The Effigies
Of the late Learned Divine
Stephen Charnock. B. D.

Sold by Tho. Cockerill att the 3 Leggs in ye Poultry.

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THE

WORKS

Of the Late LEARNED DIVINE

Stephen Charnock, B. D.

VOL. I.

BEING SEVERAL

DISCOURSES

UPON THE

Existence and Attributes

OF

GOD.

HIS

Discourse of Divine Providence:

AND A

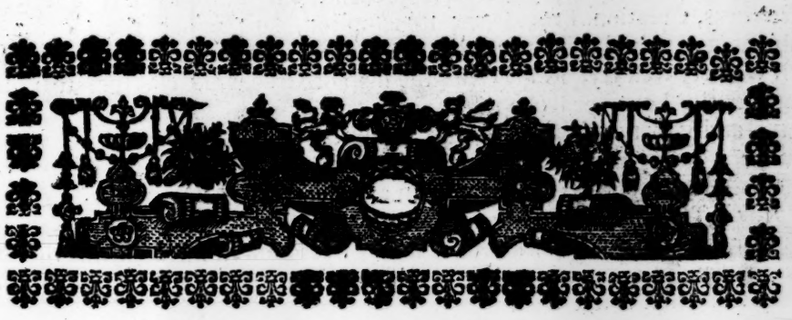
SUPPLEMENT

Of several DISCOURSES on Various Divine Subjects.

The Third EDITION Corrected.

LONDON:

Printed for *Ben. Griffin*, in the *Old-Baily*; *John Lawrence*, at the *Angel* in the *Poultry*; *Eliz. Harris*, at the *Harrow* and *John Nicholson*, at the *King's Arms*, in *Little-Britain*; and *Tho. Cockerill*, in *Amen-Corner*. 1699.



TO THE

READER.

THIS long ſince promiſed, and greatly expected Volume of the Reverend Author upon the Divine Attributes, being Tranſcribed out of his own Manuſcripts, by the unwearied Diligence of thoſe worthy Perſons that undertook it, is now at laſt come to thy Hands: Doubt not but thy Reading will pay for thy Waiting, and thy Satisfaction make full compenſation for thy Patience. In the Epiſtle before his Treatiſe of Providence, it was intimated, that his following Diſcourſes would not be inferior to that; and we are perſwaded, that ere thou haſt peruſed one half of this, thou wilt acknowledge that it was modeſtly ſpoken. Enough, aſſure thy ſelf, thou wilt find here for thy Entertainment and Delight, as well as Profit: The Sublimeneſs, Variety and Rareneſs of the Truths here handled, together with the Elegancy of the Compoſure, Neatneſs of the Stile, and whatever is wont to make any Book deſirable, will all concur in the recommendation of this. What ſo high and noble a Subject, what ſo fit for his Meditations or thine, as the higheſt and nobleſt Being, and thoſe tranſcendently Glorious Perfections wherewith he is clothed? A meet Contemplation of the Divine Excellencies may afford much Pleaſure to any Man that loves to Exerciſe his Reaſon, and is addicted to Speculation: But what incomparable Sweetneſs then will Holy Souls find, in viewing and conſidering thoſe Perfections now, which they are more fully to behold hereafter; and ſeeing what manner of God, how Wiſe and Powerful, how Great, and Good, and Holy is he, in whom the Covenant intereſts them, and in the Enjoyment of whom their Happineſs conſiſts? If rich Men delight to ſum up their vaſt Revenues, to read over their Rentals, look upon their Hoords; if they bleſs themſelves in their great Wealth, or, to uſe the Prophets words, *Jer.* 9. 23. *Glory in their Riches*; well may Believers rejoyce and glory in their *knowing the Lord*, verſe 24. and pleaſe themſelves in ſeeing how rich they are in having an immenſely full, and All-ſufficient God for their Inheritance. Alas, how little do moſt Men know of that Deity they profeſs to ſerve, and own, not as their Sovereign only, but their Portion? To ſuch this Author might ſay, as *Paul* to the *Athenians*, *Whom you ignorantly Worſhip, him declare I unto you.* Theſe Treatiſes, Reader, will inform thee who is he, whom thou calleſt *Thine*, preſent thee with a view of thy chief Good, and make thee value thy ſelf a thouſand times more upon thy intereſt in God, than upon all external Accompliſhments, and worldly Poſſeſſions. Who but Delights to hear well of one whom he loves? God is thy *Love* if thou be a Believer, and then it cannot but fill thee with Delight and Raviſhment to hear ſo much ſpoken in his Praiſe. *David* deſired *to dwell in the Houſe of the Lord*, that he might there

Mr. *J. Wilkins.* Mr. *Aſhton.*

Acts 17. 23.

behold his Beauty; How much of that *Beauty* (if thou art but capable of ſeeing it) mayſt thou *behold* in this Volume, which was our Author's main Buſineſs, for about three Years before he died, to diſplay before his Hearers? True indeed, the Lord's Glory, as ſhining forth before his heavenly Courtiers above, is unapproachable by mortal Men; but what of it is viſible in his Works, Creation, Providence, Redemption, falls under the Cognizance of his Inferior Subjects here; and this is in a great meaſure preſented to view in theſe Diſcourſes, and ſo much we may well ſay, as may (by the help of Grace) be effectual to raiſe thy Admiration, attract thy Love, provoke thy Deſires, and enable thee to make ſome gueſs at what is yet unſeen; and why not likewiſe to clear thy Eyes, and prepare them for future *ſight*, as well as turn them away from the contemptible Vanities of this preſent Life? Whatever is
2Cor.3.10. glorious in this World, yet (as the Apoſtle in another caſe) *hath no Glory by reaſon of the Glory that excels*: This *excellent Glory* is the Subject of this Book, to which all created Beauty is but meer ſhadow and duskyneſs. If thy Eyes be well fixed on this, they will not be eaſily drawn to wander after other Objects: If thy Heart be taken with God, it will be mortified to every thing that is not God.

But thou haſt in this Book, not only an excellent Subject in the general, but great variety of Matter, for the Imployment of thy Underſtanding, as well as enlivening thy Affections, and that too ſuch as thou wilt not readily find elſewhere; many excellent things which are out of the Rode of ordinary Preachers and Writers, and which may be grateful to the Curious, no leſs than ſatisfactory to the Wiſe and Judicious. It is not therefore a Book to be played with, or ſlept over, but read with the moſt intent and ſerious Mind; for though it afford much pleaſure for the Phancy, yet much more work for the Heart, and hath indeed enough in it to buſie all the Faculties. The Dreſs is compleat and decent, yet not Gariſh or Theatrical; the Rhetorick Maſculine and Vigorous, ſuch as became a Pulpit, and was never borrowed from the Stage; the Expreſſions Full, Clear, Apt, and ſuch as are beſt ſuited to the Weightineſs and Spirituality of the Truths here delivered. 'Tis plain, he was no empty Preacher, but was more for Senſe than Sound, filled up his Words with Matter, and choſe rather to inform his Hearers Minds, than to claw any itching Ears. Yet we will not ſay but ſome little things, a Word or a Phraſe now and then he may have, which no doubt had he lived to tranſcribe his own Sermons, he would have altered. If in ſome leſſer Matters he differ from thee, it is but in ſuch as Godly and Learned Men do frequently, and may without breach of Charity differ in among themſelves; in ſome things he may differ from us too, and it may be we from each other; and where are there any two Perſons, who have in all, eſpecially the more diſputable Points of Religion, exactly the ſame Sentiments, at leaſt expreſs themſelves altogether in the ſame Terms? But this we muſt ſay, That though he treat of many of the moſt Abſtruſe and Myſterious Doctrines of Chriſtianity, which are the Subjects of great Debates and Controverſies in the World, yet we find no one material thing in which he may juſtly be called Heterodox (unleſs old Hereſies be of late grown Orthodox, and his differing from them muſt make him faulty) but generally delivers (as in his * former Pieces) what is moſt conſonant to the Faith of *This*, and other the beſt Reformed Churches. He was not indeed for that Modern Divinity, which is ſo much in vogue with ſome, who would be counted the only ſound Divines; having *taſted the old*, he did not *deſire the new*, but ſaid *the old is better*. Some Errours, eſpecially the *Socinian*, he ſets himſelf induſtriouſly againſt, and cuts the very ſinnews of them, yet, ſometimes, almoſt without naming them.

Treatiſe of Providence and of Thoughts.

In the Doctrinal Part of ſeveral of his Diſcourſes, thou wilt find the Depth of *Polemical* Divinity, and in his Inferences from thence, the Sweetneſs of *Practical*; ſome things which may exerciſe the profoundeſt Scholar, and others which may inſtruct and edifie the weakeſt Chriſtian; nothing is more nervous than his Reaſonings, and nothing more affecting than his Applications. Though he make great uſe of *Schoolmen*, yet they are certainly more beholden to him, than he to them; he adopts their Notions, but he refines them too, and improves them, and reforms them from the Barbarouſneſs in which they were expreſſed, and dreſſeth them up in his own Language (ſo far as the Nature of the Matter will permit, and more clear Terms are to be found) and ſo makes them intelligible to Vulgar Capacities, which in their Original Rudeneſs were Obſcure and Strange, even to Learned Heads.

In a word; He handles the Great Truths of the Goſpel, with that Perſpicuity, Gravity and Majeſty, which beſt becomes the Oracles of God; and we have reaſon to believe, That no Judicious and Unbiaſſed Reader, but will acknowledge this to be the beſt Practical Treatiſe the World ever ſaw in *Engliſh* upon this Subject. What Doctor *John Jackſon* did (to whom our Author gave all due reſpect) was more

more brief, and in another way. Doctor *Preſton* did worthily upon the Attributes in his day, but his Diſcourſes likewiſe are more ſuccinct, when this Authors are more full and large. But whatever were the Mind of God in it, it was not his Will, that either of theſe two ſhould live to finiſh what he had begun, both being taken away when Preaching upon this Subject. Happy Souls! whoſe laſt breath was ſpent in ſo noble a Work, * *praiſing God while they had any Being.* * *Pſ.*145.2.

His Method is much the ſame in moſt of theſe Diſcourſes, both in the Doctrinal and Practical Part, which will make the whole more plain, and facile to ordinary Readers. He rarely makes Objections, and yet frequently anſwers them, by implying them in thoſe Propoſitions he lays down for the clearing up the Truths he aſſerts. His Dexterity is admirable in the Applicatory Work, where he not only brings down the higheſt Doctrines to the loweſt Capacities, but collects great Variety of Proper, Pertinent, Uſeful, and yet (many times) unthought of Inferences; and that from thoſe Truths, which however they afford much Matter for Inquiſition and Speculation, yet might ſeem (unleſs to the moſt Intelligent and Judicious Chriſtians) to have a more remote influence upon Practices. He is not like ſome *School Writers*, who attenuate and rarifie the Matter they Diſcourſe of to a degree bordering upon Annihilation; at leaſt beat it ſo thin, that a puff of Breath may blow it away; ſpin their Thread ſo fine, that the Cloth, when made up, proves uſeleſs; Solidity dwindles into Niceties, and what we thought we had got by their Aſſertions, we loſe by their Diſtinctions. But if our Author has ſome Subtilties and Superfine Notions in his Argumentations, yet he condenſeth them again, and Conſolidates them into Subſtantial and Profitable Corolaries in his Applications: And in them his main buſineſs is, as to diſcipline a prophane World for its neglect of God and contempt of him in his moſt adorable and ſhining Perfections; ſo likewiſe to ſhew how the *Divine Attributes* are not only infinitely excellent in themſelves, but a grand Foundation for all true *Divine Worſhip*, and ſhould be the great Motives to provoke Men to the Exerciſe of Faith, and Love, and Fear, and Humility, and all that Holy Obedience they are called to by the Goſpel: And this without peradventure is the great end of all thoſe rich *Diſcoveries* God hath in his Word made of himſelf to us. And *Reader*, if theſe elaborate Diſcourſes of this Holy Man, through the Lord's Bleſſing, become a means of promoting Holineſs in thee, and ſtir thee up to love, and live to the God of *his praiſe*, we are well aſſured that his end in Preaching them is anſwered, and ſo is ours in publiſhing them.

Thine in the Lord,

EDW. VEEL.

R. I. ADAMS.

The

The ſeveral Diſcourſes in this Volume.

VIZ.

Page.

1. & 29. THE *Exiſtence of God, and Practical Atheiſm; from* Pſal. 14. 1. *The Fool hath ſaid in his Heart, There is no God,* &c.

67. & 79. *God a Spirit, and Spiritual Worſhip; from* John 4. 24. *God is a Spirt, and they that Worſhip him, muſt Worſhip him in Spirit and Truth.*

110. *The Eternity of God; from* Pſal. 90. 2. *Before the Mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadſt formed the Earth and the World; even from Everlaſting to Everlaſting thou art God.*

125. *The Immutability of God; from* Pſa. 102. 26, 27. *They ſhall periſh, but thou ſhalt endure; Yea, all of them ſhall wax old, like a Garment; as a Veſture ſhalt thou change them, and they ſhall be changed: But thou art the ſame, and thy Years ſhall have no end.*

148. *The Omnipreſence of God; from* Jerem. 23. 24. *Can any hide himſelf in ſecret places, that I ſhall not ſee him, ſaith the Lord? Do not I fill Heaven and Earth, ſaith the Lord?*

166. *God's Infinite Knowledge; from* Pſal. 147. 5. *Great is our Lord, and of great Power; His Underſtanding is Infinite.*

207. *God's Infinite Wiſdom; from* Rom. 16. 27. *To God only Wiſe, be Glory through Jeſus Chriſt for ever. Amen.*

257. *God's Infinite Power; from* Job 26. 14. *Lo, theſe are parts of his ways, but how little a Portion is heard of him? [But the Thunder of his Power who can underſtand?]*

307. *God's Infinite Holineſs; from* Exod. 15. 11. *Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the Gods? Who is like thee, glorious in Holineſs, fearful in Praiſes, doing Wonders?*

353. *God's Infinite Goodneſs; from* Mark 10. 18. *And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Why calleſt thou me good? There is none good but One, that is God.*

420. *The Dominion of God; from* Pſal. 103. 19. *The Lord hath prepared his Throne in the Heavens, and his Kingdom ruleth over all.*

473. *God's Infinite Patience; from* Nahum 1. 3. *The Lord is ſlow to Anger, and great in Power, and will not at all acquit the Wicked: The Lord hath his way in the Whirlwind, and in the Storm, and the Clouds are the Duſt of his Feet.*

503. *Divine Providence; from* 2 Chron. 16. 9. *For the Eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole Earth, to ſhew himſelf ſtrong in the behalf of them whoſe Heart is perfect towards him.*

555. *Sinfulneſs and Cure of Thoughts; from* Gen. 6. 5. *And God ſaw that the Wickedneſs of Man was great in the Earth, and that every Imagination of the thought of his Heart was only evil continually.*

570. *The Churches Stability; from* Pſal. 87. 5. *And of Sion it ſhall be ſaid, This and that Man was born in her; and the Higheſt himſelf ſhall eſtabliſh her.*

588. *The fifth of* November; Exod. 15. 9, 10. *The Enemy ſaid, I will purſue, I will overtake, I will divide the Spoil; my Luſt ſhall be ſatisfied upon them; I will draw my Sword; My Hand ſhall deſtroy them; Thou didſt blow with thy Wind; the Sea covered them; they ſunk as Lead in the mighty Waters.*

599. *Delight in Prayer; from* Pſal. 37. 4. *Delight thy ſelf alſo in the Lord, and he ſhall give thee the deſires of thy heart.*

605. *Mourning for other Mens ſins; from* Ezek. 9. 4. *And the Lord ſaid unto him, Go thro' the midſt of the City, thro' the midſt of* Jeruſalem, *and ſet a Mark upon the Fore-heads of the Men that ſigh, and that cry for all the Abominations that be done in the midſt thereof.*

615. *The Comfort of Child-bearing Women; from* 1 Tim. 2. 15. *Notwithſtanding ſhe ſhall be ſaved in Child-bearing, if they continue in Faith, and Charity, and Holineſs, with Sobriety.*

624. *The Sins of the Regenerate; from* 1 John 3. 9. *Whoſoever is born of God, doth not commit ſin, for his Seed remaineth in him, and he cannot ſin, becauſe he is born of God.*

635. *The Pardon of Sin; from* Pſal. 32. 1, 2. *Bleſſed is he whoſe Tranſgreſſion is forgiven, whoſe ſin is covered. Bleſſed is the Man unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity.*

A

DISCOURSE
Upon the Exiſtence of God.

Pſalm 14. 1. *The Fool hath ſaid in his Heart, There is no God; they are corrupt, they have done abominable Works: there is none that doth good.*

THIS *Pſalm* is a deſcription of the deplorable corruption by Nature of every Son of *Adam*, ſince the withering of that Common Root. Some reſtrain it to the *Gentiles*, as a Wilderneſs full of Bryars and Thorns, as not concerning the *Jews*, the Garden of God, planted by his Grace, and watered by the Dew of Heaven. But the Apoſtle, the beſt Interpreter, rectifies this in extending it by name to *Jews*, as well as *Gentiles*, Rom. 3. 9. [*We have before proved both* Jews *and* Gentiles, *that they are all under ſin.*] And *v.* 10. 11, 12. Cites part of this Pſalm, and other Paſſages of Scripture, for the further evidence of it; concluding by *Jews* and *Gentiles*, every perſon in the World naturally in this ſtate of Corruption.

The Pſalmiſt firſt declares the Corruption of the Faculties of the Soul; *The Fool hath ſaid in his heart.* Secondly, The ſtreams iſſuing from thence; *They are corrupt*, &c. The firſt in Atheiſtical Principles, the other in Unworthy Practices; and lays all the Evil, Tyranny, Luſt and Perſecutions by Men, (as if the World were only for their ſake) upon the Neglects of God, and the Atheiſm cheriſhed in their Hearts.

The Fool, A Term in Scripture ſignifying a wicked Man, uſed alſo by the Heathen Philoſophers to ſignifie a vicious Perſon, נבל as coming from נבל ſignifies the extinction of Life in Men, Animals and Plants, ſo the word נבל is taken *, a Plant that hath loſt all that juyce that made it lovely and uſeful. So a Fool is one that hath loſt his Wiſdom, and right Notion of God and Divine things, which were communicated to Man by Creation; one dead in ſin, yet one not ſo much void of rational Faculties, as of Grace in thoſe Faculties; not one that wants reaſon, but abuſes his Reaſon: In Scripture the word ſignifies fooliſh. ‖

* Iſa. 40. 7. נבל ציץ *the flower fadeth*, Iſa. 28. 1.

‖ *Muis* נבל לא חכם *put together* Deu. 32. 6. *Oh fooliſh people and unwiſe.*

Said in his heart, that is, he thinks, or he doubts, or he wiſhes. The thoughts of the heart are in the Nature of Words to God, tho' not to Men. 'Tis uſed in the like caſe of the Atheiſtical Perſon, *Pſ.* 10. 11, 13. *He hath ſaid in his heart, God hath forgotten*, he hath ſaid in his heart, *Thou wilt not require it.* He doth not form a Syllogiſm, (as *Calvin* ſpeaks) that there is no God: He dares not openly publiſh it, tho' he dares ſecretly think it. He cannot raſe out the thoughts of a Deity, tho' he endeavours to blot thoſe Characters of God in his Soul. He hath ſome doubts whether there be a God or no: He wiſhes there were not any, and ſometimes hopes there is none at all. He could not ſo aſcertain himſelf by convincing Arguments to produce to the World, but he tampered with his own heart to bring it to that Perſwaſion, and ſmothered in himſelf thoſe Notices of a Deity; which is ſo plain againſt the Light of Nature, that ſuch a Man may well be called a Fool for it.

* אין אלהים *No God.* **Muis.*

There is no God *:] לית שולטנא *non poteſtas Domini, Chalde.* 'Tis not *Jehova*, which Name ſignifies the Eſſence of God, as the Prime and Supream Being; but *Elohim*, which Name ſignifies the Providence of God, God as a Rector and Judge. Not that he denyes the Exiſtence of a Supream Being that Created the World, but his regarding the Creatures, his government of the World, and conſequently his reward of the Righteous or puniſhments of the Wicked.

* There is a threefold denial of God, 1. *Quoad Exiſtentiam*; this is abſolute Atheiſm. 2. *Quoad Providentiam*, or his inſpection into, or care of the things of the World, bounding him in the Heavens. 3. *Quoad Naturam*, in regard of one or other of the Perfections due to his Nature. * Coccius.

Of the denial of the Providence of God moſt underſtand this, * not excluding the abſolute Atheiſt, as *Diogaras* is reported to be, nor the Sceptical Atheiſt, as *Protagoras*, who doubted whether there were a God. Thoſe that deny the Providence of God, do in effect deny the Being of a God; for they ſtrip him of that Wiſdom, Goodneſs, Tenderneſs, Mercy, Juſtice, Righteouſneſs, which are the Glory of the Deity. And that Principle, of a greedy deſire to be uncontroul'd in their Luſts, which induceth Men to a denial of Providence, that thereby they might ſtifle thoſe ſeeds of Fear which infect and embitter their ſinful Pleaſures, may as well lead them to deny that there is any ſuch Being as a God. * *Not owning him as the* Egyptians *called,* θεὸν ἐπόπτων. * *Fugubin in loc.*

That at one blow, their fears may be daſh'd all in pieces and diſſolv'd by the removal of the Foundation: As Men who deſire Liberty to commit Works of Darkneſs, would not have the Lights in the Houſe dimm'd, but extinguiſhed. What Men ſay againſt Providence, becauſe they would have no check in their Luſts, they may ſay in their hearts againſt the the Exiſtence of God upon the ſame account; little difference between the diſſenting from the one, and diſowning the other.

They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doth good.

He ſpeaks of the Atheiſt in the *ſingular*, *The Fool*, of the corruption iſſuing in the Life in the *plural*; Intimating that tho' ſome few may choak in their hearts the Sentiments of God and his Providence, and poſitively deny them, yet there is ſomething of a ſecret Atheiſm in all, which is the Fountain of the evil Practices in their Lives, not an utter diſowning of the Being of a God, but a denial or doubting of ſome of the Rights of his Nature: * When Men deny the God of Purity, they muſt needs be polluted in Soul and Body, and grow brutiſh in their Actions: When the Senſe of Religion is ſhaken off, all kind of Wickedneſs is eagerly ruſh'd into, whereby they become as loathſom to God as putrified Carcaſes are to Men *: Not one or two evil Actions is the product of ſuch a Principle, but the whole ſcene of a Man's Life is corrupted and become execrable. * *Atheiſm abſolute is not in all mens judgments, but practical is in all mens actions.* * *The Apoſtle in the* Romans *applying the latter part of it to all Mankind, but not the former. As the word tranſlated corrupt ſignifies.*

No

No Man is exempted from ſome ſpice of Atheiſm by the depravation of his Nature, which the Pſalmiſt intimates, *There is none that doth good*: Tho' there are indelible Convictions of the Being of a God, that they cannot abſolutely deny it; yet there are ſome Atheiſtical Bubling in the hearts of Men, which evidence themſelves in their Actions: As the Apoſtle, *Tit.* 1. 16. *They profeſs that they know God, but in works they deny him.* Evil works are a duſt ſtirred up by an Atheiſtical breath. He that habituates himſelf in ſome ſordid luſt, can ſcarcely be ſaid ſeriouſly and firmly to believe that there is a God in being; and the *Apoſtle* doth not ſay that they know God, *but they profeſs to know him*: True knowledge and profeſſion of knowledge are diſtinct. It intimates alſo to us, the unreaſonableneſs of *Atheiſm* in the conſequence; when men ſhut their eyes againſt the beams of ſo clear a Sun, God revengeth himſelf upon them for their impiety, by leaving them to their own wills, lets them fall into the deepeſt ſink and dregs of iniquity; and ſince they doubt of him in their hearts, ſuffers them above others to deny him in their works; this the *Apoſtle* diſcourſeth at large.

The Text then is a deſcription of man's Corruption.

1. *Of his Mind. The fool hath ſaid in his heart.* No better title than that of a fool is afforded to the Atheiſt.

2. *Of the other faculties*, 1. *In ſins of Commiſſion*, expreſt by the loathſomneſs [*corrupt, abominable.*] 2. *In ſins of Omiſſion* [*there is none that doth good*] he lays down the corruption of the Mind as the cauſe, the corruption of the other faculties as the Effect.

I. *'Tis a great Folly to deny or doubt of the Exiſtence or Being of God*: Or, *An Atheiſt is a great Fool.*

II. *Practical Atheiſm is natural to Man in his corrupt State.* 'Tis againſt Nature as conſtituted by God; but natural, as Nature is depraved by Man. The abſolute diſowning of the Being of a God is not natural to men, but the contrary is natural; but an inconſideration of God, or miſ-repreſentation of his Nature, is natural to Man as corrupt.

III. *A ſecret Atheiſm, or a partial Atheiſm, is the Spring of all the wicked Practices in the World.* The diſorders of the Life ſpring from the ill diſpoſitions of the Heart.

For the firſt, *Every Atheiſt is a Grand Fool.* If he were not a Fool, he would not imagine a thing ſo contrary to the ſtream of the Univerſal Reaſon in the World, contrary to the rational Dictates of his own Soul, and contrary to the Teſtimony of every Creature, and Link in the Chain of Creation: If he were not a Fool, he would not ſtrip himſelf of Humanity, and degrade himſelf lower than the moſt deſpicable Brute.

'Tis a Folly; for tho' God be ſo inacceſſible, that we cannot know him perfectly, yet he is ſo much in the light, that we cannot be totally ignorant of him. As he cannot be comprehended in his Eſſence, he cannot be unknown in his Exiſtence; 'tis as eaſie by Reaſon to underſtand that he is, as it is difficult to know what he is.

The demonſtrations Reaſon furniſheth us with for the Exiſtence of God, will be Evidences of the Atheiſt's Folly. One would think there were little need of ſpending time in evidencing this Truth, ſince in the Principle of it, it ſeems to be ſo univerſally own'd, and at the firſt propoſal and demand, gains the aſſent of moſt men.

But 1. *Doth not the growth of Atheiſm among us render this neceſſary?* May it not juſtly be ſuſpected, that the ſwarms of Atheiſts are more numerous in our times, than Hiſtory Records to have been in any Age; when men will not only ſay it in their hearts, but publiſh it with their lips, and boaſt that they have ſhaken off thoſe Shackles which bind other mens Conſciences? Doth not the bare-fac'd Debauchery of men evidence ſuch a ſettled Sentiment, or at leaſt a careleſs Belief of the Truth, which lies at the root, and ſprouts up in ſuch venemous branches in the World? Can mens hearts be free from that Principle wherewith their Practices are ſo openly depraved? 'Tis true, the light of Nature ſhines too vigorouſly for the Power of Man totally to put it out; yet loathſome Actions impair and weaken the actual thoughts and conſiderations of a Deity, and are like Miſts, that darken the light of the Sun, though they cannot extinguiſh it: their Conſciences as a Candleſtick, muſt hold it, though their unrighteouſneſs obſcure it, *Rom.* 1. 18. [*Who hold the Truth in Unrighteouſneſs.*] The ingraved Characters of the Law of Nature remain, though they daub them with their muddy Luſts to make them eligible: So that ſince the inconſideration of a Deity is the cauſe of all the wickedneſs and extravagances of men; and, as *Auſtin* ſaith, the Propoſition is always true, *The Fool hath ſaid in his heart*, &c. And more evidently true in this Age than any; it will not be unneceſſary to diſcourſe of the Demonſtrations of this firſt Principle.

The Apoſtles ſpent little time in urging this Truth, it was taken for granted all over the World, and they were generally devout in the *Worſhip* of thoſe Idols, they thought to be Gods. That Age run from one God to many, and our Age is running from one God to none at all.

2. *The Exiſtence of God is the Foundation of all Religion.* The whole Building totters if the Foundation be out of courſe: If we have not deliberate and right Notions of it, we ſhall perform no Worſhip, no Service, yield no affection to him. If there be not a God, 'tis impoſſible there can be one; for Eternity is Eſſential to the notion of a God; ſo all Religion would be vain, and unreaſonable to pay Homage to that which is not in being, nor can ever be. We muſt *firſt believe that he is*, and that he is what he declares himſelf to be, before we can *ſeek* him, adore him, and devote our Affections to him*: We cannot pay God a due and regular Homage, unleſs we underſtand him in his Perfections, what he is; and we can pay him no Homage at all, unleſs we believe that he is. *Heb.* 11. 6.

3. *'Tis fit we ſhould know why we believe*, that our Belief of a God, may appear to be upon undeniable Evidence, and that we may give a better reaſon for his Exiſtence, than that we have heard our Parents and Teachers tell us ſo, and our acquaintance think ſo. 'Tis as much as to ſay there is no God, when we know not why we believe there is, and would not conſider the Arguments for his Exiſtence.

4. *It is neceſſary to depreſs that ſecret Atheiſm which is in the heart of every man by nature.* Though every viſible object, which offers it ſelf to our ſenſe, preſents a Deity to our minds, and exhorts us to ſubſcribe to the truth of it, yet there is a Root of *Atheiſm* ſpringing up ſometimes in wavering thoughts, and fooliſh imaginations, inordinate actions, and ſecret wiſhes. Certain it is, that every man, that doth not love God, denies God; now can he, that diſaffects him, and hath a ſlaviſh fear of him, wiſh his Exiſtence, and ſay to his own heart with any chearfulneſs, there is a God, and make it his chief care to perſwade himſelf of it? He would perſwade himſelf there is no God, and ſtifle the ſeeds of it in his Reaſon and Conſcience, that he might have the greateſt liberty to entertain the allurements of the Fleſh.

'Tis neceſſary to Excite men to daily and actual conſiderations of God and his Nature, which would be

be a bar to much of that wickedneſs which overflows in the lives of men.

* Coccei Sum. Theol. c. 8. § 1.

5. *Nor is it unuſeful to thoſe that effectually believe and love him*; * for thoſe who have had a converſe with God, and felt his powerful influences in the ſecrets of their hearts, to take a proſpect of thoſe ſatisfactory accounts which reaſon gives of that God they adore and love; to ſee every Creature juſtifie them in their owning of him, and affections to him: Indeed the Evidences of a God, ſtriking upon the Conſcience of thoſe who reſolve to cleave to ſin as their chiefeſt darling, will daſh their pleaſures with unwelcome mixtures.

I ſhall further premiſe this;

That the folly of Atheiſm is evidenced by the light of Reaſon. Men that will not liſten to Scripture, as having no counterpart of it in their Souls, cannot eaſily deny natural Reaſon, which riſeth up on all ſides for the juſtification of this Truth: There is a natural as well as a revealed Knowledge, and the Book of the Creatures is legible in declaring the Being of a God, as well as the Scriptures are in declaring the Nature of a God; there are outward objects in the World, and common Principles in the Conſcience, whence it may be inferr'd:

For, 1. *God in regard of his Exiſtence is not only the diſcovery of Faith, but of Reaſon.* God hath revealed not only his Being, but ſome ſparks of his eternal Power and Godhead in his Works, as well as in his Word. *Rom.* 1. 19, 20. *God hath ſhewed it unto them.* How? * in his works; by the things that are made, 'tis a diſcovery to our Reaſon, as ſhining in the Creatures; and an object of our Faith, as breaking out upon us in the Scriptures: 'tis an Article of our Faith, and an Article of our Reaſon. Faith ſuppoſeth natural Knowledge, as Grace ſuppoſeth Nature. Faith indeed is properly of things above Reaſon, purely depending upon Revelation: What can be demonſtrated by natural Light, is not ſo properly the object of Faith; though in regard of the addition of a certainty by Revelation, it is ſo.

* Aquin.

The belief that God is, which the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, * is not ſo much of the bare Exiſtence of God, as what *God is.* in Relation to them that ſeek to him, *viz. a Rewarder.* The Apoſtle ſpeaks of the Faith of *Abel*, the Faith of *Enoch*, ſuch a Faith that pleaſes God: But the Faith of *Abel* teſtified in his ſacrifice, and the Faith of *Enoch* teſtified in his walking with God, was not ſimply a Faith of the Exiſtence of God. *Cain* in the time of *Abel*, other men in the World in the time of *Enoch*, believed this as well as they: But it was a Faith joyned with the Worſhip of God, and deſirous to pleaſe him in the way of his own appointment; ſo that they believed that God was ſuch as he had declared himſelf to be in his promiſe to *Adam*, ſuch an one as would be as good as his word, and bruiſe the Serpents head: He that ſeeks to God according to the mind of God, muſt believe that he is ſuch a God that will pardon ſin, and juſtifie a ſeeker of him; that he is a God of that ability and will, to Juſtifie a ſinner in that way he hath appointed for the clearing the Holineſs of his Nature, and vindicating the Honour of his Law violated by Man.

* *Heb.* 11. 6.

No Man can ſeek God, or love God, unleſs he believe him to *be thus*; and he cannot ſeek God without a diſcovery of his own mind how he would be ſought. For it is not a ſeeking God in any way of mans Invention, that renders him capable of this deſired fruit of a Reward: He that believes God as a Rewarder, muſt believe the promiſe of God concerning the *Meſſiah.* Men, under the Conſcience of ſin, cannot tell, without a divine diſcovery, whether God will reward, or how he will reward the Seekers of him; and therefore cannot act towards him as an object of Faith. Would any Man ſeek God meerly becauſe he is, or love him becauſe he is, if he did not know that he ſhould be acceptable to him? The bare Exiſtence of a thing is not the ground of affection to it, but thoſe qualities of it, and our intereſt in it, which render it amiable and delightful. How can Men, whoſe Conſciences fly in their faces, ſeek God, or love him, without this knowledge, that he is a Rewarder? Nature doth not ſhew any way to a Sinner, how to reconcile Gods provoked Juſtice with his Tenderneſs. The Faith the Apoſtles ſpeaks of here, is a Faith that eyes the reward as an encouragement, and the Will of God as the Rule of its acting, he doth not ſpeak ſimply of the Exiſtence of God.

I have ſpoken the more of this place, becauſe the *Socinians* * uſe this to decry any natural knowledge of God, and that the Exiſtence of God is only to *be known* by Revelation; ſo that by that reaſon, any one that lived without the Scripture hath no ground to believe the being of a God.

* Voet. *Theol. natural. cap.* 3. § 1. *p.* 22.

[The Scripture aſcribes a knowledge of God to all Nations in the World, *Rom.* 1. 19. not only a faculty of knowing, if they had arguments and demonſtrations; as an ignorant man in any Art hath a faculty to know; but it aſcribes an actual knowledge, *ver.* 19. *manifeſt in them*, *ver.* 21. *They knew God*, not they might know him, they knew him when they did not care for knowing him: The notices of God are as intelligible to us by reaſon, as any object in the World is viſible, he is written in every Letter.

2. *We are often in the Scripture ſent to take a proſpect of the Creatures for a diſcovery of God.* The Apoſtles drew arguments from the *Topicks* of Nature, when they diſcourſed with thoſe that owned the Scripture, *Rom.* 1. 19. as well as when they treated with thoſe that were ignorant of it, as *Acts* 14. 15, 16. And among the Philoſophers of *Athens*, *Acts* 17. 27, 29. Such arguments the Holy Ghoſt in the Apoſtles, thought ſufficient to convince men of the Exiſtence, Unity, Spirituality, and Patience of God. * Such arguments had not been uſed by them and the Prophets, from the viſible things in the World, to ſilence the *Gentiles* with whom they dealt, had not this Truth, and much more about God, been demonſtrable by natural Reaſon: They knew well enough that probable arguments would not ſatisfie piercing and inquiſitive minds.

* Voet. *Theol. natural. cap.* 3. § 1. *p.* 22.

In *Paul*'s account the Teſtimony of the Creatures was without contradiction; God himſelf juſtifies this way of proceeding by his own example, and remits *Job* to the conſideration of the Creatures, to ſpell out ſomething of his Divine Perfections. * And this is ſo convincing an argument of the Exiſtence of God, that God never vouchſafed any Miracle, or put forth any act of Omnipotency, beſides what was evident in the Creatures for ſatisfaction of the Curioſity of any Atheiſt, or the evincing of his Being, as he hath done for the Evidencing thoſe Truths which were not written in the Book of Nature, or for the reſtoring a decayed worſhip, or the protection or deliverance of his people: Thoſe Miracles in publiſhing the Goſpel, indeed did demonſtrate the Exiſtence of ſome Supream Power; but they were not Seals deſignedly affixt for that, but for the confirmation of that truth, which was above the ken of purblind Reaſon, and purely the birth of Divine Revelation: Yet what proves the Truth of any Spiritual Doctrine, proves alſo in that act the Exiſtence of the Divine Author of it: The Revelation always implies a Revealer, and that which manifeſts it to be a Revelation, manifeſts alſo the ſupream Revealer of it. By the ſame light the Sun manifeſts other things to us, it alſo manifeſts it ſelf. But what Miracles could rationally be ſuppoſed to work upon an Atheiſt, who is not drawn to a ſence

* Job. 28. 29, 40. *&c.* *'Tis but one truth in Philoſophy and Divinity, That which is falſe in one, cannot be true in another; Truth in what appearance ſo ever doth never contradict it ſelf.*

of the Truth proclaimed aloud by ſo many wonders of the Creation?

Let us now proceed to the demonſtration of the Atheiſts Folly..

'Tis a Folly to deny or doubt of a Soveraign being, incomprehenſible in his Nature, infinite in his Eſſence and Perfections, independant in his Operations, who hath given Being to the whole frame of ſenſible and intelligible Creatures, and governs them according to their ſeveral natures, by an unconceiveable Wiſdom; who fills the Heavens with the Glory of his Majeſty, and the Earth with the influences of his Goodneſs.

'Tis a Folly inexcuſeable, to renounce in this caſe all appeal to univerſal Conſent, and the joynt aſſurances of the Creatures.

Reaſon 1. *'Tis a Folly to deny or doubt of that which hath been the acknowledged Sentiment of all Nations, in all Places and Ages.* There is no Nation but hath owned ſome kind of Religion, and therefore no Nation but hath conſented in the Notion of a Supream Creator and Governour.

1. *This hath been univerſal.*
2. *It hath been conſtant and uninterrupted.*
3. *Natural and innate.*

Firſt, I. *It hath been univerſally aſſented to by the Judgments and Practices of all Nations in the World.*

1. *No Nation hath been exempt from it.* All Hiſtories of former and later Ages, have not produced any one Nation but fell under the force of this Truth. Though they have differed in their Religions, they have agreed in this Truth; here both *Heathen*, *Turk*, *Jew*, and *Chriſtian*, centre without any Contention. No quarrel was ever commenced on this Score; though about other opinions Wars have been ſharp, and Enmities irreconcilable; The Notion of the *Exiſtence of a Deity* was the ſame in All, *Indians* as well as *Britains*; *Americans* as well as *Jews*.

It hath not been an opinion peculiar to this or that people, to this or that Sect of Philoſophers; but hath been as univerſal as the Reaſon whereby men are differenc'd from other Creatures, ſo that ſome have rather defin'd man by *animal religioſum*, than *animal rationale*. 'Tis ſo twiſted with Reaſon, that a man cannot be accounted rational, unleſs he own an object of Religion: Therefore he that underſtands not this renounces his Humanity, when he renounceth a Divinity.

No inſtance can be given of any one People in the World that diſclaimed it. It hath been owned by the wiſe and ignorant, by the learned and ſtupid, by thoſe who had no other guide but the dimmeſt Light of Nature, as well as by thoſe whoſe Candles were ſnuft by a more polite Education, and that without any ſolemn debate and contention: Though ſome Philoſophers have been known to change their opinions in the concerns of Nature, yet none can be proved to have abſolutely changed their opinion concerning the being of a God: One died for aſſerting one God, none in the former Ages upon Record hath died for aſſerting no God. Go to the utmoſt bounds of *America*, you may find People without ſome broken pieces of the Law of Nature, but not without this ſignature: and ſtamp upon them, though they wanted commerce with other Nations, except as ſavage as themſelves; in whom the Light of Nature was as it were ſunk into the Socket, who are but one remove from Brutes, who cloath not their bodies, cover not their ſhame, yet were they as ſoon known to own a God, as they were known to be a people: They were poſſeſſed with the Notion of a Supream Being, the Author of the World, had an object of Religious adoration, put up Prayers to the Deity, they owned for the good things they wanted, and the diverting the evils they feared: No people ſo untamed, where abſolute perfect Atheiſm hath gained a footing.

Not one Nation of the World, known in the time of the *Romans*, that were without their Ceremonies, whereby they ſignified their devotion to a Deity. They had their places of Worſhip, where they made their Vows, preſented their Prayers, offered their Sacrifices, and implored the Aſſiſtance of what they thought to be a God, and in their diſtreſſes run immediately, without any deliberation, to their Gods; ſo that the notion of a Deity was as inward and ſettled in them as their own Souls, and indeed runs in the blood of Mankind: The diſtempers of the Underſtanding cannot utterly deface it; you ſhall ſcarce find the moſt diſtracted Bedlam, in his raving fits, to deny a God, though he may blaſpheme and fancy himſelf one.

2. *Nor doth the Idolatry and multiplicity of Gods in the World weaken, but confirm this univerſal conſent.* Whatſoever unworthy conceits Men have had of God in all Nations, or whatſoever degrading repreſentations they have made of him, yet they all concur in this, that there is a Supream Power to be ador'd. Tho' one People worſhipped the Sun, others the Fire; and the *Egyptians*, Gods out of their Rivers, Gardens, and Fields; yet the Notion of a Deity exiſtent, who created and governed the World, and conferred daily benefits upon them, was maintained by all, tho' applied to the Stars, and in part to thoſe ſordid Creatures. All the *Dagons* of the World eſtabliſh this truth, and fall down before it. Had not the Nations owned the Being of a God, they had never offered Incenſe to an Idol: Had there not been a deep impreſſion of the *Exiſtence of a Deity*, they had never exalted Creatures below themſelves to the honour of Altars: Men could not ſo eaſily have been deceived by forged Deities, if they had not had a Notion of a real one. Their fondneſs to ſet up others in the place of God, evidenced a natural knowledge that there was One, who had a right to be Worſhipped. If there were not this ſentiment of a Deity, no Man would ever have made an Image of a piece of Wood, worſhipp'd it, pray'd to it, and ſaid, *deliver me for thou art my God* *. They applied a general Notion to a particular Image. The difference is in the manner, and immediate object of worſhip, not in the formal ground of worſhip. The worſhip ſprung from a true Principle, though it was not applied to a right object: While they were rational Creatures, they could not deface the Notion; yet while they were corrupt Creatures, it was not difficult to apply themſelves to a wrong object from a true principle. A blind man knows he hath a way to go as well as one of the cleareſt ſight, but becauſe of his blindneſs he may miſs the way and ſtumble into a Ditch. No man would be impos'd upon to take a *Briſtol* ſtone inſtead of a Diamond, if he did not know that there were ſuch things as Diamonds in the World; nor any man ſpread forth his hands to an Idol, if he were altogether without the ſenſe of a Deity. Whether it be a falſe or a true God men apply to, yet in both, the natural ſentiment of a God is evidenc'd; all their miſtakes were grafts inſerted in this Stock, ſince they would multiply Gods rather than deny a Deity.

* *Iſa.* 44. 17.

* *How ſhould ſuch a general ſubmiſſion be entred into by all the world, ſo as to adore things of a baſe alloy,* if the force of Religion were not ſuch, that in any faſhion a man would ſeek the ſatisfaction of his natural inſtinct to ſome object of worſhip? This great diverſity confirms this conſent to be a good argument, for it evidenceth it not to be a Cheat, Combination, or Conſpiracy, to deceive, or a mutual intelligence, but every one finds it in his climate, yea in

* *Charron de la Sageſſe Livr.* 1. *Cha.* 7. *p.* 43, 44.

Gassend. Phys. § 1. *lib.*4.*cap.*2. *p.* 291.

in himself. People would never have given the Title of a God to Men or Brutes, had there not been a pre-existing, and unquestioned perswasion, that there was such a Being, how else should the Notion of a God come into their minds, the Notion that there is a God must be more ancient.

3. *Whatsoever disputes there have been in the World, this of the existence of God was never the subject of contention.* All other things have been questioned. What Jarrings were there among Philosophers about natural things, into how many parties were they split, with what animosities did they maintain their several judgments? But we hear of no solemn Controversies about the Existence of a Supream Being: This never met with any considerable contradiction: No Nation, that hath put other things to question, would ever suffer this to be disparaged, so much as by a publick doubt. * We find among the Heathen contentions about the Nature of God, and the number of Gods; some asserted an innumerable multitude of Gods, some affirmed him to be subject to Birth and Death, some affirmed the intire World was God; others fancied him to be a circle of a bright Fire; others that he was a Spirit diffused through the whole World: Yet they unanimously concurr'd in this, as the Judgment of Universal Reason, that there was such a Sovereign Being: And those that were sceptical in every thing else, and asserted that the greatest certainty was that there was nothing certain, profest a certainty in this. The question was not whether there was a *First Cause*, but what it was. * 'Tis much the same thing, as the disputes about the Nature and Matter of the Heavens, the Sun and Planets, tho' there be great diversity of Judgments, yet all agree that there are Heavens, Sun, Planets: so all the Contentions among Men about the Nature of God, weaken not, but rather confirm, that there is a God, since there was never a publick formal debate about his Existence. Those that have been ready to pull out one anothers eyes for their dissent from their Judgments, sharply censured one anothers sentiments, envied the births of one anothers wits, always shook hands with an unanimous consent in this; never censured one another for being of this perswasion, never called it into question; as what was never controverted among Men professing Christianity, but acknowledged by all, though contending about other things, has reason to be judged a certain truth belonging to the Christian Religion; so what was never subjected to any Controversie, but acknowledged by the whole World, hath reason to be imbraced as a truth without any doubt.

* *Amyrant des. Religion, p.* 50.

* *Gassend. Phys.* § 1. *lib.*4.*cap.*2. *p.* 291.

Gassend. Phys. § 1. *lib.*4. *cap.*7. *p.* 282.

4. *This Universal Consent is not prejudiced by some few Dissenters.* History doth not reckon *twenty profest Atheists* in all Ages in the compass of the whole World: And we have not the name of any one absolute Atheist upon Record in Scripture: Yet it is questioned, whether any of them, noted in History with that infamous name, were downright deniers of the Existence of God, but rather because they disparaged the Deities commonly worshipped by the Nations where they lived, as being of a clearer reason to discern, that those qualities, vulgarly attributed to their Gods, as Lust and Luxury, Wantonness and Quarrels, were unworthy of the nature of a God. But suppose they were really what they are termed to be, what are they to the multitude of Men, that have sprung out of the loyns of *Adam*? not so much as one grain of ashes is to all that were ever turned into that form by any fires in your Chimnies. And many more were not sufficient to weigh down the contrary consent of the whole World, and bear down an universal impression. Should the Laws of a Country, agreed universally to by the whole Body of the People, be accounted vain, because *a hundred Men* of those millions disapprove of them, when not their reason, but their folly and base interest, perswades them to dislike them, and dispute against them? What if some Men be blind, shall any conclude from thence that eyes are not natural to Men? Shall we say that the Notion of the *Existence of God* is not natural to Men, because a very small number have been of a contrary opinion? Shall a Man in a Dungeon, that never saw the Sun, deny that there is a Sun, because one or two blind Men tell him there is none, when thousands assure him there is? Why should then the exceptions of a few, not one to Millions, discredit that which is voted certainly true by the joynt consent of the World? Add this too, that if those that are reported to be Atheists, had had any considerable reason to step aside from the common perswasion of the whole World, 'tis a wonder it met not with entertainment by great numbers of those, who, by reason of their notorious wickedness, and inward disquiets, might reasonably be thought to wish in their hearts that there were no God. 'Tis strange if there were any reason on their side, that in so long a space of time, as hath run out from the Creation of the World, there could not be engaged a considerable number to frame a Society for the profession of it. It hath died with the Person that started it, and vanish'd as soon as it appeared.

Gassend. ibid. p. 290.

To conclude this, is it not folly for any Man to deny or doubt of the Being of a God, to dissent from all Mankind, and stand in contradiction to humane Nature? What is *the general dictate of Nature is a certain Truth.* 'Tis impossible, that Nature can naturally and universally lye. And therefore those that ascribe all to Nature, and set it in the Place of God, contradict themselves, if they give not credit to it in that which it universally affirms. ‖ A general consent of all Nations is to be esteemed as a Law of Nature. Nature cannot plant in the minds of all Men an assent to a falsity, for then the Laws of Nature would be destructive to the reason and minds of Men. How is it possible, that a falsity should be a perswasion spread through all Nations, engraven upon the minds of all Men, Men of the most towring, and Men of the most creeping understanding; that they should consent to it in all places, and in those places, where the Nations have not had any known Commerce with the rest of the known World? A Consent not settled by any Law of Man to constrain People to a belief of it: And indeed 'tis impossible, that any Law of Man can constrain the belief of the Mind. Would not he deservedly be accounted a fool, that should deny that to be gold, which hath been tryed and examined by a great number of knowing Goldsmiths, and hath past the test of all their Touch-stones? What excess of folly would it be for him to deny it to be true gold, if it had been tryed by all that had skill in that metal in all Nations in the World?

‖ *Cicero.*

Secondly, 2. *It hath been a constant and uninterrupted consent.* It hath been as Ancient as the first Age of the World; no Man is able to mention any time, from the beginning of the World, wherein this Notion hath not been universally owned; 'tis as old as Mankind, and hath run along with the course of the Sun, nor can the date be fixed lower than that.

1. First, *In all the changes of the World, this hath been maintained.* In the overturnings of the Government of States, the alteration of Modes of Worship, this hath stood unshaken. The reasons upon which it was founded, were in all Revolutions of time accounted satisfactory and convincing; nor could absolute Atheism, in the changes of any Laws, ever gain the favour of any one Body of people to be established

by a Law. When the Honour of the Heathen Idols was laid in the duſt, this ſuffered no impair. The being of one God was more vigorouſly owned, when the unreaſonableneſs of multiplicity of Gods was manifeſt; and grew taller by the detection of counterfeits. When other parts of the Law of Nature have been violated by ſome Nations, this hath maintained its ſtanding. The long ſeries of Ages hath been ſo far from blotting it out, that it hath more ſtrongly confirmed it, and maketh further progreſs in the confirmation of it. Time which hath eaten out the ſtrength of other things, and blaſted meer inventions, hath not been able to conſume this. The diſcovery of all other Impoſtures, never made this by any Society of Men to be ſuſpected as one. It will not be eaſie to name any Impoſture that hath walked perpetually in the World without being diſcovered, and whipped out by ſome Nation or other. Falſities have never been ſo univerſally and conſtantly owned without publick controul and queſtion. And ſince the world hath detected many errors of the former Age, and Learning being increaſed, this hath been ſo far from being dimm'd, that it hath ſhone out clearer with the increaſe of Natural Knowledge, and received freſh and more vigorous confirmations.

2. *The fears and anxieties in the Conſciences of Men, have given Men ſufficient occaſion to root it out, had it been poſſible for them to do it.* If the Notion of the Exiſtence of God, had been poſſible to have been daſht out of the minds of Men, they would have done it rather than have ſuffered ſo many troubles in their Souls upon the Commiſſion of ſin; ſince there did want wickedneſs and wit in ſo many corrupt Ages, to have attempted it and proſpered in it, had it been poſſible. How comes it therefore to paſs, that ſuch a multitude of proffligate perſons, that have been in the World ſince the Fall of Man, ſhould not have rooted out this principle, and diſpoſſeſt the minds of Men of that which gave birth to their tormenting fears? How is it poſſible that all ſhould agree together in a thing which created fear, and an obligation againſt the Intereſt of the Fleſh, if it had been free for Men to diſcharge themſelves of it? No Man, as far as corrupt Nature bears ſway in him, is willing to live controul'd.

The *firſt Man* would rather be *a God* himſelf than under one: * Why ſhould Men continue this Notion in them, which ſhackled them in their vile inclinations, if it had been in their power utterly to deface it? If it were an Impoſture, how comes it to paſs that all the wicked Ages of the world could never diſcover that to be a Cheat, which kept them in continual alarms? Men wanted not will to ſhake off ſuch apprehenſions; As *Adam*, ſo all his Poſterity are deſirous to hide themſelves from God upon the Commiſſion of ſin, * and by the ſame reaſon they would hide God from their Souls. What is the reaſon they could never attain their will, and their wiſh, by all their endeavours? Could they poſſibly have ſatisfied themſelves that there were no God, they had diſcarded their fears, the diſturbers of the repoſe of their Lives, and been unbridled in their pleaſures. The wickedneſs of the World would never have preſerved that which was a perpetual moleſtation to it, had it been poſſible to be raſed out.

* Gen. 3. 5.

* Gen. 3. 9.

But ſince Men, under the turmoils and laſhes of their own Conſciences, could never bring their hearts to a ſettled diſſent from this Truth; it evidenceth, that as it took its birth at the beginning of the World, it cannot expire, no not in the aſhes of it, nor in any thing, but the reduction of the Soul to that Nothing from whence it ſprung. This conception is ſo perpetual, that the nature of the Soul muſt be diſſolved before it be rooted out, nor can it be extinct whilſt the Soul endures.

3. Let it be conſidered alſo by us that own the Scripture, *that the Devil deems it impoſſible to root out this ſentiment.* It ſeems to be ſo perpetually fixed, that the Devil did not think fit to tempt Man to the denial of the Exiſtence of a Deity, but perſwaded him to believe, he might aſcend to that dignity, and become a God himſelf, *Gen.* 3 1. *Hath God ſaid?* and he there owns him, *ver.* 5. *Ye ſhall become as Gods.* He owns God in the queſtion he asks the Woman, and perſwades our firſt Parents to be Gods themſelves. And in all Stories both Ancient and Modern, the Devil was never able to tincture Mens minds with a profeſſed denial of the Deity, which would have opened a door to a world of more wickedneſs than hath been acted, and took away the bar, to the breaking out of that evil, which is naturally in the hearts of men, to the greater prejudice of humane Societies. He wanted not malice to raſe out all the Notions of God, but power: He knew it was impoſſible to effect it, and therefore in vain to attempt it. He ſet up himſelf in ſeveral places of the ignorant world as a God, but never was able to overthrow the opinion of the being of a God: The impreſſions of a Deity were ſo ſtrong, as not to be ſtruck out by the malice and power of Hell.

What a folly is it then in any to contradict or doubt of this Truth, which all the periods of Time have not been able to wear out; which all the Wars and Quarrels of Men with their own Conſciences, have not been able to deſtroy; which Ignorance and Debauchery, its two greateſt Enemies, cannot weaken; which all the falſhoods and errors, which have reigned in one or other part of the World, have not been able to baniſh; which lives in the conſents of Men in ſpight of all their wiſhes to the contrary, and hath grown ſtronger and ſhone clearer by the improvements of Natural Reaſon?

3. *Natural and innate*; which pleads ſtrongly for the perpetuity of it. 'Tis natural, tho' ſome think it not a Principle writ in the heart of Man; * 'tis ſo natural that every Man is born with a reſtleſs inſtinct to be of ſome kind of Religion or other, which implies ſome object of Religion. The impreſſion of a Deity is as common as Reaſon, and of the ſame age with Reaſon. * 'Tis a Relique of Knowledge after the Fall of *Adam*, like fire under aſhes, which ſparkles as ſoon as ever the heap of aſhes is opened. A Notion ſealed up in the Soul of every Man; * elſe how could thoſe People, who were unknown to one another, ſeparate by Seas and Mounts, differing in various Cuſtoms and manner of Living, had no mutual intelligence one with another, light upon this as a common Sentiment, if they had not been guided by one uniform Reaſon in all their minds, by one Nature common to them all; tho' their Climates be different, their tempers and conſtitutions various, their imaginations in ſome things as diſtant from one another as Heaven is from Earth, the Ceremonies of their Religion not all of the ſame kind; Yet where ever you find Humane Nature, you find this ſettled perſwaſion. So that the Notion of a God ſeems to be twiſted with the Nature of Man, and is the firſt natural branch of Common Reaſon, or upon either the firſt inſpection of a Man into himſelf, and his own ſtate and conſtitution, or upon the firſt ſight of any external viſible Object. Nature within Man, and Nature without Man, agree upon the firſt meeting together to form this Sentiment, that there is a God. 'Tis as natural as any thing we call a common Principle. One thing which is called a Common Principle and Natural, is, that the whole is greater than the parts. If this be not born with us, yet the Exerciſe of Reaſon, eſſential to Man, ſettles it as a certain Maxim; upon the dividing any thing into ſeveral parts, he finds every part leſs than when they were alto-

* Pink, Eph. 6. pag. 10, 11.

* King on Jonah, p. 16

* Amyrant des Religious, p. 6, 7, 8, 9.

altogether. By the same exercise of Reason, we cannot cast our eyes upon any thing in the World, or exercise our Understandings upon our selves, but we must presently imagine, there was some cause of those things, some cause of my self and my own being; so that this Truth is as natural to Man, as any thing he can call most Natural, or a Common Principle.

It must be confess'd by all, that there is a Law of Nature writ upon the hearts of Men, which will direct them to commendable actions, if they will attend to the writing in their own Consciences. This Law cannot be considered without the notice of a Lawgiver. For 'tis but a natural and obvious conclusion, that some superior hand engrafted those Principles in Man, since he finds something in him twitching him upon the pursuit of uncomely actions, tho' his heart be mightily inclined to them; Man knows he never planted this Principle of Reluctancy in his own Soul; he can never be the cause of that, which he cannot be friends with. If he were the cause of it, why doth he not rid himself of it? No Man would endure a thing that doth frequently molest and disquiet him, if he could cashier it. 'Tis therefore sown in Man by some hand more powerful than Man, which riseth so high, and is rooted so strong, that all the force that Man can use cannot pull it up. If therefore this Principle be natural in Man, and the Law of Nature be natural, the Notion of a Law-giver must be as natural as the Notion of a Printer, or that there is a Printer is obvious upon the sight of a stampt impress: After this the multitude of effects in the World step in to strengthen this beam of natural light, and the direct conclusion from thence is, that that power, which made those outward objects, implanted this inward Principle: This is sown in us, born with us, and sprouts up with our growth; or as one saith, *'tis like Letters carved upon the bark of a young plant, which grows up together with us, and the longer it grows the Letters are more legible.

*Charleton.

This is the ground of this universal consent, and why it may well be termed natural.

This will more evidently appear to be natural, because,

1. *This consent could not be by meer Tradition.*

2. *Nor by any mutual intelligence of Governors to keep People in awe*, which are two things the Atheist pleads: The first hath no strong foundation, and that other is as absurd and foolish, as it is wicked and abominable.

3. *Nor was it Fear first introduced it.*

1. *It could not be by meer Tradition.* Many things indeed are entertained by Posterity, which their Ancestors delivered to them, and that out of a common reverence to their Forefathers, and an opinion, that they had a better prospect of things than the increase of the corruption of succeeding Ages would permit them to have.

But if this be a Tradition handled from our Ancestors, they also must receive it from theirs; we must then ascend to the first Man, we cannot else escape a confounding our selves with running into infinite; was it then the only Tradition he left to them, is it not probable he acquainted them with other things in conjunction with this, the Nature of God, the way to worship him, the manner of the Worlds existence, his own state? We may reasonably suppose him to have a good stock of knowledge, what is become of it? It cannot be supposed, that the first Man should acquaint his Posterity with an object of worship, and leave them ignorant of a mode of worship, and of the end of worship; we find in Scripture his immediate Posterity did the first in Sacrifices, and without doubt they were not ignorant of the other: How come Men to be so uncertain in all other things, and so confident of this, if it were only a Tradition? How did debates and irreconcilable questions, start up concerning other things, and this remain untouch'd, but by a small number? Whatsoever Tradition the first Man left besides this is lost, and no way recoverable, but by the Revelation God hath made in his Word.

How comes it to pass, this of a God is longer liv'd than all the rest, which we may suppose Man left to his immediate descendents? How come Men to retain the one, and forget the other? What was the reason this surviv'd the ruin of the rest, and surmounted the uncertainties into which the other sunk? Was it likely it should be handed down alone without other attendants on it at first? Why did it not expire among the *Americans*, who have lost the account of their own descent, and the Stock from whence they sprung, and cannot reckon above eight hundred or a thousand years at most? Why was not the manner of the worship of a God transmitted as well as that of his Existence? How came Men to dissent in their Opinions concerning his Nature, whether he was corporeal or incorporeal, finite or infinite, omnipresent or limited? Why were not Men as negligent to transmit this of his Existence as that of his Nature? No reason can be rendred for the security of this above the other, but that there is so clear a tincture of a Deity upon the minds of Men, such traces and shadows of him in the creatures, such indelible instincts within, and invincible arguments without, to keep up this universal consent. The Characters are so deep, that they cannot possibly be rased out, which would have been one time or other, in one Nation or other, had it depended only upon Tradition, since one Age shakes off frequently the Sentiments of the former.

I cannot think of above one which may be called a Tradition, which indeed was kept up among all Nations, *viz.* Sacrifices, which could not be natural but instituted: What ground could they have in Nature, to imagine that the blood of Beasts could expiate and wash off the guilt and stains of a rational Creature? Yet they had in all places (but among the *Jews*, and some of them only) lost the knowledge of the reason and end of the Institution, which the Scripture acquaints us was to typifie and signifie the Redemption by the Promised Seed. This Tradition hath been superannuated and laid aside in most parts of the World, while this Notion of the Existence of a God hath stood firm.

But suppose it were a Tradition, was it likely to be a meer intention and figment of the first Man? Had there been no reason for it, his Posterity would soon have found out the weakness of its Foundation: What advantage had it been to him to transmit so great a falshood to kindle the fears, or raise the hopes of his Posterity, if there were no God? It cannot be supposed he should be so void of that natural affection, Men in all Ages bear to their Descendents, as so grosly to deceive them, and be so contrary to the simplicity and plainness which appears in all things nearest their Original.

2. Neither was it *by any mutual Intelligence of Governors among themselves, to keep people in subjection to them.* If it were a Political design at first, it seems it met with the general nature of Mankind very ready to give it entertainment.

I. *It is unaccountable how this should come to pass.* It must be either by a joint Assembly of them, or a mutual Correspondence. If by any Assembly, who were the Persons? Let the Name of any one be mentioned; when was the time? Where was the place of this appearance? By what Authority did they meet together? Who made the first motion, and first started this great Principle of Policy? By what means could they assemble from such distant Parts of the World? Humane Histories are utterly silent in it, and the Scripture, the ancientest History, gives an account of

of the attempt of *Babel*, but not a word of any deſign of this nature.

What mutual Correſpondence could ſuch have, whoſe Intereſts are for the moſt part different, and their deſigns contrary to one another? How could they, who were divided by ſuch vaſt Seas, have this mutual Converſe? How could thoſe, who were different in their Cuſtoms and Manners, agree ſo unanimouſly together in one thing to gull the People? If there had been ſuch a Correſpondence between the Governors of all Nations, what is the reaſon ſome Nations ſhould be unknown to the World till of late times? How could the buſineſs be ſo ſecretly managed, as not to take Vent, and iſſue in a diſcovery to the World? Can reaſon ſuppoſe ſo many in a joynt Conſpiracy, and no Mans Conſcience in this life, under ſharp afflictions, or on his death-bed, when Conſcience is moſt awakened, conſtrain him to reveal openly the Cheat that beguil'd the World? How came they to be ſo unanimous in this Notion, and to differ in their Rites almoſt in every Country? Why could they not agree in one Mode of Worſhip throughout all the World, as well as in this univerſal Notion? If there were not a mutual Intelligence, it cannot be conceived how in every Nation ſuch a State-Engineer ſhould riſe up with the ſame Trick to keep People in awe. What is the reaſon we cannot find any Law in any one Nation, to conſtrain Men to the belief of the Exiſtence of a God, ſince politick Stratagems have been often fortified by Laws? Beſides, ſuch Men make uſe of Principles received to effect their Contrivances, and are not ſo impolitick as to build deſigns upon Principles that have no Foundation in nature: Some Heathen Law-givers have pretended a converſe with their Gods, to make their Laws be received by the People with a greater veneration, and fix with ſtronger obligation the obſervance and perpetuity of them; but this was not the introducing of a new Principle, but the ſuppoſition of an old receiv'd Notion, that there was a God, and an application of that Principle to their preſent deſign. The pretence had been vain, had not the notion of a God been ingrafted. Politicians are ſo little poſſeſſed with a Reverence of God, that the firſt mighty one in the Scripture, (which may reaſonably gain with the Atheiſt the credit of the Ancienteſt Hiſtory in the Word) is repreſented without any fear of God. * An Invader and Oppreſſor of his Neighbours, and reputed the Introducer of a new Worſhip, and being the firſt that built Cities after the Flood, (as *Cain* was the firſt Builder of them before the Flood) built alſo Idolatry with them. And erected a new Worſhip, and was ſo far from ſtrengthning that Notion the People had of God, that he endeavoured to corrupt it; The firſt Idolatry in common Hiſtories being noted to proceed from that part of the World; the Ancienteſt Idol being at *Babylon*, and ſuppoſed to be firſt invented by this Perſon: Whence by the way perhaps *Rome* is in the *Revelations* called *Babylon*, with reſpect to that ſimilitude of their Saint-Worſhip, to the Idolatry firſt ſet up in that place *. 'Tis evident *Politicians* have often changed the Worſhip of a Nation, but it is not upon record, that the firſt thoughts of an object of Worſhip ever entred into the minds of People by any Trick of theirs.

*Gen. 10. 9. Nimrod *was a mighty hunter before the Lord.*

* *Or if we underſtand it, as ſome think, that he defended his invaſions under a pretext of the preſerving Religion, it aſſures us that there was a notion of an object of Religion before, ſince no Religion can be without an object of Worſhip.*

But to return to the preſent Argument, the Being of a God is owned by ſome Nations, that have ſcarce any form of Policy among them. 'Tis as wonderful how any Wit ſhould hit upon ſuch an Invention, as it is abſurd to aſcribe it to any humane device, if there were not prevailing Arguments to conſtrain the conſent. Beſides, how is it poſſible they ſhould deceive themſelves? What is the reaſon the greateſt Politicians have their fears of a Deity upon their unjuſt Practices, as well as other Men, they intended to befool? How many of them have had forlorn Conſciences upon a Death-Bed, upon the conſideration of a God to anſwer an Account to in another World? Is it credible they ſhould be frighted by that wherewith they knew they beguiled others? No Man ſatisfying his Pleaſures, would impoſe ſuch a deceit upon himſelf, or render and make himſelf more miſerable than the Creatures he hath dominion over.

2. *It is unaccountable how it ſhould indure ſo long a time.* That this Policy ſhould be ſo fortunate as to gain ground in the Conſciences of Men, and exerciſe an Empire over them, and meet with ſuch an univerſal ſucceſs. If the Notion of a God were a State-Engine, and introduced by ſome Politick Grandees for the eaſe of Government, and preſerving People with more felicity in order, how comes it to paſs the firſt broachers of it were never upon record? There is ſcarce a falſe opinion vented in the World, but may, as a ſtream, be traced to the firſt head and fountain. The Inventors of particular forms of Worſhip are known, and the reaſons why they preſcribed them known; but what Grandee was the Author of this? Who can pitch a time and perſon that ſprung up this Notion? If any be ſo inſolent as to impoſe a Cheat, he can hardly be ſuppoſed to be ſo ſucceſsful as to deceive the whole World for many Ages: Impoſtures paſs not free through the whole World without Examination and Diſcovery; Falſities have not been univerſally and conſtantly owned without controul and queſtion. If a Cheat impoſeth upon ſome Towns and Countries, he will be found out by the more piercing enquiries of other places; and it is not eaſie to name any Impoſture that hath walked ſo long in its diſguiſe in the World, without being unmasked and whipped out by ſome Nation or other: If this had been a meer Trick, there would have been as much craft in ſome to diſcern it, as there was in others to contrive it. No Man can be imagined ſo wiſe in a Kingdom, but others may be found as wiſe as himſelf: And it is not conceivable, that ſo many clear-ſighted Men in all Ages, ſhould be ignorant of it, and not endeavour to free the World from ſo great a falſity. * It cannot be found that a Trick of State ſhould always beguile Men of the moſt piercing inſights, as well as the moſt credulous: That a few crafty Men ſhould befool all the wiſe Men in the World; and the World lie in a belief of it, and never like to be freed from it. What is the reaſon the ſucceeding Politicians never knew this Stratagem, ſince their Maxims are uſually handed to their Succeſſors?

* Fotherby *A Theomaſtix*, p. 64.

And there is not a Richlieu, *but leaves his Axioms to a* Mazerine.

This perſwaſion of the Exiſtence of God, owes not it ſelf to any Impoſture or ſubtilty of Men: If it had not been agreeable to common Nature and Reaſon, it could not ſo long have born ſway. The impoſed yoke would have been caſt off by Multitudes; Men would not have charged themſelves with that which was attended with conſequences diſpleaſing to the Fleſh, and hindred them from a full ſwing of their rebellious Paſſions; ſuch a ſhackle would have mouldred of it ſelf, or been broke by the extravagances Humane Nature is inclin'd unto: The wickedneſs of Men, without queſtion, hath prompted them to endeavour to unmask it, if it were a Coſenage, but could never yet be ſo ſucceſsful as to free the World from a perſwaſion, or their own Conſciences from the tincture of the Exiſtence of a Deity. It muſt be therefore of an ancienter Date than the Craft of States-men, and deſcend into the World with the firſt appearance of Humane Nature. Time, which hath rectified many Errors, improves this Notion, makes it ſhock down its roots deeper, and ſpread its branches larger.

It muſt be a natural Truth that ſhines clear by the detection of thoſe Errors that have befooled the World, and the wit of Man is never able to name any Humane Author that firſt inſinuated it into the beliefs of Men.

3. *Nor was it Fear firſt introduced it.* Fear is the Conſequent

Consequent of wickedness. As Man was not created with any inherent sin, so he was not created with any terrifying fears, the one had been against the Holiness of the Creator, the other against his goodness: Fear did not make this Opinion, but the Opinion of the Being of a Deity was the cause of this Fear, after his sense of angring the Deity by his wickedness. The Object of Fear is before the Act of Fear; there could not be an Act of Fear exercised about the Deity, till it was believed to be existent, and not only so, but Offended: For God, as existent only, is not the Object of Fear or Love; 'tis not the existence of a thing that excites any of those Affections, but the Relation a thing bears to us in particular. God is Good, and so the object of Love, as well as Just, and thereby the object of Fear. He was as much called *Love*, * and *Mens*, or *Mind*, in regard of his Goodness and Understanding, by the Heathens, as much as by any other Name. Neither of those names were proper to insinuate Fear; neither was Fear the first Principle that made the Heathens worship a God; they offered Sacrifices out of Gratitude to some, as well as to others out of Fear: the fear of Evils in the World, and the hopes of Relief and Assistance from their Gods, and not a terrifying Fear of God, was the principal Spring of their worship: When Calamities from the hands of Men, or Judgments by the influences of Heaven, were upon them, they implored that which they thought a Deity; It was not their Fear of him, but a hope in his Goodness, and Perswasion of Remedy from him, for the averting those Evils that rendred them Adorers of a God: If they had not had pre-existent Notions of his Being and Goodness, they would never have made addresses to him, or so frequently sought to that they only apprehended as a terrifying Object: * When you hear Men calling upon God in a time of affrighting Thunder, you cannot imagine that the fear of Thunder did first introduce the Notion of a God, but implies, that it was before apprehended by them, or stampt upon them, though their fear doth at present actuate that Belief, and engage them in a present Exercise of Piety: and whereas the Scripture saith, *The fear of God is the beginning of Wisdom*, or of all Religion; *'tis not understood of a distracted and terrifying Fear, but a reverential Fear of him, because of his Holiness, or a worship of him, a submission to him, and sincere seeking of him.

* Ἔρως.

* *Gassend. Phys. sect. 1. l. 4. c. 2. p. 291, 292.*

* *Pro. 9. 10. Ps. 111. 10.*

Well then, is it not a folly for an Atheist to deny that which is the reason and common Sentiment of the whole World, to strip himself of Humanity, run counter to his own Conscience, prefer a private before an universal Judgment, give the Lye to his own Nature and Reason, assert things impossible to be proved, nay impossible to be acted, Forge irrationalities for the support of his fancy against the common perswasion of the World, and against himself, and so much of God as is manifest in him and every Man *?

* *Rom. 1. 19*

II. *It is a folly to deny that which all Creatures, or all things in the World manifest.* Let us view this in Scripture since we acknowledge it, and after consider the arguments from Natural Reason.

Jupiter est quodcunque vides, &c.

The Apostle resolves it, Rom. 1. 19, 20. *The invisible things of him from the Creation of the World are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his Eternal Power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse*: They know, or might know, by the things that were made, the Eternity and Power of God; their sense might take Circuit about every object, and their minds collect the Being, and something of the Perfections of the Deity: The first discourse of the mind upon the sight of a delicate piece of Workmanship, is the conclusion of the being of an Artificer, and the admiration of his skill and industry. The Apostle doth not say, the invisible things of God are *believed*, or they have an opinion of them, but they are *seen* and *clearly seen*: They are like Chrystal-glasses which give a clear representation of the Existence of a Deity, like that Mirrour reported to be in a Temple in *Arcadia*, which represented to the Spectator, not his own face, but the Image of that Deity which he worshipped.

The whole World is like a Looking-glass, which whole and entire represents the Image of God, and every broken piece of it, every little shred of a Creature doth the like, not only the great ones, *Elephants* and the *Leviathan*, but *Ants*, *Flies*, *Worms*, whose bodies rather than names we know: The greater *Cattle* and the *Creeping things*, *Gen.* 1. 24. Not naming there any intermediate Creature, to direct us to view him in the smaller Letters, as well as the greater Characters of the World. His name is *Glorious*, and his Attributes are excellent *in all the Earth*, * in every Creature, as the glory of the Sun is in every beam and smaller flash; he is seen in every Insect, in every Spire of grass: The voice of the Creator is in the most contemptible Creature: * The Apostle adds, that they are so clearly seen, that Men are inexcusable if they have not some knowledge of God by them; if they might not certainly know them, they might have some excuse: So that his *Existence* is not only probably, but demonstratively proved, from the things of the World.

* Psal. 8. 1.

* Banes in Aquin. *Par. 2. Qu. 2 Artic. 2. p. 78. Col. 2.*

Especially the Heavens declare him, which God *stretches out like a Curtain*, * or as some render the word, a *Skin*; whereby is signified, that Heaven is an open Book, which was anciently made of the skins of Beasts, that by the knowledge of them we may be taught the knowledge of God. Where Scripture was not revealed, the World served for a witness of a God; whatever arguments the Scripture uses to prove it, are drawn from Nature, (though indeed it doth not so much prove as suppose the Existence of a God) but what Arguments it uses are from the Creatures, and particularly the Heavens, which are the publick Preachers of this Doctrine: The breath of God sounds to all the World through those Organ-pipes. His Being is visible in their Existence, his Wisdom in their frame, his Power in their motion, his Goodness in their usefulness: * They have a voice, and their voice is as intelligible as any common Language. And those are so plain Heralds of a Deity, that the Heathen mistook them for Deities, and gave them a particular adoration which was due to that God they declared. The first Idolatry seems to be of those Heavenly bodies, which began probably in the time of *Nimrod*. In *Jobs* time it is certain they admired the Glory of the *Sun*, and the brightness of the *Moon*, not without *kissing their hands*, a sign of Adoration *. 'Tis evident a Man may as well doubt whether there be a Sun, when he sees his beams guilding the Earth, as doubt whether there be a God when he sees his Works spread in the World.

* Ps. 104. 2.

* *For their voice goeth to the end of the Earth*, Psal. 19. 1, 2.

* Job 31. 26, 27.

The things in the World declare the Existence of a God.

1. *In their Production*, 2. *Harmony*, 3. *Preservation*, 4. *Answering their several ends.*

First, 1. *In their Production.* The declaration of the Existence of God was the chief end for which they were Created, that the Notion of a Supream and Independent Eternal Being, might easier incur into the active Understanding of Man from the objects of sense dispersed in every corner of the World, that he might pay a homage and devotion to the Lord of all, Isa. 40. 12, 13, 18, 19, *&c. Have you not understood from the foundation of the Earth, 'tis he that sits upon the Circle of the Heaven?* &c. How could this great heap be brought into being, unless a God had framed it? Every Plant, every Atome, as well as every Star, at the first meeting whispers this in our Ears, *I have a Creator, I am witness to a Deity*: Who ever saw Statues or Pictures, but presently thinks of a Statuary and Limner? Who beholds Garments, Ships or Houses,

but underſtands there was a Weaver, a Carpenter, an Architect? * Who can caſt his eyes about the World, but muſt think of that power that formed it, and that the goodneſs which appears in the formation of it hath a perfect Reſidence in ſome Being? [thoſe things that are good muſt flow from ſomething perfectly good: that which is chief in any kind is the cauſe of all of that kind. Fire which is moſt hot, is the cauſe of all things which are hot. There is ſome Being therefore which is the cauſe of all that Perfection, which is in the Creature; and this is God. *Aquin.* 1. *qu.* 2. *Artic.* 3.] All things that are, demonſtrate ſomething from whence they are. All things have a contracted perfection, and what they have is communicated to them. Perfections are parcell'd out among ſeveral Creatures. Any thing that is imperfect cannot exiſt of it ſelf. We are led therefore by them to conſider a Fountain which bubbles up in all perfection; a Hand which diſtributes thoſe ſeveral degrees of Being and Perfection to what we ſee; we ſee that which is imperfect, our minds conclude ſomething perfect to exiſt before it; our eye ſees the ſtreams, but our underſtanding riſeth to the head: as the eye ſees the ſhadow, but the underſtanding informs us whether it be the ſhadow of a Man, or of a Beaſt.

* Philo. *ex* Petav. Theol. *Dog. Tom.* 1. *l.* 1. *cap.* 1. *p.* 4. *ſomewhat changed.*

God hath given us Senſe to behold the objects in the World, and Underſtanding to reaſon his *Exiſtence* from them; the Underſtanding cannot conceive a thing to have made it ſelf; that is againſt all reaſon. * As they are made they ſpeak out a Maker; and cannot be a trick of chance, ſince they are made with ſuch an immenſe Wiſdom, that is too big for the graſp of all Humane Underſtanding. Thoſe that doubt whether the Exiſtence of God be an implanted Principle, yet agree that the effects in the World lead to a ſupream and univerſal cauſe: And that if we have not the knowledge of it rooted in our Natures, yet we have it by diſcourſe, ſince by all Maſters of reaſon, a *Proceſſus in Infinitum* muſt be accounted impoſſible in ſubordinate cauſes.

*Rom. 1. 20.

This will appear in ſeveral things.

First, 1. *The World and every Creature had a beginning.* The Scripture Aſcertains this to us *; *David*, who was not the firſt Man, gives the praiſe to God of his being *curiouſly wrought*, &c. *Pſal.* 139. 14, 15. God gave Being to Men, and Plants, and Beaſts, before they gave being to one another. He gives Being to them now as the Fountain of all Being, though the ſeveral Modes of Being are from the ſeveral natures of ſecond Cauſes.

*Gen. 1.

'Tis true indeed, we are aſcertained that they were made by the true God, that they were made by his Word *, that they were made of Nothing, and not only this lower World wherein we live, but according to the *Jewiſh* diviſion, the World of *Men*, the World of *Stars*, and the World of *Spirits*, and *Souls*: We do not waver in it, or doubt of it, as the Heathen did in their diſputes; we know they are the workmanſhip of the true God, of that God we adore, not of falſe Gods: *By his Word*, without any Inſtrument or Engine, as in earthly Structures; *of things which do not appear*, without any pre-exiſtent Matter, as all Artificial works of Men are framed.

* *By Faith we underſtand that the Worlds were framed by the Word of God*, &c.
* Heb. 11. 3.

Yet the proof of the beginning of the World is affirmed with good reaſon; and if it had a beginning, it had alſo ſome higher cauſe than it ſelf: Every effect hath a cauſe.

* *The World was not Eternal or from Eternity.* The Matter of the World cannot be Eternal: Matter cannot ſubſiſt without form, nor put on any form without the action of ſome cauſe, this cauſe muſt be in Being before it acted; that which is not cannot act. The cauſe of the World muſt neceſſarily exiſt before any Matter was endued with any form; that therefore cannot be Eternal before which another did ſubſiſt; if it were from Eternity it would not be ſubject to mutation: If the whole was from Eternity, why not alſo the parts, what makes the changes ſo viſible then, if Eternity would exempt it from mutability?

* Daile 20. *Serm.* Pſal. 102. 26. *p.* 13, 14.

1. *Time cannot be infinite, and therefore the World not Eternal*; * All motion hath its beginning, if it were otherwiſe, we muſt ſay the number of heavenly revolutions of Days and Nights, which are paſt to this inſtant, is actually infinite, which cannot be in nature: If it were ſo, it muſt needs be granted, that a part is equal to the whole; becauſe infinite being equal to infinite, the number of days paſt in all Ages to the beginning of one year being Infinite (as they would be, ſuppoſing the World had no beginning) would by conſequence be equal to the number of days, which ſhall paſs to the end of the next; whereas that number of days paſt is indeed but a part, and ſo a part would be equal to the whole.

* Daile ut Supra.

2. *Generations of Men, Animals and Plants, could not be from Eternity.* * If any Man ſay the World was from Eternity, then there muſt be propagations of living Creatures in the ſame manner as are at this day: For without this the World could not conſiſt; what we ſee now done muſt have been perpetually done, if it be done by a neceſſity of nature: But we ſee nothing now that doth ariſe but by a mutual propagation from another: If the World were Eternal therefore, it muſt be ſo in all Eternity: Take any particular ſpecies, ſuppoſe a Man, if Men were from Eternity, then there were perpetual Generations, ſome were born into the World and ſome died: Now the natural condition of Generation is, that a Man doth not generate a Man, nor a Sheep a Lamb, as ſoon as ever it ſelf is brought into the World, but gets ſtrength and vigour by degrees, and muſt arrive to a certain ſtated age before they can produce the like; for whilſt any thing is little and below the due age, it cannot increaſe its kind; Men therefore, and other Creatures, did propagate their kind by the ſame Law, not as ſoon as ever they were born, but in the interval of ſome time, and Children grew up by degrees in the Mothers Womb till they were fit to be brought forth: If this be ſo, then there could not be an Eternal ſucceſſion of propagating: For there is no Eternal continuation of time: Time is always to be conceived as having one part before another: But that perpetuity of Nativities is always after ſome time, wherein it could not be for the weakneſs of age: If no Man then can conceive a propagation from Eternity, there muſt be then a beginning of Generation in time, and conſequently the Creatures were made in time.

* Petav. Theo. *Dogmat. Tom.* 1. *lib.* 1. *cap.* 2. *pag.* 15.

* [If the World were Eternal, it muſt have been in the ſame poſture as it is now, in a ſtate of Generation and Corruption; and ſo Corruption muſt have been as Eternal as Generation, and then things that do generate and corrupt muſt have Eternally been, and Eternally not have been: There muſt be ſome firſt way to ſet Generation on work.] We muſt loſe our ſelves in our conceptions; we cannot conceive a Father before a Child, as well as we cannot conceive a Child before a Father: And reaſon is quite bewildred, and cannot return into a right way of Conception till it conceive one firſt of every kind: One firſt Man, one firſt Animal, one firſt Plant, from whence others do proceed. The Argument is unanſwerable, and the wiſeſt Atheiſt (if any Atheiſt can be called wiſe) cannot unloſe the knot. We muſt come to ſomething that is firſt in every kind, and this firſt muſt have a Cauſe, not of the ſame kind, but Infinite and Independent; otherwiſe Men run into unconceivable Labyrinths and Contradictions.

* *To expreſs it in the words of one of our own.* Wolſeley *of Atheiſm*, pag. 47.

Man, the nobleſt Creature upon Earth, hath a beginning. No Man in the World but was ſome years ago no Man. If every Man we ſee had a beginning, then the firſt Man had alſo a beginning, then the World had a beginning: For the Earth which was made for the

the use of Man, had wanted that end for which it was made. We must pitch upon some one Man that was unborn, that first Man must either be Eternal, that cannot be, for he that hath no beginning hath no end; or must spring out of the Earth, as Plants and Trees do, that cannot be; why should not the Earth produce Men to this day, as it doth Plants and Trees? He was therefore made; and whatsoever is made hath some cause that made it, which is God.

Petav. *ut supr.* p. 10.

* Damason. * If the World were uncreated it were then immutable, but every Creature upon the Earth is in a continual flux, always changing: If things be mutable, they were created; if created, they were made by some Author; whatsoever hath a beginning must have a Maker; if the World hath a beginning, there was then a time when it was not; it must have some cause to produce it. That which makes is before that which is made, and this is God.

Secondly, II. Which will appear further in this proposition, *No Creature can make it self:* The World could not make it self.

If every Man had a beginning, every Man then was once nothing; he could not then make himself, because nothing cannot be the cause of something, *Psal.* 100. 3. *The Lord he is God, he hath made us, and not we our selves*, [whatsoever begun in time, was not; and when it was nothing, it had nothing, and could do nothing: And therefore could never give to it self nor to any other to be, or to be able to do: For then it gave what it had not, and did what it could not.

* Petav. *Theol. Dog. Tom.* 1. *lib.* 1. *cap.* 2. *p.* 14. * Since Reason must acknowledge a *first* of every kind, a first Man, *&c.* it must acknowledge him created and made, not by himself: Why have not other Men since rise up by themselves? not by Chance; Why hath not Chance produced the like in that long time the World hath stood? If we never knew any thing give Being to it self, how can we imagine any thing ever could? If the chiefest part of this lower World cannot, nor any part of it hath been known to give Being to it self, then the whole cannot be supposed to give any Being to it self: Man did not form himself: His body is not from himself, it would then have the power of moving it self, but that is not able to live or act without the presence of the Soul: Whilst the Soul is present the Body moves, when that is absent the Body lies as a senceless Log, not having the least action or motion. His Soul could not form it self; can that which cannot form the least mote, the least grain of dust, form it self, a nobler substance than any upon the earth?

This will be evident to every Man's reason, if we consider,

1. *Nothing can act before it be.* The first Man was not, and therefore could not make himself to be: For any thing to produce it self is to act; if it acted before it was, it was then something and nothing at the same time; it had then a Being before it had a Being; it acted when it brought it self into Being. How could it act without a Being, without it was? So that if it were the cause of it self, it must be before it self as well as after it self; it was before it was; it was as a cause before it was as an effect. Action always supposes a principle from whence it flows; as nothing hath no Existence, so it hath no operation; there must be therefore something of real Existence to give a Being to those things that are, and every second cause must be an effect of some other before it be a cause: To be and not be at the same time, is a manifest contradiction, which would be, if any thing made it self: That which makes is always before that which is made: Who will say the House is before the Carpenter, or the Picture before the Limner? The World as a Creator, must be before it self as a Creature.

2. *That which doth not understand it self, and order it self, could not make it self.* If the first Man fully understood his own Nature, the excellency of his own Soul, the manner of its operations, why was not that understanding conveyed to his Posterity? Are not many of them found, who understand their own nature, almost as little as a Beast understands it self, or a Rose understands its own sweetness, or a Tulip its own Colours? The Scripture indeed gives us an account how this came about, *viz.* by the deplorable Rebellion of Man, whereby Death was brought upon them (a Spiritual Death, which includes ignorance as well as an inability to Spiritual action *). Thus he fell from his Honour, and became like the Beasts that perish, and not retaining God in his knowledge, retained not himself in his own knowledge.

* Gen. 2. 17. Psal. 49. 8.

But what reply can an Atheist make to it, who acknowledges no higher cause than Nature? If the Soul made it self, how comes it to be so muddy, so wanting in its knowledge of it self, and of other things? If the Soul made its own Understanding, whence did the defect arise? If some first principle was settled by the first Man in himself, where was the stop that he did not implant all in his own mind, and consequently in the minds of all his descendants? Our Souls know little of themselves, little of the World, are every day upon new enquiries, have little satisfaction in themselves, meet with many an invincible rub in their way; and when they seem to come to some resolution in some cases, stagger again, and like a stone roll'd up to the top of the Hill, quickly find themselves again at the foot. How come they to be so purblind in Truth? So short of that which they judge true goodness? How comes it to pass they cannot order their own rebellious affections, and suffer the reins they have to hold over their affections, to be taken out of their hands by the unruly fancy and flesh?

This no Man that denies the Being of a God, and the Revelation in Scripture, can give an account of. Blessed be God that we have the Scripture, which gives us an account of those things, that all the wit of Men could never inform us of; and that when they are discovered and known by Revelation, they appear not contrary to reason.

3. *If the first Man made himself, how came he to limit himself?* If he gave himself Being, why did he not give himself all the perfections and ornaments of Being? Nothing that made it self, could sit down contented with a little, but would have had as much power to give it self that which is less, as to give it self Being, when it was nothing. The excellencies it wanted had not been more difficult to gain than the other which it possessed, as belonging to its nature. If the first Man had been independent upon another, and had his perfection from himself, he might have acquired that perfection he wanted, as well as have bestowed upon himself that perfection he had; and then there would have been no bounds set to him. He would have been Omniscient and Immutable. He might have given himself what he would; if he had had the setting his own bounds, he would have set none at all; For what should restrain him? No Man now wants Ambition to be what he is not; and if the first Man had not been determined by another, but had given himself Being, he would not have remained in that determinate Being, no more than a Toad would remain a Toad, if it had power to make it self a Man, and that power it would have had, if it had given it self a Being. Whatsoever gives it self Being, would give it self all degrees of Being, and so would have no imperfection, because every imperfection is a want of some degree of Being. * He that could give himself Matter and Life, might give himself every thing. The giving of Life is an act of Omnipotence, and what is Omnipotent in one thing, may be in all. Besides, if the first Man had made himself, he would have conveyed himself to all his Posterity in the same manner, every

* *Therefore the Heathens called God τὸ ὄν, the only Being: Other things were not Beings, because they had not all degrees of Being.*

every Man would have had all the perfections of the firſt Man, as every Creature hath the perfections of the ſame kind, from whence it naturally iſſues, are all deſirous to communicate what they can to their poſterity. Communicative goodneſs belongs to every nature. Every Plant propagates its kind in the ſame perfection it hath it ſelf; and the nearer any thing comes to a rational nature, the greater affection it hath to that which deſcends from it; therefore this affection belongs to a rational nature much more. The firſt Man therefore, if he had had power to give himſelf Being, and conſequently all perfection, he would have had as much power to convey it down to his Poſterity; no impediment could have ſtopt his way; then all Souls proceeding from that firſt Man would have been equally intellectual. What ſhould hinder them from inheriting the ſame perfections? whence ſhould they have divers qualifications and differences in their Underſtandings? No Man then would have been ſubject to thoſe weakneſſes, doubtings, and unſatisfied deſires of knowledge and perfection. But being all Souls are not alike, 'tis certain they depend upon ſome other cauſe for the communication of that excellency they have. If the perfections of Man be ſo contracted and kept within certain bounds, 'tis certain that they were not in his own power, and ſo were not from himſelf. Whatſoever hath a determinate Being, muſt be limited by ſome Superior Cauſe. There is therefore ſome Superior Power, that hath thus determined the Creature by ſet bounds and diſtinct meaſures, and hath aſſigned to every one its proper nature, that it ſhould not be greater or leſs than it is; who hath ſaid of every one as
*Job 38.11 of the waves of the Sea, * *Hitherto ſhalt thou come, but no further*; and this is God. Man could not have reſerved any perfection from his Poſterity. For ſince he doth propagate not by choice but nature, he could no more have kept back any perfection from them, than he could, as he pleaſed, have given any perfection belonging to his nature to them.

4. *That which hath power to give it ſelf Being, cannot want power to preſerve that Being.* Preſervation is not more difficult than Creation. If the firſt Man made himſelf, why did he not preſerve himſelf? He is not now among the Living in the World. How came he to be ſo feeble as to ſink into the Grave? Why did he not inſpire himſelf with new heat and moiſture, and fill his languiſhing Limbs and declining Body with new ſtrength? Why did he not chaſe away Diſeaſes and Death at the firſt approach? What creature can find the duſt of the firſt Man? All his poſterity traverſe the Stage and retire again; in a ſhort ſpace their Age departs, and is *removed* from them *as a Shepherds Tent*,
*Iſa.38.12. and is *cut off with pining Sickneſs*. * The Life of Man is as a wind, and like a cloud that is conſumed and
*Job 7.6, 7, 8, 9. vaniſhes away. **The eye that ſees him ſhall ſee him no more, he returns not to his houſe, neither doth his place know him any more.* The Scripture gives us the reaſon of this, and lays it upon the ſcore of ſin againſt his Creator; which no Man without revelation can give any ſatisfactory account of.

Had the firſt Man made himſelf, he had been ſufficient for himſelf, able to ſupport himſelf without the aſſiſtance of any creature. He would not have needed Animals and Plants, and other helps, to nouriſh and refreſh him, nor Medicines to cure him. He could not be beholding to other things for his ſupport, which he is certain he never made for himſelf. His own nature would have continued that vigour, which once he had conferred upon himſelf. He would not have needed the heat and light of the Sun; he would have wanted nothing ſufficient for himſelf in himſelf; he needed not have ſought without himſelf for his own preſervation and comfort. What depends upon another is not of it ſelf, and what depends upon things inferior to it ſelf is leſs of it ſelf. Since nothing can ſubſiſt of it ſelf, ſince we ſee thoſe things upon which Man depends for his nouriſhment and ſubſiſtence, growing and decaying, ſtarting into the World and retiring from it, as well as Man himſelf, ſome preſerving Cauſe muſt be concluded upon which all depends.

5. *If the firſt Man did produce himſelf, why did he not produce himſelf before?*

It hath been already proved, that he had a beginning, and could not be from Eternity. Why then did he not make himſelf before? Not becauſe he would not. For having no Being, he could have no Will; he could neither be willing nor not willing. If he could not then, how could he afterwards? If it were in his own power he could have done it, he would have done it; if it were not in his own power, then it was in the power of ſome other cauſe, and that is God. How came he by that power to produce himſelf? If the power of producing himſelf were communicated by another, then Man could not be the cauſe of himſelf. That is the cauſe of it which communicated that power to it. But if the power of Being was in and from himſelf, and in no other, nor communicated to him, Man would always have been in act, and always have exiſted; no hindrance can be conceived. For that which had the power of Being in it ſelf was invincible, by any thing that ſhould ſtand in the way of its own Being.

We may conclude from hence, the excellency of the Scripture; that it is a Word not to be refuſed credit. It gives us the moſt rational account of things in the 1. and 2. of *Geneſis*, which nothing in the World elſe is able to do.

Thirdly, III. Propoſition, *No Creature could make the World.* No Creature can create another. If it creates of nothing, 'tis then Omnipotent, and ſo not a Creature. If it makes ſomething of Matter unfit for that which is produced out of it, then the inquiry will be, who was the cauſe of the Matter; and ſo we muſt arrive to ſome uncreated Being, the cauſe of all. Whatſoever gives Being to any other muſt be the higheſt Being, and muſt poſſeſs all the perfections of that which it gives Being to. What viſible Creature is there which poſſeſſes the perfections of the whole World? If therefore an inviſible Creature made the World, the ſame enquiries will return whence that Creature had its Being; for he could not make himſelf. If any Creature did create the World, he muſt do it by the ſtrength and vertue of another, which firſt gave him Being; and this is God. For whatſoever hath its exiſtence and vertue of acting from another, is not God. If it hath its vertue from another, 'tis then a ſecond cauſe, and ſo ſuppoſeth a firſt cauſe. It muſt have ſome cauſe of it ſelf, or be eternally Exiſtent. If eternally Exiſtent, 'tis not a ſecond cauſe, but God; if not eternally Exiſtent, we muſt come to ſomething at length which was the cauſe of it, or elſe be bewildred without being able to give an account of any thing. We muſt come at laſt to an Infinite Eternal Independent Being, that was the firſt cauſe of this Structure and Fabrick wherein we and all Creatures dwell.
The Scripture proclaims this aloud, * *I am the Lord,* *Iſa.45.6,7 Deut.4.35.
and there is none elſe: I form the light, and I create darkneſs. Man, the Nobleſt Creature, cannot of himſelf make a Man, the chiefeſt part of the World. If our Parents only, without a Superior power, made our Bodies or Souls, they would know the frame of them; as he that makes a Lock knows the Wards of it; he that makes any curious piece of Arras, knows how he ſets the various colours together, and how many threads went to each diviſion in the Web; he that makes a Watch, having the Idea of the whole work in his mind, knows the motions of it, and the reaſon of thoſe motions. But both Parents and Children are equally ignorant of the Nature of their Souls and Bodies, and of the reaſon of their motions.

God

God only that had the Supream Hand in informing us, in whoſe *Book all our Members are written, which in continuance were faſhioned*, knows what we all are ignorant of. If Man hath in an ordinary Courſe of Generation his being chiefly from an higher Cauſe than his Parents, the World then certainly had its Being from ſome infinitely wiſe intelligent Being, which is God. If it were, as ſome fancy, made by an Aſſembly of Atomes, there muſt be ſome infinite intelligent Cauſe that made them, ſome Cauſe that ſeparated them, ſome Cauſe that mingled them together for the piling up ſo comely a Structure as the World. 'Tis the moſt abſurd thing to think they ſhould meet together by hazard, and rank themſelves in that order we ſee without a higher and a wiſe Agent. So that no Creature could make the World. For ſuppoſing any Creature was formed before this viſible World, and might have a hand in diſpoſing Things, yet he muſt have a Cauſe of himſelf, and muſt Act by the Virtue and Strength of another; and this is God.

Pſ. 139. 16.

Fourthly, IV. Propoſition. From hence it follows, *That there is a firſt Cauſe of Things, which we call* [God.] There muſt be ſomething Supream in the order of Nature, ſomething which is Greater than all, which hath nothing beyond it or above it; otherwiſe we muſt run *in Infinitum*. We ſee not a River but we conclude a Fountain; a Watch but we conclude an Artificer. As all Number begins from Unity, ſo all the multitude of Things in the World begins from ſome Unity, Oneneſs, as the principle of it. 'Tis natural to ariſe from a view of thoſe Things, to the conception of a Nature more perfect than any. As from Heat mixed with Cold, and Light mixed with Darkneſs, Men conceive and ariſe in their Underſtanding to an intenſe Heat and a pure Light: And from a corporeal or bodily Subſtance joyned with an incorporeal, (as Man is an earthly Body, and a ſpiritual Soul,) we aſcend to a conception of a Subſtance purely incorporeal and Spiritual. So from a multitude of Things in the World, Reaſon leads us to one choice Being above all. And ſince in all Natures in the World, we ſtill find a ſuperiour Nature; the Nature of one Beaſt, above the Nature of another; the Nature of Man above the Nature of Beaſts; and ſome inviſible Nature, the Worker of ſtrange Effects in the Air and Earth, which cannot be aſcribed to any viſible Cauſe, we muſt ſuppoſe ſome Nature above all thoſe of unconceivable Perfection.

* Every *Sceptick*, one that doubts whether there be any thing real or no in the World, that counts every thing an Appearance, muſt neceſſarily own a firſt Cauſe. They cannot reaſonably doubt, but that there is ſome firſt Cauſe, which makes the Things appear ſo to them. They cannot be the Cauſe of their own Appearance. For as nothing can have a Being from it ſelf, ſo nothing can appear by it ſelf and its own force. Nothing can be and not be, at the ſame time. But that which is not, and yet ſeems to be; if it be the Cauſe why it ſeems to be what it is not, it may be ſaid to be and not be. But certainly ſuch Perſons muſt think themſelves to Exiſt. If they do not, they cannot think; and if they do exiſt, they muſt have ſome Cauſe of that Exiſtence. So that which way ſoever we turn our ſelves, we muſt in reaſon own a firſt Cauſe of the World.

* Cocceii *ſum. Theol. c.* 8. § 33, *&c.*

Well then might the Pſalmſt term an *Atheiſt*, *a Fool*, that diſowns a God, againſt his own Reaſon. Without owning a God as the firſt Cauſe of the World, no Man can give any tolerable or ſatisfactory account of the World to his own Reaſon.

And this firſt Cauſe,

1. *Muſt neceſſarily Exiſt.* * 'Tis neceſſary that he by whom all things are, ſhould be before all things, and nothing before him. And if nothing be before him, he comes not from any other; and then he always was, and without beginning. He is from himſelf; not that he once was not, but becauſe he hath not his Exiſtence from another, and therefore of neceſſity he did exiſt from all Eternity. Nothing can make it ſelf, or bring it ſelf into Being; therefore there muſt be ſome Being which hath no Cauſe, that depends upon no other, never was produced by any other, but was what he is from Eternity, and cannot be otherwiſe; and is not what he is by will, but nature, neceſſarily exiſting, and always exiſting without any capacity or poſſibility ever not to be.

* Petav. *Theol. Dog. Tom.* 1. *l.* 1. *c.* 2. *p.* 10, 11

2. *Muſt be infinitely perfect.* Since Man knows he is an imperfect Being, he muſt ſuppoſe the perfections he wants, are ſeated in ſome other Being, which hath limited him, and upon which he depends. Whatſoever we conceive of Excellency or Perfection muſt be in God. For we can conceive no Perfection but what God hath given us a power to conceive. And he that gave us a power to conceive a tranſcendent Perfection above whatſoever we ſaw or heard of, hath much more in himſelf; or elſe he could not give to us ſuch a Conception.

Secondly, II. As the Production of the World, *ſo the harmony of all the parts of it declare the Being and Wiſdom of a God.* Without the acknowledging God the Atheiſt can give no account of thoſe things. The multitude, elegancy, variety and beauty of all things are ſteps whereby to aſcend to one fountain and original of them.

Is it not a folly to deny the Being of a wiſe Agent, who ſparkles in the beauty and motions of the Heavens; rides upon the wings of the Wind, and is writ upon the flowers and fruits of Plants? As the Cauſe is known by the Effects, ſo the Wiſdom of the Cauſe is known by the Elegancy of the Work, the proportion of the parts to one another. Who can imagine the World could be raſhly made, and without conſultation, which in every part of it is ſo artificially fram'd? * No work of Art ſprings up of its own accord. The World is fram'd by an excellent Art, and therefore made by ſome skilful Artiſt. As we hear not a melodious Inſtrument, but we conclude there is a Muſician that touches it, as well as ſome skilful hand that framed and diſpoſed it for thoſe Leſſons. And no Man that hears the pleaſant ſound of a Lute, but will fix his Thoughts not upon the Inſtrument it ſelf, but upon the skill of the Artiſt that made it, and the art of the Muſician that ſtrikes it, tho' he ſhould not ſee the firſt, when he ſaw the Lute, nor ſees the other, when he hears the Harmony. So a rational Creature confines not his Thoughts to his Senſe, when he ſees the Sun in its Glory, and the Moon walking in its Brightneſs; but riſeth up in a Contemplation and Admiration of that infinite Spirit that compoſed, and filled them with ſuch ſweetneſs.

* Philo Judæ. Petav. Theol. *Dog. Tom.* 1. *lib.* 1. *c.* 1. *p.* 9.

This appears,

1. *In the linking contrary Qualities together.* All things are compounded of the Elements. Thoſe are indued with contrary Qualities, Dryneſs and Moiſture, Heat and Cold. Theſe would always be contending with an infeſting one another's Rights, till the Conteſt ended in the deſtruction of one or both. Where Fire is predominant, it would ſuck up the Water; where Water is prevalent, it would quench the Fire. The Heat would wholly expel the Cold, or the Cold over-power the Heat. Yet we ſee them chained and link'd one within another in every Body upon the Earth, and rendring mutual Offices for the benefit of that Body wherein they are ſeated, and all conſpiring together in their particular Quarrels for the publick Intereſt of the Body. How could thoſe Contraries, that of themſelves obſerve no order, that are always preying upon one another, joyntly

joyntly accord together of themſelves, for one common End, if they were not link'd in a common Band, and reduced to that order by ſome incomprehenſible Wiſdom and Power, which keeps a hand upon them orders their Motions, and directs their Events, and makes them friendly paſs into one anothers Natures? Confuſion had been the reſult of the diſcord and diverſity of their Natures. No Compoſition could have been of thoſe conflicting Qualities for the frame of any Body, nor any Harmony aroſe from ſo many jarring Strings, if they had not been reduced into concord, by one that is Supream Lord over them, and knows how to diſpoſe their Varieties and Enmities for the publick good. * If a Man ſhould ſee a large City or Country, conſiſting of great multitudes of Men of different Tempers, full of Frauds and Factions and Animoſities in their Natures againſt one another, yet living together in good order and peace, without oppreſſing and invading one another, and joyning together for the publick good; he would preſently conclude, there were ſome excellent Governor, who temper'd them by his Wiſdom, and preſerv'd the publick Peace, tho' he had never yet beheld him with his Eye. 'Tis as neceſſary to conclude a God, who moderates the Contrarieties in the World; as to conclude a wiſe Prince, who over-rules the contrary Diſpoſitions in a State, making every one to keep his own Bounds and Confines. Things that are contrary to one another, ſubſiſt in an admirable order.

* Athanaſ. Peta. Theo. *Dog. Tom.* 1. *l.* 1. *c.* 1. *p.* 4, 5

2. *In the ſubſerviency of one thing to another.* * All the Members of living Creatures are curiouſly fitted for the Service of one another, deſtin'd to a particular End, and endued with a Vertue to attain that End, and ſo diſtinctly placed, that one is no hindrance to the other in its Operations. Is not this more admirable than to be the Work of Chance, which is uncapable to ſettle ſuch an order and fix particular and general ends, cauſing an exact Correſpondency of all the parts with one another, and every part to conſpire together for one common end? One thing is fitted for another. The Eye is fitted for the Sun, and the Sun fitted for the Eye. Several ſorts of Food are fitted for ſeveral Creatures, and thoſe Creatures fitted with Organs for the partaking of that Food.

* Gaſſend. *Phyſic.* § 1. *l.* 4. *c.* 2. *p.* 315.

1. *Subſerviency of heavenly Bodies.* * The Sun, the Heart of the World, is not for it ſelf, but for the good of the World, as the Heart of Man is for the good of the Body. How conveniently is the Sun placed, at a diſtance from the Earth, and the upper Heavens to enlighten the Stars above and enliven the Earth below? If it were either higher or lower, one part would want its influences. 'Tis not in the higher parts of the Heavens; the Earth then which lives and fructifies by its influence would have been expoſed to a perpetual Winter and Chilneſs, unable to have produced any thing for the Suſtenance of Man or Beaſt. If ſeated lower, the Earth had been parched up, the World made uninhabitable and long ſince had been conſumed to Aſhes by the ſtrength of its heat. Conſider the Motion as well as the Scituation of the Sun. Had it ſtood ſtill, one part of the World had been cheriſhed by its Beams, and the other left in a deſolate Widow-hood, in a diſconſolate Darkneſs. Beſides, the Earth would have had no ſhelter from its perpendicular Beams ſtriking perpetually, and without any remiſſion upon it. The ſame Incommodities would have followed upon its fixedneſs as upon its too great nearneſs. By a conſtant Day, the Beauty of the Stars had been obſcur'd, the Knowledge of their Motions had been prevented, and a conſiderable part of the Glorious Wiſdom of the Creator in thoſe choice *Works of his Fingers*, *Pſal.* 8. 3. had been vail'd from our Eyes. It moves in a fixed Line, viſits all parts of the Earth, ſcatters in the Day its refreſhing Bleſſings in every creek of the Earth, and removes the mask from the other Beauties of Heaven in the Night, which ſparkle out to the glory of the Creator. It ſpreads its Light, warms the Earth, cheriſheth the Seeds, excites the Spirit in the Earth, and brings Fruit to maturity. View alſo the Air, the vaſt extent between Heaven and Earth, which ſerves for a Water-courſe, a Ciſtern for Water, to bedew the Face of the Sun-burnt Earth, to ſatisfie the deſolate Ground, and to cauſe the *Bud of the tender Herb to ſpring forth* †: Could Chance appoint the Clouds of the Air to interpoſe as Fans before the ſcorching heat of the Sun, and the faint Bodies of the Creatures? Can that be the *Father of the Rain, or beget the drops of Dew* †? Could any thing ſo blind ſettle thoſe Ordinances of Heaven for the preſervation of Creatures on the Earth? Can this either bring or ſtay the Bottles of Heaven, when the *Duſt grows into hardneſs, and the Clods cleave faſt together* †?

† Job 38. 25, 37.

† Job 38. v. 28.

† Job 38. 37, 38.

2. *Subſerviency of the lower World, the Earth and Sea*, which was Created to be inhabited, *Iſa.* 45. 18. The Sea affords Water to the Rivers, the Rivers like ſo many Veins are ſpread thro' the whole Body of the Earth to refreſh and enable it to bring forth Fruit for the Suſtenance of Man and Beaſt, *Pſal.* 104. 10, 11. *He ſends the Springs into the Vallies, which run among the Hills, they give Drink to every Beaſt of the Field, the wild Aſſes quench their Thirſt. He cauſes the Graſs to grow for the Cattle, and the Herb for the Service of Man, that he may bring forth Food out of the Earth*, ver. 14. The Trees are provided for ſhades againſt the Extremity of Heat, a Refuge for the panting Beaſts, *an Habitation for Birds* wherein to make their Neſts, *ver.* 17. and a Basket for their Proviſion. How are the Vallies and Mountains of the Earth diſpoſed for the pleaſure and profit of Man? Every Year are the Fields covered with Harveſts, for the nouriſhing the Creatures, no part is barren but beneficial to Man. The Mountains that are not cloathed with Graſs for his Food, are ſet with Stones to make him an Habitation; they have their peculiar ſervices of Metals and Minerals, for the conveniency, and comfort, and benefit of Man. Things which are not fit for his Food, are Medicines for his Cure under ſome painful Sickneſs. Where the Earth brings not forth Corn, it brings forth Roots for the Service of other Creatures. Wood abounds more in thoſe Countries where the Cold is ſtronger, than in others. Can this be the reſult of Chance, or not rather of an infinite Wiſdom?

Conſider the Uſefulneſs of the Sea, for the ſupply of Rivers to refreſh the Earth, *Which go up by the Mountains, and down by the Vallies, into the place God hath founded for them*, Pſal. 104. 8. A Storehouſe for Fiſh for the nouriſhment of other Creatures, a Shop of Medicines for Cure, and Pearls for Ornament. The Band that ties remote Nations together, by giving opportunity of Paſſage to, and Commerce with one another. How ſhould that natural inclination of the Sea to cover the Earth, ſubmit to this ſubſerviency to the Creatures? Who hath bounded in this fluid Maſs of Water into certain Limits, and confined it to its own Channel, for the accommodation of ſuch Creatures, who by its common Law can only be upon the Earth? Naturally the Earth was covered with the Deep, as with a Garment, the Waters ſtood above the Mountains, *Who ſet a bound that they might not paſs over*, that they return not again to cover the Earth? * Was it blind Chance, or an infinite Power, that ſhut up the Sea *with Doors, and made thick Darkneſs a ſwadling band for it, and ſaid, Hitherto ſhalt thou come and no further, and here ſhall thy proud Waves be ſtaid* *?

* Pſal. 104. 6, 9.

* Job 38. 8, 9, 11.

All

All things are so ordered, that they are not *propter se*, but *propter aliud*. What advantage accrues to the *Sun* by its unwearied rolling about the World? Doth it increase the perfection of its nature by all its Circuits? No, but it serves the inferior World, it impregnates things by its heat. Not the most abject thing, but hath its end and use. There is a strait connexion, the Earth could not bring forth fruit without the Heavens, the Heavens could not water the Earth without vapours from it.

3. *All this subserviency of Creatures centers in Man.* Other Creatures are served by those things as well as our selves, and they are provided for their nourishment and refreshment as well as ours; *yet both they and all Creatures meet in Man as lines in their Centers: Things that have no life or sense, are made for those that have both life and sense; and those that have life and sense, are made for those that are endued with reason. When the *Psalmist* admiringly considers the Heavens, Moon, and Stars, he intimates Man to be the end for which they were created, *Psal.* 8. 3, 4. *What is Man that thou art mindful of him?* He expresseth more particularly the Dominion that Man hath *over the beasts of the fields, the fowl of the air, and whatsoever passes through the paths of the Sea*, ver. 6, 7, 8. and concludes from thence the *excellency of Gods Name in all the Earth*. All things in the World, one way or other, center in an usefulness for Man, some to feed him, some to cloath him, some to delight him, others to instruct him, some to exercise his wit, and others his strength. Since Man did not make them, he did not also order them for his own use. If they conspire to serve him who never made them, they direct Man to acknowledge another, who is the joynt Creator both of the Lord, and the Servants under his Dominion.* And therefore as the inferior Natures are ordered by an invisible hand for the good of Man, so the nature of Man is by the same hand ordered to acknowledge the Existence and the Glory of the Creator of him. This visible order Man knows he did not constitute, he did not settle those Creatures in subserviency to himself; they were placed in that order before he had any acquaintance with them, or existence of himself, which is a question God puts to *Job*, to consider of, *Job* 38. 4. *Where wast thou when I laid the foundation of the Earth, declare if thou hast understanding?* All is ordered for Mans use, the Heavens answer to the Earth as a roof to a floor, both composing a delightful habitation for Man; *vapours ascend from the Earth*, and the Heavens concocts them, and returns them back in welcome showers for the supplying of the Earth.* The light of the Sun descends to beautifie the Earth, and imploys its heat to midwife its fruits, and this for the good of the community, whereof Man is the head; and though all Creatures have distinct natures, and must act for particular ends, according to the Law of their Creation, yet there is a joynt combination for the good of the whole, as the common end; just as all the Rivers in the World, from what part soever they come, whether North or South, fall into the Sea, for the supply of that mass of Waters; which loudly proclaims some infinitely wise nature, who made those things in so exact an harmony.* [As in a Clock, the hammer which strikes the Bell, leads us to the next Wheel, that to another, the little Wheel to a greater, whence it derives its motion, this at last to the spring, which acquaints us that there was some Artist that framed them in this subordination to one another for this orderly motion.]

4. *This order or subserviency is regular and uniform.* Every thing is determined to its peculiar nature.* The *Sun* and *Moon* make day and night, months and years, determine the Seasons, never are defective in coming back to their station and place; they wander not from their Roads, shock not against one another, nor hinder one another in the functions assigned them. From a small grain or seed a Tree springs, with body, root, bark, leaves, fruit of the same shape, figure, smell, taste; that there should be as many parts in one as in all of the same kind, and no more; and that in the Womb of a Sensitive Creature, should be formed one of the same kind, with all the due members and no more, and the Creature that produceth it knows not how it is formed, or how 'tis perfected. If we say this is Nature, this Nature is an intelligent Being; if not, how can it direct all causes to such uniform ends? If it be intelligent, this Nature must be the same we call God: *Who ordered every herb to yield seed, and every fruit Tree to yield fruit after its kind, and also every beast, and every creeping thing, after its kind*, Gen. 11. 12, 24.

And every thing is determined to its particular Season. The sap riseth from the Root at its appointed time, enlivening and cloathing the branches with a new Garment at such a time of the Suns returning, not wholly hindered by any accidental coldness of the weather, it being often colder at its return, than it was at the Suns departure. All things have their seasons of flourishing, budding, blossoming, bringing forth fruit; they ripen in their seasons, cast their leaves at the same time, throw off their old cloaths, and in the Spring appear with new Garments, but still in the same fashion.

* The Winds and the Rain have their Seasons, and seem to be administred by Laws for the profit of Man: No satisfactory cause of those things can be ascribed to the Earth, the Sea, to the Air or Stars. *Can any understand the spreading of his clouds, or the noise of his Tabernacle?* Job 38. 29. The natural reason of those things cannot de demonstrated without recourse to an infinite and intelligent Being: Nothing can be rendred capable of the direction of those things but a God.

This regularity in Plants and Animals is in all Nations. The Heavens have the same motion in all parts of the World; all Men have the same Law of Nature in their mind; all Creatures are stampt with the same Law of Creation: In all parts the same Creatures serve for the same use; and though there be different Creatures in *India* and *Europe*, yet they have the same subordination, the same subserviency to one another, and ultimately to Man; which shews that there is a God, and but one God, who tunes all those different strings to the same notes in all places. Is it Nature meerly conducts these Natural Causes in due measures to their proper effects, without interfering with one another? Can meer Nature be the cause of those musical proportions of Time? You may as well conceive a *Lute* to sound its own strings without the hand of an *Artist*; a City well Governed without a Governor; an Army keep its Stations without a General, as imagine so exact an order, without an Orderer. Would any Man, when he hears a Clock strike, by fit intervals, the hour of the day, imagine this regularity in it, without the direction of one that had understanding to manage it? He would not only regard the motion of the Clock, but commend the diligence of the Clock-keeper.

5. *This order and subserviency is constant.* Children change the Customs and Manners of their Fathers: Magistrates change the Laws they have receiv'd from their Ancestors, and enact new ones in their room; But in the World all things consist as they were created at the beginning; the Law of Nature in the Creatures hath met with no change.* Who can behold the Sun rising in the morning, the Moon shining in the night, increasing and decreasing in its due spaces, the Stars in their regular motions night after night, for all Ages, and yet deny a President over them? And this motion of the heavenly bodies, being contrary

* Amirald. *de Trinitate*, p. 13. and p. 18.

* Jer. 10. 13

* Morn. *de verit. cap.* 1. *pag.* 7.

* Amirant.

* Coccei *Sum. Theol. cap.* 8. § 77.

* Petav. *de Athanas. Theol. Dog. Tom.* 1. *lib.* 1 *cap.* 1. § 4.

trary to the nature of other Creatures, who move in order to rest, must be from some higher cause. But those, ever since the settling in their places, have been perpetually rounding the World; * What Nature, but one powerful and intelligent, could give that perpetual motion to the *Sun*, which being bigger than the Earth a *hundred sixty six times*, runs many thousand miles with a mighty swiftness in the space of an hour, with an unwearied diligence, performing its daily task, and as a strong Man, rejoycing to run its race, for above *five thousand years* together, without intermission, but in the time of *Joshuah?* * Tis not Nature's Sun, but *God's Sun*, which he *makes to rise upon the just and unjust* *.

* (*Whether it be the Sun or the Earth that moves, it is all one: Whence have either of 'em this constant and uniform motion?*)

* Josh. 10. 13.

*Mat. 5. 45.

So a *Plant* receives its nourishment from the Earth, sends forth its juyce to every branch, forms a bud which spreads it into a blossom and flower, the leaves of this drop off, and leave a fruit of the same colour and taste, every year; which being ripened by the Sun, leaves seeds behind it for the propagation of its like, which contains in the nature of it, the same kind of buds, blossoms, fruit which were before, and being nourished in the Womb of the Earth, and quickened by the power of the Sun, discovers it self at length, in all the progresses, and motions which its predecessor did. Thus in all Ages, in all Places, every year it performs the same task, spins out fruit of the same colour, taste, vertue, to refresh the several Creatures for which they are provided.

This settled state of things comes from that God who laid the *foundations of the Earth*, that it should *not be removed* for ever; * and set *Ordinances for them* to act by a stated Law; * according to which they move as if they understood themselves to have made a Covenant with their Creator *.

* Psal. 104. 5.

* Job 38. 33.

* Jer. 33.

3. Add to this union of contrary qualities, and the subserviency of one thing to another, *the admirable variety and diversity of things in the World.* What variety of *Metals*, living *Creatures*, *Plants*; what variety and distinction in the *shape* of their leaves, flowers, *smell*, resulting from them? Who can number up the several sorts of *Beasts* on the Earth, *Birds* in the Air, *Fish* in the Sea? How various are their motions? Some *Creep*, some *Go*, some *Fly*, some *Swim*; and in all this variety each Creature hath Organs or Members, fitted for their peculiar motion. If you consider the multitude of *Stars*, which shine like Jewels in the Heavens, their different magnitudes, or the variety of colours in the Flowers and Tapestry of the Earth, you could no more conclude they made themselves, or were made by chance, than you can imagine a piece of Arras, with a diversity of figures and colours, either wove it self, or were knit together by hazard.

How delicious is the sap of the Vine, when turned into Wine, above that of a Crab? Both have the same Womb of Earth to conceive them, both agree in the nature of Wood and Twigs, as Channels to convey it into fruit; What is that which makes the one so sweet, the other so sowre, or makes that sweet, which was a few Weeks before unpleasantly sharp? Is it the Earth? No: They both have the same soil; the branches may touch each other; the strings of their Roots may under ground entwine about one another. Is it the Sun? Both have the same beams: Why is not the taste and colour of the one as gratifying as the other? Is it the Root? The taste of that is far different from that of the fruit it bears. Why do they not, when they have the same Soil, the same Sun, and stand near one another, borrow something from one anothers natures? No reason can be rendred, but that there is a God of infinite Wisdom hath determin'd this variety, and bound up the nature of each Creature within it self. * [Every thing follows the Law of its Creation, and it is worthy observation, that the Creator of them hath not given that power to Animals, which arise from different species, to propagate the like to themselves; as Mules that arise from different species. No reason can be rendred of this, but the fixt determination of the Creator, that those species which were created by him should not be lost in those mixtures, which are contrary to the Law of the Creation.] This cannot possibly be ascribed to that which is commonly called Nature, but unto the God of Nature, who will not have his Creatures exceed their bounds or come short of them.

* Admald. de Trinitate, p. 21.

Now since among those varieties, there are some things better than other, yet *all are good in their kind*, and partake of Goodness, * there must be something better, and more excellent than all those, from whom they derive that goodness, which inheres in their nature, and is communicated by them to others: And this excellent Being must inherit in an eminent way in his own nature, the goodness of all those varieties, since they made not themselves, but were made by another. All that Goodness which is scattered in those varieties, must be infinitely concentred in that nature, which distributed those various perfections to them, *Psal. 94. 9. He that planted the Ear, shall not he hear; he that formed the Eye, shall not he see; he that teacheth Man knowledge, shall not he know?* The Creator is greater than the Creature, and whatsoever is in his effects, is but an impression of some excellency in himself; there is therefore some chief Fountain of Goodness, whence all those various goodnesses in the World do flow.

*Gen. 1. 31.

From all this it follows, if there be an Order and Harmony, there must be an Orderer, one that *made the Earth by his Power, established the World by his Wisdom, and stretched out the Heavens by his discretion*, Jer. 10. 12. Order being the effect, cannot be the cause of it self: Order is the disposition of things to an end, and is not intelligent, but implies an intelligent Orderer; and therefore it is as certain that there is a God, as it is certain there is order in the World. Order is an effect of Reason and Counsel; this Reason and Counsel must have its residence in some Being, before this Order was fixed. The things ordered are always distinct from that Reason and Counsel whereby they are ordered, and also after it, as the effect is after the Cause. No Man begins a piece of Work, but he hath the Model of it in his own mind. No Man builds an House, or makes a Watch, but he hath the *Idea* or Copy of it in his own head. This beautiful World bespeaks an Idea of it, or a Model; since there is such a magnificent Wisdom in the Make of each Creature, and the proportion of one Creature to another, this Model must be before the World, as the Pattern is always before the thing that is wrought by it. This therefore must be in some intelligent and wise Agent, and this is God. Since the reason of those things exceed the Reason and all the Art of Man, who can ascribe them to any inferior Cause? Chance it could not be; the motions of Chance are not constant, and at seasons, as the motions of Creatures are. That which is by Chance is contingent, this is necessary; Uniformity can never be the birth of Chance. Who can imagine that all the parts of a Watch can meet together, and put themselves in order and motion by Chance? [* Nor can it be Nature only, which indeed is a disposition of second Causes: If Nature hath not an Understanding, it cannot work such effects: If Nature therefore uses Counsel to begin a thing, Reason to dispose it, Art to effect it, Vertue to compleat it, and Power to govern it, why should it be called Nature rather than God?] Nothing so sure as that; that which hath an end to which it tends, hath a cause by which it is ordered to that end: Since therefore all things are ordered in subserviency to the good of Man, they are so ordered by him that

*Lactant.

made

made both Man and them; And Man must acknowledge the wisdom and goodness of his Creator, and act in subserviency to his Glory, as other Creatures act in subserviency to his Good: Sensible objects were not made only to gratifie the sense of Man, but to hand something to his mind as he is a rational Creature; to discover God to him as an object of love and desire to be enjoyed: * If this be not the effect of it, the order of the Creature, as to such an one, is in vain, and falls short of its true end.

* Coccei. *sum. Theol. cap.* 8. § 63, 64.

To conclude this; As when a Man comes into a Palace, built according to the exactest Rule of Art, and with an unexceptionable conveniency for the Inhabitants, he would acknowledge both the Being and Skill of the Builder: So whosoever shall observe the disposition of all the parts of the World, their connexion, comelineſs, the variety of seasons, the swarms of different Creatures, and the mutual offices they render to one onother, cannot conclude less, than that it was contrived by an *Infinite Skill*, effected by *Infinite Power*, and governed by *Infinite Wisdom*. None can imagine a Ship to be orderly conducted without a Pilot; nor the parts of the World to perform their several functions without a wise guide, considering the Members of the Body cannot perform theirs, without the active presence of the Soul. The *Atheist then is a fool*, to deny that which every Creature in his constitution asserts, and thereby renders himself unable to give a satisfactory account of that constant uniformity in the motions of the Creatures.

Thirdly, III. As the production and harmony, so *particular Creatures, pursuing and attaining their ends, manifest that there is a God.* All particular Creatures have natural instincts, which move them for some end. The intending of an end, is a property of a rational Creature; since the lower Creatures cannot challenge that title, they must act by the understanding and direction of another: And since Man cannot challenge the honour of inspiring the Creatures with such instincts, it must be ascribed to some nature infinitely above any Creature in understanding. No Creature doth determine it self. Why do the fruits and grain of the Earth nourish us, when the Earth, which instrumentally gives them that fitness, cannot nourish us, but because their several ends are determined by one higher than the World?

1. *Several Creatures have several Natures.* How soon will all Creatures, as soon as they see the light, move to that whereby they must live, and make use of the natural arms God hath given their kind, for their defence, before they are grown to any maturity to afford them that defence? The Scripture makes the appetite of Infants to their Milk, a foundation of the divine Glory, *Psal.* 8. 2. *Out of the Mouths of Babes and Sucklings, hast thou ordained strength*; that is, matter of praise and acknowledgment of God, in the natural appetite they have to their Milk, and their relish of it. All Creatures have a natural affection to their young ones; all young ones, by a natural instinct, move to, and receive the nourishment that is proper for them: Some are their own Physicians, as well as their own Caterers, and naturally discern what preserves them in life, and what restores them when sick. The *Swallow* flies to its *Celendine*, and the *Toad* hastens to its *Plantain*.

Can we behold the Spiders Nets, or Silkworms Web, the Bees Closets, or the Ants Granaries, without acknowledging a higher Being than a Creature, who hath planted that Genius in them? The consideration of the nature of several Creatures God commended to *Job*, (*Chap.* 39. where he discourseth to *Job* of the natural instincts, of the *Goat*, the *Ostrich*, *Horse* and *Eagle*, &c) to perswade him to the acknowledgment and admiration of God, and humiliation of himself.

The Spider, as if it understood the Art of weaving, fits its web both for its own Habitation, and a Net to catch its prey. The Bee builds a Cell which serves for Chambers to reside in, and a Repository for its Provision. Birds are observed to build their Nests with a clammy matter without, for the firmer duration of it, and with a soft moss and down within, for the conveniency and warmth of their young: *The Stork knows his appointed time*, Jer. 8. 7. And the Swallows observe the time of their coming; they go and return according to the Seasons of the year. This they gain not by consideration, it descends to them with their nature; they neither gain nor increase it by rational deductions. 'Tis not in vain to speak of these. How little do we improve by Meditation those objects, which daily offer themselves to our view, full of Instruction for us? And our *Saviour* sends his Disciples to spell God in the *Lillies*. * 'Tis observed also, that the Creatures offensive to Man go single: If they went by troops, they would bring destruction upon Man and Beast. This is the nature of them, for the preservation of others.

* Mat. 6. 28.

2. *They know not their end.* They have a Law in their natures, but have no rational understanding, either of the end to which they are appointed, or the means fit to attain it. They naturally do what they do, and move by no Counsel of their own, but by a Law impreſt by some higher hand upon their Natures.

What Plant knows why it strikes its root into the earth? Doth it understand what storms it is to contest with, or why it shoots up its branches towards Heaven? Doth it know it needs the droppings of the clouds to preserve it self, and make it fruitful? These are acts of understanding: The root is downward to preserve its own standing, the branches upwards to preserve other Creatures: This understanding is not in the Creature it self, but originally in another. Thunders and Tempests know not why they are sent, yet by the direction of a mighty hand they are instruments of Justice upon a wicked World.

* Rational Creatures that act for some end, and know the end they aim at, yet know not the manner of the natural motion of the Members to it. When we intend to look upon a thing, we take no counsel about the natural motion of our eyes, we know not all the principles of their operations; or how that dull matter, whereof our bodies are composed, is subject to the order of our minds. * We are not of Counsel with our stomachs about the concoction of our meat, or the distribution of the nourishing juyce to the several parts of the body. Neither the *Mother* nor the *Fœtus* sit in Council, how the formation should be made in the Womb. We know no more than a Plant knows what stature it is of, and what medicinal vertue its fruit hath for the good of Man; yet all those natural operations are perfectly directed to the proper end, by an higher wisdom than any human understanding is able to conceive, since they exceed the ability of an inanimate or fleshly nature, yea and the wisdom of a Man. Do we not often see reasonable Creatures acting for one end, and perfecting a higher than what they aimed at, or could suspect? When *Josephs* Brethren sold him for a Slave, their end was to be rid of an Informer: * But the action issued in preparing him to be the preserver of them and their Families. *Cyrus* his end was to be a Conqueror, but the action ended in being the *Jews* Deliverer, *Prov.* 16. 9. *A mans heart deviseth his way, but the Lord directs his steps.*

* Coccei. *sum Theol. cap.* 8. § 67. *&c.*

* Pearson, *on the Creed*, p. 35.

* Gen. 37. 12.

3. Therefore there is some Superior understanding and nature which so acts them. That which acts for an end unknown to its self, depends upon some overruling wisdom that knows that end. Who should

direct them in all thoſe ends, but he that beſtowed a Being upon them for thoſe ends, * who knows what is convenient for their Life, ſecurity and propagation of their Natures? An exact knowledge is neceſſary, both of what is agreeable to them, and the means whereby they muſt attain it; which ſince it is not inherent in them, is in that wiſe God, who puts thoſe inſtincts into them, and governs them in the Exerciſe of them to ſuch ends. Any Man that ſees a Dart flung, knows it cannot hit the Mark, without the Skill and Strength of an Archer. Or he that ſees the hand of a Dial pointing to the Hours ſucceſſively, knows that the Dial is ignorant of its own end, and is diſpoſed and directed in that Motion by another. All Creatures ignorant of their own Natures, could not univerſally in the whole kind, and in every Climate and Country, without any difference in the whole World, tend to a certain end, if ſome over-ruling Wiſdom did not preſide over the World and guide them: And if the Creatures have a Conductor, they have a Creator: All things are turned round *about by his Council, that they may do whatſoever he commands them upon the Face of the World upon the Earth* *.

* Leſſius. *de proviđen. l.* 1. *p.* 652.

* Job 37. v. 12.

So that in this reſpect the folly of Atheiſm appears. Without the owning a God no account can be given of thoſe Actions of Creatures, that are an imitation of Reaſon: To ſay the Bees, *&c.* are rational, is to equal them to Man; nay, make them his Superiors, ſince they do more by Nature than the wiſeſt Man can do by Art: 'Tis their own Counſel whereby they act, or anothers; If it be their own, they are reaſonable Creatures; If by anothers, 'tis not meer Nature that is neceſſary; Then other Creatures would not be without the ſame skill: There would be no difference among them: If Nature be reſtrained by another, it hath a Superior; if not 'tis a free Agent: 'Tis an underſtanding Being that directs them: And then it is ſomething Superior to all Creatures in the World; and by this therefore we may aſcend to the acknowledgment of the neceſſity of a God.

Fourthly, IV. Add to the Production & Order of the World, and the Creatures acting for their end, *the Preſervation of them.* Nothing can depend upon it ſelf in its Preſervation, no more than it could in its Being. If the order of the VVorld was not fixed by it ſelf, the Preſervation of that order cannot be continued by it ſelf.

Tho' the matter of the VVorld after Creation, cannot return to that Nothing whence it was fetched, without the power of God that made it, (becauſe the ſame power is as requiſite to reduce a thing to nothing, as to raiſe a thing from nothing) yet without the actual exerting of a power that made the Creatures, they would fall into Confuſion. Thoſe conteſting Qualities, which are in every part of it, could not have preſerved, but would have conſumed, and extinguiſhed one another, and reduced the VVorld to that confuſed Chaos, wherein it was before the Spirit moved upon the VVaters: As contrary parts could not have met together in one Form, unleſs there had been one that had conjoyned them: So they could not have kept together after their Conjunction, unleſs the ſame hand had preſerved them. Natural Contrarieties cannot be reconciled. 'Tis as great power to keep diſcords knit, as at firſt to link them. VVho would doubt, but that an Army made up of ſeveral Nations and Humours, would fall into a Civil VVar, and ſheath their Swords in one anothers Bowels, if they were not under the Management of ſome wiſe General, or a Ship daſh againſt the Rocks without the Skill of a Pilot? * As the Body hath neither Life nor Motion, without the active preſence of the Soul, which diſtributes to every part the vertue of acting; ſets every one in the exerciſe of its proper Function, and reſides in every part: So there is ſome powerful Cauſe which doth the like in the VVorld, that rules and tempers it. There is need of the ſame Power and Action, to preſerve a thing, as there was at firſt to make it. VVhen we conſider that we are preſerved, and know that we could not preſerve our ſelves; we muſt neceſſarily run to ſome firſt cauſe which doth preſerve us. All VVorks of Art depend upon Nature, and are preſerved while they are kept by the force of Nature: As a Statue depends upon the Matter whereof it is made, whether Stone or Braſs; This Nature therefore muſt have ſome Superiour by whoſe influx it is preſerved. Since therefore we ſee a ſtable order in the things of the VVorld, that they conſpire together for the good and beauty of the Univerſe; that they depend upon one another: There muſt be ſome principle upon which they do depend; ſomething to which the firſt Link of the Chain is faſtned, which himſelf depends upon no ſuperior, but wholly reſts in his own Eſſence and Being: 'Tis the Title of God to be the *Preſerver of Man and Beaſt.* * The Pſalmiſt elegantly deſcribeth it, Pſal. 104. 24, &c. *The Earth is full of his Riches, all wait upon him*, that he may *give them their Meat in due ſeaſon*; when he *opens his hand, he fills them with good*; when he *hides his face they are troubled, if he take away their breath, they die and return to duſt*; *he ſends forth his Spirit, and they are Created, and renews the face of the Earth, the glory of the Lord ſhall endure for ever, and the Lord ſhall rejoyce in his Works*: Upon the conſideration of all which, the Pſalmiſt (*v.* 34.) takes a pleaſure in the Meditation of God, as the Cauſe and Manager of all thoſe things, which iſſues into a joy in God and a praiſing of him. And why ſhould not the conſideration of the Power and Wiſdom of God, in the Creatures, produce the ſame effect in the Hearts of us, if he be our God? Or as ſome render it, *My Meditation ſhall be ſweet*, or acceptable to him; whereby I find matter of praiſe in the things of the VVorld, and offer it to the Creator of it.

* Gaſſend. *Phy.* § 6. *l.* 4. *c.* 2. *p.* 101.

* Pſal. 36. 6.

Thirdly, III. Reaſon, *'Tis a folly to deny that which a Man's own Nature witneſſeth to him.* The whole frame of Bodies and Souls bears the impreſs of the infinite Power and VViſdom of the Creator. A Body fram'd with an admirable Architecture, a Soul endowed with Underſtanding, VVill, Judgment, Memory, Imagination. Man is the Epitome of the VVorld, contains in himſelf the Subſtance of all Natures, and the fulneſs of the whole Univerſe; not only in regard of the Univerſalneſs of his knowledge, whereby he comprehends the Reaſons of many things; but as all the Perfections of the ſeveral Natures of the VVorld are gathered and united in Man, for the Perfection of his own, in a ſmaller Volume. In his Soul he partakes of Heaven, in his Body of the Earth. There is the Life of *Plants*, the ſenſe of *Beaſts*, and the intellectual Nature of *Angels*. * *The Lord breathed into his Noſtril the breath of Life, and Man*, &c. Hebr. *of Lifes.* Not one ſort of *lifes*, but ſeveral; not only an *Animal*, but a *Rational* Life; a Soul of a Nobler extract and nature, than what was given to other Creatures.

Third Reaſ.

* Gen. 2. 7.

So that we need not ſtep out of Doors, or caſt our Eyes any further than our ſelves, to behold a God. He ſhines in the Capacity of our Souls, and the Vigour of our Members. VVe muſt flie from our ſelves and be ſtrip'd of our own Humanity, before we can put off the Notion of a Deity: He that is ignorant of the Exiſtence of God, muſt be poſſeſſed with ſo much folly, as to be ignorant of his own make and frame.

1. *In the parts whereof he doth consist*, Body and Soul.

First, I. *Take a Prospect of the Body.* The Psalmist counts it a matter of Praise and Admiration, *Psalm* 139. 15, 16. *I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; when I was made in secret and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the Earth, in thy Book all my Members were written.* The Scheme of Man and every Member was drawn in his Book: All the Sinews, Veins, Arteries, Bones, like a piece of Embroidery or Tapestry, were wrought by God, as it were with Deliberation; like an Artificer that draws out the Model of what he is to do in Writing, and sets it before him when he begins his Work.

And indeed the *Fabrick* of Man's Body, as well as his Soul, is an Argument for Divinity. The Artificial Structure of it, the elegancy of every part, the proper Situation of them, their proportion one to another, the fitness for their several Functions, drew from *Galen*, * (a Heathen and one that had no raised Sentiments of a Deity,) a confession of the admirable Wisdom and power of the Creator, and that none but God could frame it.

* *Lib.* 3. *de usu partium.* Peta. *Theol. Dog. Tom.* 1. *l.* 1. *c.* 1. *p.* 6.

1. *In the order, fitness and usefulness of every part.* The whole model of the Body is grounded upon Reason. Every Member hath its exact Proportion, distinct Office, regular Motion. Every part hath a particular Comliness, and convenient Temperament bestowed upon it, according to its place in the Body. The *Heart* is hot to enliven the whole. The Eye clear to take in Objects to present them to the Soul; Every Member is fitted for its peculiar Service and Action: Some are for Sense, some for Motion, some for preparing, and others for dispensing Nourishment to the several parts: They mutually depend upon, and serve one another. What small Strings fasten the particular Members together, *as the Earth that hangs upon nothing?* * Take but one part away, and you either destroy the whole, or stamp upon it some mark of Deformity. All are knit together by an admirable Symmetry; all orderly perform their Functions, as Acting by a settled Law; none swerving from their Rule, but in case of some predominant Humour: And none of those in so great a multitude of parts, stifled in so little a Room, or justling against one another to hinder their mutual Actions; none can be better disposed. And the greatest Wisdom of Man could not imagine it, till his Eyes present them with the sight and connexion of one part and Member with another.

* Job. 26. 7.

1. *The Heart.* * How strongly it is guarded with Ribs like a Wall, that it might not be easily hurt! It draws Blood from the Liver, thro'a Channel made for that purpose: Ratifies it and makes it fit to pass thro' the Arteries and Veins, and to carry Heat and Life to every part of the Body: And by a perpetual Motion, it sucks in the Blood and spouts it out again; which Motion depends not upon the Command of the Soul, but is pure Natural.

* Theod. *de providentiâ Orat.* 3.

2. *The Mouth*, takes in the Meat, the Teeth grind it for the Stomach, the Stomach prepares it, Nature strains it thro' the milky Veins, the Liver refines it and mints it into Blood, separates the pure from the drossy parts, which go to the Heart, circuites thro' the whole Body, running thro' the Veins like Rivers thro' so many Channels of the World, for the watering of several parts: Which are framed of a thin Skin for the straining the Blood through, for the supply of the members of the Body, and framed with several valves or doors, for the thrusting the Blood forwards to perform its circular Motion.

3. *The Brain*, fortified by a strong Skull to hinder outward Accidents, a tough Membrane (or Skin) to hinder any oppression by the Skull; the seat of Sense; that which coins the Animal Spirits by purifying and refining those which are sent to it, and seems like a curious piece of Needle-work.

4. *The Ear*, framed with Windings and Turnings, to keep any thing from entring to offend the Brain; so disposed as to admit *Sounds* with the greatest safety and delight; * fill'd with an Air within, by the Motion whereof the Sound is transmitted to the Brain: As Sounds are made in the Air by diffusing themselves, as you see Circles made in the Water by the flinging in a Stone. This is the Gate of Knowledge, whereby we hear the Oracles of God, and the instruction of Men for Arts: 'Tis by this they are exposed to the Mind, and the Mind of another Man fram'd in our Understandings.

* Eccl. 12. 4

5. *What a curious Workmanship is that of the Eye*, which is in the Body, as the Sun in the World; set in the Head, as in a Watch-Tower, having the softest Nerves for the receiving the greater multitude of Spirits necessary for the act of Vision? How is it provided with defence, by the variety of Coats to secure and accommodate the little Humour, and part whereby the Vision is made? Made of a round Figure and Convex, as most commodious to receive the Species of Objects; shaded by the Eye-brows and Eye-lids, secured by the Eye-lids which are its Ornament and Safety which refresh it when it is too much dryed by Heat, hinder too much light from insinuating it self into it to offend it, cleanse it from Impurities, by their quick Motion preserve it from any Invasion, and by Contraction confer to the more evident discerning of Things: Both the Eyes seated in the hollow of the bone for Security; yet standing out that things may be perceived more easily on both sides: And this little Member can behold the Earth: and in a Moment view things as high as Heaven.

6. * *The Tongue*, for Speech framed like a Musical Instrument; the Teeth serving for variety of Sounds; the Lungs serving for Bellows to blow the Organs as it were, to cool the Heart; by a continual Motion transmitting a pure Air to the Heart, expelling that which was smoaky and superfluous. 'Tis by the Tongue that Communication of Truth hath a passage among Men; it opens the sense of the Mind; there would be no Converse and Commerce without it: Speech among all Nations hath an elegancy and attractive force, mastering the Affections of Men.

* Coccei *Sum. Theol. c.* 8. § 49.

Not to speak of other parts, or of the multitude of Spirits that act every part; the quick flight of them, where there is a necessity of their presence. *Solomon* (*Eccles.* 12.) makes an elegant Description of them, in his Speech of old Age: And *Job* speaks of this Formation of the Body, *Job* 10. 9, 10, 11, *&c.* Not the least part of the body is made in vain. The Hairs of the Head have their use, as well as are an Ornament. The whole Symmetry of the Body is a ravishing Object. Every Member hath a signature and mark of God and his Wisdom: He is visible in the formation of the Members, the beauty of the Parts, and the Vigor of the Body: This Structure could not be from the Body, that only hath a passive Power, and cannot act in the absence of the Soul: Nor can it be from the Soul. How comes it then to be so ignorant of the manner of its Formation? The Soul knows not the internal parts of its own Body, but by information from others, or inspection into other Bodies: It knows less of the inward frame of the Body than it doth of it self: But he that makes the Clock can tell the number and Motions of the Wheels within, as well as what Figures are without.

This short Discourse is useful to raise our Admirations of the VVisdom of God, as well as to demonstrate, that there is an infinite wise Creator: And the consideration of our selves every day, and the VVisdom

dom of God in our Frame would maintain Religion much in the VVorld; since all are so framed that no Man can tell any error in the Constitution of him. If thus the Body of Man is fitted for the Service of his Soul by an infinite God, the Body ought to be ordered for the Service of this God, and in Obedience to him.

2. *In the admirable difference of the Features of Men.* Which is a great Argument that the World was made by a wise Being: This could not be wrought by Chance, or be the work of meer Nature, since we find never, or very rarely two Persons exactly alike. This Distinction is a part of infinite Wisdom; otherwise what Confusion would be introduced into the World? Without this, Parents could not know their Children, nor Children their Parents, nor a Brother his Sister, nor a Subject his Magistrate: VVithout it there had been no comfort of Relations, no Government, no Commerce: Debtors would not have been known from Strangers, nor good Men from bad: Propriety could not have been preserved, nor justice executed; the Innocent might have been apprehended for the Nocent; VVickedness could not have been stopt by any Law.

The Faces of Men are the same for Parts, *not for Features*: A dissimilitude in a likeness. Man, like to all the rest in the VVorld, yet unlike to any, and differenced by some mark from all, which is not to be observed in any other Species of Creatures. This speaks some wise Agent which framed Man; since for the Preservation of Humane Society and Order in the VVorld, this Distinction was necessary.

Secondly, II. As Man's own Nature witnesseth God to him in the Structure of his Body, so also *in the Nature of his Soul.* * VVe know that we have an *understanding* in us; a Substance we cannot see, but we know it by its Operations; as thinking, reasoning, willing, remembring; and as operating about things that are invisible and remote from sense. This must needs be distinct from the Body, for that being but Dust and Earth in its Original, hath not the power of Reasoning and thinking; for then it would have that Power, when the Soul were absent, as well as when it is present. Besides, if it had that power of Thinking, it could think only of those things which are sensible and made up of Matter, as it self is. This Soul hath a greater Excellency; it can know it self; rejoyce in it self, which other Creatures in this VVorld are not capable of: The Soul is the greatest Glory of this lower VVorld, and as one saith, * There seems to be no more difference between the *Soul* and an *Angel*, than between a *Sword in* the Scabbard, and when it is *out* of the Scabbard.

* Coccei. *Sum. Theol.* c. 8. §50, 51

* More.

First, I. *Consider the vastness of its Capacity.* The Understanding can conceive the whole VVorld, and paint in it self the invisible Pictures of all things. 'Tis capable of apprehending and discoursing of things Superior to its own Nature. [* 'Tis suited to all Objects, as the Eye to all Colours, or the Ear to all Sounds.] How great is the Memory to retain such Varieties, such Diversities? The VVill also can accommodate other things to it self. It invents Arts for the use of Man; prescribes Rules for the Government of States, ransacks the Bowels of Nature; makes endless Conclusions, and Steps in reasoning from one thing to another, for the Knowledge of Truth; it can contemplate and form Notions of things higher than the VVorld.

* *Calverwel*

2. *The Quickness of its Motions.* [* Nothing is more quick in the whole Course of Nature; the Sun runs thro' the whole VVorld in a day, this can do it in a moment. It can with one flight of Fancy ascend to the Battlements of Heaven.] The mists of the Air that hinder the sight of the Eye, cannot hinder the flights of the Soul; it can pass in a moment from one end of the VVorld to the other, and think of things a thousand Miles distant. It can think of some mean thing in the VVorld, and presently by one cast, in the twinkling of an Eye, mount up as high as Heaven. As its desires are not bounded by sensual objects, so neither are the Motions of it restrained by them. It will break forth with the greatest vigour, and conceive things infinitely above it; though it be in the Body, it acts as if it were ashamed to be Cloystered in it. This could not be the result of any material Cause: VVho ever knew meer matter understand, think, will? And what it hath not, it cannot give. That which is destitute of Reason and VVill, could never confer Reason and VVill. * 'Tis not the effect of the Body, for the Body is fitted with Members to be subject to it: 'Tis in part ruled by the Activity of the Soul, and in part by the Counsel of the Soul; 'Tis used by the Soul, and knows not how it is used. Nor could it be from the Parents, since the Souls of the Children often transcend those of the Parents in Vivacity, Acuteness and Comprehensiveness: One Man is stupid and begets a Son with a capacious Understanding; one is debauched and beastly in Morals, and begets a Son who from his Infancy testifies some vertuous Inclinations, which sprout forth in delightful Fruit with the ripeness of his Age. Whence should this difference arise, a Fool begat the wise Man, and a Debauched the vertuous Man? the Wisdom of the one could not descend from the foolish Soul of the other; nor the vertues of the Son, from the deformed and polluted Soul of the Parent; it lies not in the Organs of the Body; For if the folly of the Parent proceeded not from their Souls, but the ill Disposition of the Organs of their Bodies, how comes it to pass that the Bodies of the Children, are better Organized beyond the goodness of their immediate Cause? We must recur to some invisible hand, that makes the difference, who bestows upon one at his pleasure richer Qualities, than upon another: You can see nothing in the World endowed with some excellent Quality, but you must imagine some bountiful Hand did enrich it with that Dowry: None can be so foolish as to think that a Vessel ever enrich'd it self with that spritely Liquor, wherewith it is filled; or that any thing worse than the Soul should endow it with that Knowledge and Activity which sparkles in it. Nature could not produce it: That Nature is intelligent, or not; if it be not, then it produceth an effect more excellent than it self, in as much as an understanding Being surmounts a Being that hath no Understanding; If the supream Cause of the Soul be Intelligent, why do we not call it God as well as Nature? We must arise from hence to the Notion of a God; a Spiritual Nature cannot proceed but from a Spirit higher than it self, and of a transcendent Perfection above it self: If we believe we have Souls, and understand the State of our own Faculties, we must be assur'd that there was some invisible Hand which bestowed those Faculties and the riches of them upon us: A Man must be ignorant of himself, before he can be ignorant of the Existence of God. By considering the Nature of our Souls we may as well be assur'd that there is a God, as that there is a Sun by the shining of the Beams in at our Windows: And indeed the Soul is a Statue and Representation of God, as the Land-Skip of a Country or Map represents all the parts of it, but in a far less proportion than the Country it self is. The Soul fills the Body, and God the World; the Soul sustains the Body, and God the World; the Soul sees, but is not seen; God sees all things, but is himself invisible. How base are they then that prostitute their Souls, an Image of God, to base things unexpressibly below their own Nature?

* Coccei. *Theo.* c. 8. § 51, 52.

I do not dispute whether the Soul were generated or no; Suppose the Substance of it was generated by the Parents, yet those more excellent Qualities were not the result of em.

* Theodor.

3. I

3. I might add *the Union of Soul and Body.* Man is a kind of compound of Angel and Beast, of Soul and Body; If he were only a Soul, he were a kind of Angel; if only a Body, he were another kind of Brute: Now that a Body as vile and dull as Earth, and a Soul that can mount up to Heaven, and rove about the World with so quick a Motion, should be link'd in so strait an Acquaintance, that so noble a Being as the Soul should be an Inhabitant in such a Tabernacle of Clay, must be owned to some infinite power that hath so chained it.

3. Man witnesseth to a God in the *Operations and Reflections of Conscience*, Rom. 2. 15. *Their Thoughts are accusing or excusing.* An inward Comfort attends good Actions, and an inward torment follows bad ones; for there is in every Man's Conscience fear of Punishment, and hope of Reward: There is therefore a sense of some Superior Judge, which hath the power both of Rewarding and Punishing: If Man were his Supream Rule, what need he fear Punishment, since no Man would inflict any Evil or Torment on himself; nor can any Man be said to reward himself, for all Rewards refer to another, to whom the Action is pleasing, and is a conferring some good a Man had not before: If an Action be done by a Subject or Servant, with hopes of Reward, it cannot be imagined, that he expects a Reward from himself, but from the Prince or Person whom he Eyes in that Action, and for whose sake he doth it.

1. *There is a Law in the Minds of Men, which is a Rule of Good and Evil.* There is a Notion of Good and Evil in the Consciences of Men, which is evident by those Laws which are common in all Countries, for the preserving humane Societies, the Encouragement of Vertue, and Discouragement of Vice; What Standard should they have for those Laws, but a Common Reason? The design of those Laws was to keep Men within the Bounds of Goodness, for mutual Commerce; whence the Apostle calls the Heathen Magistrate *a Minister of God for Good*, Rom. 13. 4. and *the Gentiles do by Nature the things contained in the Law*, Rom. 2. 14.

Man in the first instant of the use of Reason, finds Natural Principles within himself, directing and choosing them; he finds a Distinction between Good and Evil; how could this be, if there were not some Rule in him to try and distinguish Good and Evil? If there were not such a Law and Rule in Man, he could not sin; for where there is no Law, there is no Transgression. If Man were a Law to himself, and his own Will his Law, there could be no such thing as Evil; whatsoever he willed would be good and agreeable to the Law; and no Action could be accounted Sinful: The worst Act would be as commendable as the best. Every thing at Mans Appointment would be Good or Evil. If there were no such Law, how should Men that are naturally inclin'd to Evil, disapprove of that which is unlovely, and approve of that Good which they practise not. No Man but inwardly thinks well of that which is good, while he neglects it; and thinks ill of that which is evil, while he commits it. Those that are vitious, do praise those that practise the contrary Vertues. Those that are evil would seem to be good, and those that are blame-worthy, yet will rebuke Evil in others. This is really to distinguish between good and evil; whence doth this arise, by what rule do we measure this, but by some *innate Principle?*

And this is universal, the same in one Man as in another, the same in one Nation as in another; they are born with every Man, and inseparable from his Nature, Prov. 27. 19. *As in Water face answers to face, so the heart of Man to Man.* Common reason supposeth, that there is some hand which hath fixed this Distinction in Man: How could it else be universally impress? No Law can be without a Law-giver; no sparks but must be kindled by some other: Whence should this Law then derive its original? Not from Man; he would fain blot it out, and cannot alter it when he pleases: Natural Generation never intended it: 'Tis settled therefore by some higher Hand, which as it imprinted it, so it maintains it against the violences of Men; who, were it not for this Law, would make the World more than it is, an *Aceldama* and Field of Blood: For had there not been some supream good, the measure of all other goodness in the World, we could not have had such a thing as Good. The Scripture gives us an account that this Good was distinguished from Evil before Man fell, they were, *objecta scibilia*; Good was commanded and Evil prohibited, and did not depend upon Man: From this a Man may rationally be instructed that there is a God: for he may thus argue, I find my self naturally obliged to do this thing and avoid that, I have therefore a Superior that doth oblige me; I find something within me that directs me to such Actions, *contrary to my sensitive Appetite, there must* be something above me therefore that put this principle into Man's nature: If there were no Superior, I should be the Supream Judge of Good and Evil: Were I the Lord of that Law which doth oblige me, I should find no Contradiction within my self, *between reason & appetite.*

2. *From the Transgression of this Law of Nature, fears do arise in the Consciences of Men.* Have we not known or heard of Men struck by so deep a Dart, that could not be drawn out by the strength of Men, or appeased by the pleasure of the World, and Men crying out with horror upon a Death-bed of their past Life, when *their fear hath come as a desolation, and destruction as a whirlwind*, Prov. 1. 27. And often in some sharp affliction, the dust hath been blown off from Mens Consciences, which for a while hath obscured the Writing of the Law. If Men stand in awe of Punishment, there is then some Superior to whom they are accountable: If there were no God, there were no Punishment to fear. What reason of any fear, upon the dissolution of the Knot, between the Soul and Body, if there were not a God to punish, and the Soul remained not in being to be punished?

How suddenly will Conscience work upon the appearance of an Affliction, rouze it self from sleep like an armed Man, and fly in a Man's Face before he is aware of it? It will *surprize the Hypocrites*, Isa. 38. 14. It will bring to mind Actions committed long ago, and set them in order before the Face, as God's Deputy Acting by his Authority and Omniscience. As God hath not left himself without a witness among the Creatures, *Acts* 14. 17. so he hath not left himself without a witness in a Man's own Breast.

1. *This Operation of Conscience hath been universal.* No Nation hath been any more exempt from it, than from Reason: Not a Man but hath one time or other, more or less smarted under the sting of it. All over the World Conscience hath shot its Darts. It hath torn the hearts of Princes in the midst of their Pleasures: It hath not flattered them whom most Men flatter, nor feared to disturb their rest, whom no Man dares to provoke. Judges have trembled on a Tribunal, when Innocents have rejoyced in their Condemnation: The Iron-bars upon *Pharaohs* Conscience, were at last broke up, and he acknowledged the Justice of God in all that he did, *Exod. 9. 27. I have sinned, the Lord is righteous, and I and my People are wicked.* Had they been like Childish Frights at the Apprehension of Bug-bears, why hath not reason shaken them off? but on the contrary, the stronger Reason grows the smarter those Lashes are: Groundless fears had been short liv'd:

Age and Judgment would have worn them off, but they grow ſharper with the growth of Perſons. The Scripture informs us they have been of as ancient a date as the revolt of the firſt Man, *Gen.* 3. 10. *I was afraid*, ſaith *Adam*, *becauſe I was naked*; which was an expectation of the Judgment of God. All his Poſterity inherit his fears, when God expreſſeth himſelf in any tokens of his Majeſty and Providence in the World. Every Mans Conſcience teſtifies that he is unlike what he ought to be according to that Law engraven upon his heart. In ſome indeed, Conſcience may be ſeared, or dimmer; or ſuppoſe ſome Men may be devoid of Conſcience, ſhall it be denied to be a thing belonging to the nature of Man? Some Men have not their eyes, yet the power of ſeeing the light is natural to Man, and belongs to the integrity of the Body: Who would argue, that becauſe ſome Men are mad, and have loſt their Reaſon by a diſtemper of the brain, that therefore Reaſon hath no reality, but is an imaginary thing? But I think it is a ſtanding truth, that every Man hath been under the ſcourge of it, one time or other, in a leſs or greater degree. For ſince every Man is an offender, it cannot be imagined, Conſcience, which is natural to Man, and an active faculty, ſhould always lie idle, without doing this part of its office. The *Apoſtle* tells us of the thoughts, accuſing or excuſing one another, (or by turns) according as the actions were. Nor is this truth weakned by the corruptions in the World, whereby many have thought themſelves bound in Conſcience to adhere to a falſe and ſuperſtitious Worſhip and Idolatry, as much as any have thought themſelves bound to adhere to a Worſhip commanded by God. This very thing infers, that all men have a reflecting principle in them; it is no argument againſt the Being of Conſcience, but only infers that it may Err in the application of what it naturally owns. We can no more ſay, that becauſe ſome Men walk by a falſe Rule, there is no ſuch thing as Conſcience, than we can ſay, that becauſe Men have errors in their minds, therefore they have no ſuch faculty as an Underſtanding; or becauſe Men will that which is evil, they have no ſuch faculty as a Will in them.

2. *Theſe operations of Conſcience, are when the wickedneſs is moſt ſecret.* Theſe tormenting fears of Vengeance, have been frequent in Men, who have had no reaſon to fear Man, ſince their wickedneſs being unknown to any but themſelves, they could have no accuſer but themſelves. They have been in many acts which their Companions have juſtified them in: Perſons above the ſtroak of Humane Laws, yea ſuch as the People have honoured as Gods, have been haunted by them. Conſcience hath not been frighted by the power of Princes, or brib'd by the pleaſures of Courts: *David* was purſued by his horrors, when he was by reaſon of his dignity above the puniſhment by the Law, or at leaſt was not reach'd by the Law; ſince though the Murder of *Uriah* was intended by him, it was not acted by him. Such examples are frequent in humane Records: When the crime hath been above any puniſhment by Man, they have had an Accuſer, Judge and Executioner, in their own breaſts. Can this be originally from a Mans ſelf? He who loves and cheriſhes himſelf, would fly from any thing that diſturbs him: 'Tis a greater Power and Majeſty from whom Man cannot hide himſelf, that holds him in thoſe fetters. What ſhould affect their minds for that which can never bring them ſhame or puniſhment in this World, if there were not ſome Supream Judge, to whom they were to give an account, whoſe inſtrument Conſcience is? Doth it do this of it ſelf? Hath it received an Authority from the Man himſelf to ſting him? It is ſome Supream Power, that doth direct and commiſſion it againſt our Wills.

3. *Theſe operations of Conſcience cannot be totally ſhaken off by Man.* If there be no God, why do not Men ſilence the clamors of their Conſciences, and ſcatter thoſe fears that diſturb their reſt and pleaſures? How inquiſitive are Men after ſome remedy againſt thoſe Convulſions? Sometimes they would render the charge inſignificant, and ſing a reſt to themſelves, tho' they *walk in the wickedneſs of their own hearts*: * How often do Men attempt to drown it by ſenſual pleaſures, and perhaps over-power it for a time; but it revives, reinforceth it ſelf, and acts a revenge for its former ſtop. It holds ſin to a Mans view, and fixes his eyes upon it, whether he will or no: *The wicked are like a troubled Sea, and cannot reſt*, Iſa. 57. *v.* 20. They would wallow in ſin without controul, but this inward principle will not ſuffer it; nothing can ſhelter Men from thoſe blows. What is the reaſon it could never be cried down? Man is an enemy to his own diſquiet; what Man would continue upon the rack, if it were in his power to deliver himſelf? Why have all humane remedies been without ſucceſs, and not able to extinguiſh thoſe operations, tho' all the wickedneſs of the heart hath been ready to aſſiſt and ſecond the attempt? It hath purſued Men, notwithſtanding all the violence uſed againſt it, and renewed its ſcourges with more ſeverity, as men deal with their reſiſting Slaves. Man can as little ſilence thoſe Thunders in his Soul, as he can the Thunders in the Heavens: He muſt ſtrip himſelf of his humanity, before he can be ſtript of an accuſing and affrightning Conſcience; it ſticks as cloſe to him as his nature: Since man cannot throw out the Proceſs it makes againſt him, 'tis an evidence that ſome higher Power ſecures its Throne and ſtanding. Who ſhould put this ſcourge into the hand of Conſcience, which no Man in the World is able to wreſt out?

* Deut. 29. 19.

4. We may add, *the comfortable reflections of Conſcience.* There are excuſing as well as accuſing reflections of Conſcience, when things are done as works of the *Law of Nature*, Rom. 2. 15. As it doth not forbear to accuſe and torture, when a wickedneſs, tho' unknown to others, is committed; ſo when a man hath done well, tho' he be attackt with all the calumnies the wit of man can forge, yet his Conſcience juſtifies the action, and fills him with a ſingular contentment. As there is torture in ſinning, ſo there is peace and joy in well doing: Neither of thoſe it could do, if it did not underſtand a Soveraign Judge, who puniſhes the rebels, and rewards the well-doer. *Conſcience* is the foundation of all Religion; and the two Pillars upon which it is built, are the *Being* of God, and the *Bounty* of God to thoſe that *diligently ſeek him* *.

* Heb. 11. 6.

This proves the *Exiſtence of God*: If there were no God, Conſcience were uſeleſs; the operations of it would have no foundation, if there were not an eye to take notice, and a hand to puniſh or reward the action. The accuſations of Conſcience evidence the Omniſcience and the *Holineſs* of God; The terrors of Conſcience, the *juſtice* of God; The approbations of Conſcience, the *goodneſs* of God: All the Order in the World owes it ſelf, next to the Providence of God, to Conſcience; without it the World would be a *Golgotha*. As the Creatures witneſs, there was a firſt cauſe that produced them, ſo this principle in Man evidenceth it ſelf to be ſet by the ſame hand, for the good of that which it had ſo framed: There could be no Conſcience if there were no God, and Man could not be a rational Creature, if there were no Conſcience. As there is a *Rule* in us, there muſt be a *Judge* whether our actions be according to the Rule. And ſince Conſcience in our corrupted ſtate is in ſome particular miſled, there muſt be a power ſuperior to Conſcience, to judge how it hath behaved it ſelf in its deputed office: We muſt come to ſome ſupream Judge, who can Judge Conſcience it ſelf. As a man

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can have no ſurer evidence, that he is a Being, than becauſe he thinks; he is a thinking Being. So there is no ſurer evidence in nature, that there is a God, than that every man hath a natural principle in him, which continually cites him before God, and puts him in mind of him, and makes him one way or other fear him, and reflects upon him whether he will or no: A man hath leſs power over his Conſcience than over any other faculty: He may chooſe whether he will exerciſe his underſtanding about, or move his will to ſuch an object, but he hath no ſuch Authority over his Conſcience; he cannot limit it, or cauſe it to ceaſe from acting and reflecting; and therefore both that, and the Law about which it acts, are ſettled by ſome Supream Authority in the mind of Man, and this is God.

Fourthly, IV. The evidence of a *God* reſults from *the vaſtneſs of deſires in Man*, and the real diſſatisfaction he hath in every thing below himſelf. Man hath a boundleſs appetite after ſome Soveraign Good: As his underſtanding is more capacious than any thing below, ſo is his appetite larger. This affection of *deſire* exceeds all other affections. Love is determined to ſomething known. Fear to ſomething apprehended; but deſires approach nearer to Infiniteneſs, and purſue not only what we know, or what we have a glimps of, but what we find wanting in what we already enjoy. That which the deſire of man is moſt naturally carried after, is *Bonum*; ſome fully ſatiſfying Good. We deſire knowledge by the ſole impulſe of reaſon; but we deſire Good before the excitement of reaſon, and the deſire is always after Good, but not always after Knowledge.

Now the Soul of Man finds an imperfection in every thing here, and cannot ſcrape up a perfect ſatisfaction and felicity. In the higheſt fruitions of worldly things, 'tis ſtill purſuing ſomething elſe, which ſpeaks a defect in what it already hath. The World may afford a felicity for our duſt, the body, but not for the inhabitant in it; 'tis too mean for that. Is there any one Soul among the Sons of Men, that can, upon a due enquiry ſay, it was at reſt and wanted no more, that hath not ſometimes had deſires after an immaterial Good? The Soul *follows hard* after ſuch a thing, and hath frequent looks after it, *Pſal.*63.8. Man deſires a ſtable Good, but no ſublunary thing is ſo: And he that doth not deſire ſuch a Good, wants the rational nature of a Man. This is as natural as Underſtanding, Will and Conſcience. Whence ſhould the Soul of Man have thoſe deſires? How came it to underſtand that ſomething is ſtill wanting to make its nature more perfect; if there were not in it ſome notion of a more perfect Being, which can give it reſt?

Can ſuch a *capacity* be ſuppoſed to be in it, without ſomething in being able to ſatisfie it? If ſo, the nobleſt Creature in the World is miſerableſt, and in a worſe condition than any other. Other Creatures obtain their ultimate deſires, *they are filled with good*, Pſal.104.28. And ſhall Man only have a vaſt deſire without any poſſibility of enjoyment? Nothing in Man is in vain: He hath objects for his affections, as well as affections for objects. Every Member of his body hath its end, and doth attain it. Every affection of his Soul hath an object, and that in this World, and ſhall there be none for his deſire, which comes neareſt to infinite of any affection planted in him? This boundleſs deſire had not its original from Man himſelf: Nothing would render it ſelf reſtleſs; ſomething above the bounds of this World, implanted thoſe deſires after a higher Good, and made him reſtleſs in every thing elſe. And ſince the Soul can only reſt in that which is infinite, there is ſomething infinite for it to reſt in: Since nothing in the World, tho' a Man had the whole, can give it a ſatisfaction, there is ſomething above the World only capable to do it, otherwiſe the Soul would be always without it, and be more in vain than any other Creature.

There is therefore ſome infinite Being that can only give a contentment to the Soul, and *this is God*, And that goodneſs which implanted ſuch deſires in the Soul, would not do it to no purpoſe, and mock it in giving it an infinite deſire of ſatisfaction, without intending it the pleaſure of enjoyment, if it doth not by its own folly deprive it ſelf of it. The felicity of Humane Nature muſt needs exceed that which is allotted to other Creatures.

4. And *laſt Reaſon*. As 'tis a folly to deny that which all Nations in the World have conſented to, which the frame of the World evidenceth, which Man in his Body, Soul, Operations of Conſcience, witneſſeth to: So *'tis a folly to deny the Being of God, which is witneſſed unto by extraordinary occurrences in the World.* *Fourth Reaſon.*

1. *In extraordinary Judgments.* When a juſt revenge follows abominable crimes, eſpecially when the Judgment is ſuited to the ſin, by a ſtrange Concatenation and ſucceſſion of Providences, methodized to bring ſuch a particular puniſhment; when the ſin of a Nation or Perſon is made legible in the inflicted Judgment, which teſtifies that it cannot be a caſual thing. The Scripture gives us an account of the neceſſity of ſuch Judgments, to keep up the reverential thoughts of God in the World. Pſal.9.16. *The Lord is known by the judgment which he executes, the wicked is ſnared in the work of his own hand.* And Jealouſie is the name of God, *Exod.*34.14. *Whoſe name is Jealous*: He is diſtinguiſh'd from falſe Gods by the Judgments which he ſends, as men are by their names.

Extraordinary Prodigies, in many Nations, have been the Heralds of extraordinary Judgments, and preſages of the particular Judgments which afterwards they have left, of which the *Roman* Hiſtories, and others, are full. That there are ſuch things is undeniable, and that the events have been anſwerable to the threatning, unleſs we will throw away all Humane Teſtimonies, and count all the Hiſtories of the World forgeries. Such things are evidences of ſome inviſible Power which orders thoſe affairs: And if there be inviſible Powers, there is alſo an efficacious cauſe which moves them. A Government certainly there is among them, as well as in the World, and then we muſt come to ſome Supream Governor which preſides over them.

Judgments upon notorious Offenders, have been evident in all Ages; the Scripture gives many inſtances. I ſhall only mention that of *Herod Agrippa*, which *Joſephus* mentions. * He receives the flattering applauſe of the People, and thought himſelf a God; but by the ſudden ſtroak upon him, was forced by his torture to confeſs another. *I am God*, ſaith he, *in your account, but a higher calls me away: The Will of the heavenly Deity is to be endured. The Angel of the Lord ſmote him.* The Judgment here was ſuited to the ſin; he that would be a God is eaten up of Worms, the vileſt Creatures. *Tully Hoſtilius*, a *Roman* King, who counted it the moſt unroyal thing to be Religious, or own any other God but his Sword, was conſumed himſelf, and his whole Houſe, by Lightning from Heaven. * *Lib* 19. *Antiq.* Act. 12.21,22, 23.

Many things are unaccountable, unleſs we have recourſe to God: The ſtrange Revelations of Murderers, that have moſt ſecretly committed their crimes: The making good ſome dreadful imprecations, which ſome wretches have uſed to confirm a Lye, and immediately have been ſtruck with that Judgment they wiſhed: The raiſing often unexpected perſons to be inſtruments of Vengeance on a ſinful and perfidious Nation: The overturning the deepeſt and ſureſt Counſels of Men, when they have had a ſucceſsful progreſs, and came to the very point of Execution:

The whole design of Mens preservation hath been beaten in pieces by some unforeseen circumstance, so that Judgments have broken in upon them without controul, and all their subtilties been outwitted. The strange crossing of some in their Estates, tho' the most wise, industrious, and frugal persons, and that by strange and unexpected ways: And it is observable, how often every thing contributes to carry on a Judgment intended, as if they rationally designed it. All those loudly proclaim a God in the World: If there were no God, there would be no sin; if no sin, there would be no punishment.

2. *In Miracles.* The course of Nature is uniform; and when it is put out of its course, it must be by some Superior Power invisible to the World; and by whatsoever invisible Instruments they are wrought, the efficacy of them must depend upon some first Cause above Nature. Psal. 72. 18. *Blessed be the Lord God of* Israel, *who only doth wondrous things*, by himself and his sole Power.

That which cannot be the result of a Natural Cause, must be the result of something Supernatural: What is beyond the reach of Nature, is the effect of a power superior to Nature: For it is quite against the order of Nature, and is the elevation of something to such a pitch, which all Nature could not advance it to. Nature cannot go beyond its own limits: If it be determined by another, as hath been formerly proved, it cannot lift it self above it self, without that power, that so determined it. Natural Agents act necessarily: The Sun doth necessarily shine, Fire doth necessarily burn. That cannot be the result of Nature, which is above the ability of Nature. That cannot be the work of Nature, which is against the order of Nature: Nature cannot do any thing against it self, or invert its own course.

We must own that such things have been, or we must accuse all the Records of former Ages to be a pack of Lies; which whosoever doth, destroys the greatest and best part of Humane Knowledge. The Miracles mentioned in the Scripture, wrought by our Saviour, are acknowledged by the *Heathen*, by the *Jews* at this day, tho' his greatest enemies. There is no dispute whether such things were wrought, the *dead raised*, the *blind restored to sight*. The Heathens have acknowledged the Miraculous Eclipse of the Sun, at the Passion of Christ, quite against the rule of Nature, the Moon being then in opposition to the Sun. The propagation of Christianity, contrary to the Methods whereby other Religions have been propagated, that in a few years the Nations of the World should be sprinkled with this Doctrine, and give in a greater Catalogue of Martyrs, courting the devouring flames, than all the Religions of the World.

To this might be added, the strange hand that was over the *Jews*, the only people in the World professing the true God, that should so often be befriended by their Conquerors, so as to rebuild their Temple, tho' they were looked upon as a people apt to rebel. *Dion* and *Seneca* observe, that wherever they were transplanted, they prospered, and gave Laws to the Victors. So that this proves also the Authority of the Scripture, the Truth of Christian Religion, as well as the Being of a God, and a Superior Power over the World.

To this might be added, the bridling the tumultuous passions of Men for the preservation of Humane Societies, which else would run the World into unconceivable confusions, *Psal.* 65. 7. *Which stilleth the noise of the Sea, and the tumults of the People.* As also the Miraculous deliverance of a Person or Nation, when upon the very brink of ruin; the sudden answer of Prayer, when God hath been sought to, and the turning away a Judgment, which in reason could not be expected to be averted, and the raising a sunk People from a ruin which seemed inevitable, by unexpected ways.

3. *Accomplishments of Prophecies.* Those things which are purely contingent, and cannot be known by Natural signs, and in their causes, as Eclipses and Changes in Nations, which may be discerned by an observation of the Signs of the Times; such things that fall not within this compass, if they be foretold and come to pass, are solely from some higher hand, and above the cause of Nature. This in Scripture is asserted to be a notice of the true God, *Isa.* 41. 23. *Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that you are God*; and *Isa.* 46. 10. *I am God, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times, the things that are not yet done, saying, my Counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.* And Prophecy was consented to by all the Philosophers to be from Divine Illumination: That power which discovers things future, which all the foresight of men cannot ken and conjecture, is above Nature. And to foretel them so certainly as if they did already exist, or had existed long ago, must be the result of a mind infinitely intelligent, because it is the highest way of knowing, and a higher cannot be imagined. And he that knows things future in such a manner, must needs know things present and past. *Cyrus* was Prophesied of by *Esay*, *ch.* 44. 28. & 45. 1. long before he was born: His Victories, Spoils, all that should happen in *Babylon*, his bounty to the *Jews* came to pass, according to that Prophecy; and the sight of that Prophecy which the *Jews* shewed him, as other Historians report, was that which moved him to be favourable to the *Jews*.

Alexanders sight of *Daniels* Prophecy, concerning his Victories, moved him to spare *Jerusalem*. And are not the four *Monarchies* plainly deciphered in that Book, before the fourth rose up in the World? That power which foretels things beyond the reach of the Wit of Man, and orders all causes to bring about those predictions, must be an infinite power, the same that made the World, sustains it and governs all things in it according to his pleasure, and to bring about his own ends: And this Being is God.

1. If Atheism be a folly; *'Tis then pernicious to the World, and to the Atheist himself.* Wisdom is the band of Humane Societies, the glory of Man. Folly is the disturber of Families, Cities, Nations: The disgrace of Humane Nature. *Use* 1.

First, I. *'Tis pernicious to the World.*

1. *It would root out the foundations of Government.* It demolisheth all order in Nations. The Being of a God is the guard of the World: The Sense of a God is the foundation of Civil order; without this there is no tye upon the Consciences of Men. What force would there be in Oaths for the decisions of Controversies, what right could there be in Appeals made to one that had no Being? A City of Atheists would be a heap of confusion; there could be no ground of any Commerce, when all the Sacred Bands of it in the Consciences of Men were snapt asunder, which are torn to pieces, and utterly destroyed, by denying the Existence of God: What Magistrate could be secure in his standing, what private person could be secure in his right? * Can that then be a truth, that is destructive of all publick Good? If the Atheists sentiment, that there were no God, were a truth; and the contrary, that there were a God, were a falsity; it would then follow, that falsity made Men good and serviceable to one another: that error were the foundation of all the beauty and order, and outward felicity of the World; the Fountain of all good to Man. If there were no God, to *believe there is one* would be an error; and to believe there is none would be the greatest Wisdom, because it would be the greatest Truth. And then as it is the greatest

* Lessius *de Provid.* p. 665.

Wisdom

wisdom to *fear God*, upon the apprehension of his Existence; * So it would be the greatest error to fear him, if there were none. It would unquestionably follow, that Error is the support of the World, the spring of all Humane Advantages; and that every part of the World were obliged to a falsity for being a quiet Habitation, which is the most absurd thing to imagine. 'Tis a thing impossible to be tolerated by any Prince, without laying an Axe to the Root of the Government.

* Psal. 111. v. 19.

2. *It would introduce all evil into the World.* If you take away God, you take away Conscience, and thereby all measures and rules of Good and Evil. And how could any Laws be made when the measure and standard of them were removed? All good Laws are founded upon the Dictates of Conscience and Reason, upon common Sentiments in humane Nature, which spring from a sense of God: So that if the Foundation be demolish'd, the whole Superstructure must tumble down: A Man might be a Thief, a Murderer, an Adulterer, and could not in a strict sense be an Offender. The worst of Actions could not be Evil, if a Man were a God to himself, a Law to himself. Nothing but Evil deserves a Censure, and nothing would be Evil, if there were no God, the Rector of the World against whom Evil is properly committed: No Man can make that morally Evil, that is not so in it self. As where there is a faint sense of God, the Heart is more strongly inclin'd to Wickedness; so where there is no sense of God, the Bars are remov'd, the flood-gates set open for all Wickedness to rush in upon Mankind. Religion pinions Men from abominable Practices, and restrains them from being Slaves to their own Passions: An Atheist's Arms would be loose to do any thing. * Nothing so villanous and unjust but would be acted, if the natural fear of a Deity were extinguish'd. The first consequence issuing from the apprehension of the *Existence of God*, is his Government of the World. If there be no God, then the natural Consequence is, that there is no supream Government of the World: Such a Notion would cashier all Sentiments of Good, and be like a *Trojan* Horse, whence all Impurity, Tyranny and all sorts of Mischiefs would break out upon Mankind: Corruption and abominable Works in the Text, are the fruit of the Fools perswasion, that *there is no God.* The perverting the ways of Men, oppression and extortion owe their rise to a forgetfulness of God, Jer. 3. 21. *They have perverted their way, and they have forgotten the Lord their God*, Ezek. 22. 12. *Thou hast greedily gained by extortion, and hast forgotten me, saith the Lord.* The whole Earth would be filled with violence, all flesh would corrupt their way, as it was before the deluge, when probably Atheism did abound more than Idolatry; and if not a disowning the Being, yet denying the Providence of God by the Posterity of *Cain*: Those of the Family of *Seth* only *calling upon the Name of the Lord*, Gen. 6. 11, 12. compar'd with *Gen.* 4. 26.

* Lessius de Provid. p. 664.

The greatest Sense of a Deity in any, hath been attended with the greatest innocence of Life and Usefulness to others: And a weaker Sense hath been attended with a baser Impurity. * If there were no God, Blasphemy would be praise-worthy; as the reproach of Idols is praise-worthy, because we testifie that there is no Divinity in them. What can be more contemptible than that which hath no Being? Sin would be only a false Opinion of a violated Law, and an offended Deity. If such Apprehensions prevail, what a wide door is opened to the worst of Villanies? If there be no God, no respect is due to him; all the Religion in the World is a Trifle, and Error, and thus the Pillars of all humane Society, and that which hath made Common-wealths to flourish, are blown away.

* Less. de Prov. p. 665

Secondly, 2. *'Tis pernicious to the Atheist himself.* If he fear no future Punishment, he can never expect any future Reward: All his hopes must be confined to a Swinish and despicable manner of Life, without any imaginations of so much as a dram of reserv'd Happiness. He is in a worse Condition than the silliest Animal, which hath something to please it in its Life: Whereas an *Atheist* can have nothing here to give him a full content, no more than any other Man in the World, and can have less satisfaction hereafter. He deposeth the noble end of his own Being, which was to serve a God and have a satisfaction in him, to seek a God and be Rewarded by him: And he that departs from his end, recedes from his own Nature. All the content any Creature finds, is in performing its end, moving according to its Natural Instinct: As it is a *joy to the Son to run its Race*: * In the same manner it is a satisfaction to every other Creature, and its delight to observe the Law of its Creation. What content can any Man have that runs from his end, opposeth his own Nature, denies a God by whom and for whom he was Created, whose Image he bears, which is the Glory of his Nature; and sinks into the very dregs of brutishness? How elegantly is it described by *Bildad*, * *His own Counsel shall cast him down, terrors shall make him afraid on every side, destruction shall be ready at his side, the first-born of Death shall devour his strength, his Confidence shall be rooted out, and it shall bring him to the King of Terrors: Brimstone shall be scattered upon his Habitation, he shall be driven from light into darkness, and chased out of the World; they that come after him shall be astonished at his Day, as they that went before were affrighted: and this is the place of him that knows not God.* * If there be a future reckoning, (as his own Conscience can't but sometimes inform him of) his condition is desperate, & his misery dreadful and unavoidable: 'Tis not righteous a Hell should entertain any else, if it refuse him.

* Ps. 19. 5

* Job 18. 7, 8, &c.

* Ver. 21.

2. *How lamentable is it, that in our times this folly of Atheism should be so rise?* That there should be found such Monsters in Humane Nature, in the midst of the improvements of Reason, and shinings of the Gospel, who not only make the Scripture the matter of their Jeers, but scoff at the Judgments and Providences of God in the World, and envy their Creator a Being, without whose goodness they had had none themselves; who contradict in their carriage what they assert to be their Sentiment, when they dreadfully imprecate *damnation* to themselves? Whence should that damnation they so rashly wish, be poured forth upon them, if there were not a revenging God? Formerly Atheism was as rare as prodigious, scarce *two* or *three* known in an Age. And those that are reported to be so in former Ages, are rather thought to be counted so, for mocking at the senseless Deities, the common People ador'd, and laying open their Impurities. A meer natural strength would easily discover that those they ador'd for Gods could not deserve that Title, since their Original was known, their Uncleanness manifest and acknowledged by their Worshippers. And probably it was so, * since the Christians were termed Ἄθεοι, because they acknowledged not their vain Idols.

Use 2.

* Justin.

I question whether there ever was, or can be in the World, an uninterrupted and internal denyal of the Being of God, or that Men (unless we can suppose Conscience utterly dead) can arrive to such a degree of Impiety: For before they can stifle such Sentiments in them, (whatsoever they may assert) they must be utter Strangers to the Common Conceptions of reason, and despoil themselves of their own Humanity. He that dares to deny a God with his lips, yet sets up something or other as a God in his Heart. Is it not lamentable that this sacred Truth, consented to by all Nations, which is the

band of Civil Societies, the ſource of all order in the World, ſhould be denyed with a bare face, and diſputed againſt in Companies; And the glory of a wiſe Creator aſcribed to an unintelligent Nature, to blind Chance? Are not ſuch worſe than Heathens? They worſhipped many Gods, theſe none: They preſerved a Notion of God in the World under a diſguiſe of Images; theſe would baniſh him both from Earth and Heaven, and demoliſh the Statues of him in their own Conſciences: They degraded him, theſe would deſtroy him: They coupled Creatures with him, *Rom.* 1. 25. *Who worſhipped the Creature with the Creator*, as it may moſt properly be rendred: And theſe would make him worſe than the Creature, a meer nothing. Earth is hereby become worſe than Hell. Atheiſm is a perſwaſion, which finds no footing any where elſe. Hell that receives ſuch Perſons, in this point reforms them: They can never deny or doubt of his Being, while they feel his ſtroaks. The Devil rejoyces at their Wickedneſs, knows them to be in an Error; for he
*Jam. 2. 19. *believes and trembles at the belief.* * This is a forerunner of Judgment: Boldneſs in ſin is a preſage of Vengeance, eſpecially when the honour of God is more particularly concern'd therein. It tends to the overturning humane Society, taking off the Bridle from the wicked Inclinations of Men. And God appears not in ſuch viſible Judgments againſt ſin immediately committed againſt himſelf, as in the caſe of thoſe ſins that are deſtructive to humane Society. Beſides, God as Governour of the World will uphold that, without which all his Ordinances in the World would be uſeleſs. *Atheiſm* is point blank againſt all the Glory of God in Creation, and againſt all the Glory of God in Redemption, and pronounceth at one Breath, both the Creator, and all Acts of Religion and Divine Inſtitutions uſeleſs and inſignificant.

Since moſt have had one time or other, ſome riſings of doubt, whether there be a God, tho' few do in expreſſions deny his Being, it may not be unneceſſary to propoſe ſome things for the further impreſſing this truth, and guarding themſelves againſt ſuch temptations.

1. *'Tis utterly impoſſible to demonſtrate there is no God.* He can chooſe no *Medium*, but will fall in as a proof for his Exiſtence, and a manifeſtation of his Excellency, rather than againſt it. The Pretences of the Atheiſt are ſo ridiculous, that they are not worth the mentioning.

They never ſaw God, and therefore know not how to believe ſuch a Being; they cannot comprehend him. He would not be God, if he could fall within the narrow Model of an humane Underſtanding: He would not be infinite, if he were comprehenſible, or to be terminated by our ſight. How ſmall a thing muſt that be which is ſeen by a bodily Eye or graſp'd by a weak Mind? If God were viſible or comprehenſible, he would be limited: Shall it be a ſufficient Demonſtration from a blind Man, that there is no fire in the Room, becauſe he ſees it not, tho' he feel the warmth of it? The knowledge of the effect is ſufficient to conclude the Exiſtence of the Cauſe. Who ever ſaw his own Life? Is it ſufficient to deny a Man Lives, becauſe he beholds not his Life, and only knows it by his Motion? He never ſaw his own Soul, but knows he hath one by his thinking power: The Air renders it ſelf ſenſible to Men in its operations, yet was never ſeen by the eye.

If God ſhould render himſelf viſible, they might queſtion as well as know, whether that which was ſo viſible, were God or ſome deluſion. If he ſhould appear glorious, we can as little behold him in his Majeſtick Glory, as an Owl can behold the Sun in its Brightneſs; we ſhould ſtill but ſee him in his Effects, as we do the Sun by his Beams. If he ſhould ſhew a new Miracle, we ſhould ſtill ſee him but by his Works; ſo we ſee him in his Creatures, every one of which would be as great a Miracle as any can be wrought, to one that had the firſt proſpect of them. To require to ſee God, is to require that which is impoſſible, 1 *Tim.* 6. 16. *He dwells in the light which no Man can approach unto, whom no Man hath ſeen nor can ſee.* 'Tis viſible that he is, *for he covers himſelf with Light as with a Garment*, Pſal. 104. 2. 'Tis inviſible what he is, *for he makes Darkneſs his ſecret place*, Pſal. 18. 11. Nothing more clear to the Eye than Light, and nothing more difficult to the underſtanding than the nature of it: as Light is the firſt Object obvious to the Eye, ſo is God the firſt Object obvious to the Underſtanding. The Arguments from Nature do with greater ſtrength evince his Exiſtence, than any pretences can manifeſt there is no God. No Man can aſſure himſelf by any good reaſon there is none. For as for the *likeneſs of Events* to him that is *righteous* and him that is *wicked*, to him that *ſacrificeth* and to him that *ſacrificeth* not, *Eccleſ.* 9. 2. It is an Argument for a reſerve of Judgment in another State, which every Mans Conſcience dictates to him; when the Juſtice of God ſhall be glorified in another world, as much as his patience is in this.

2. *Whoſoever doubts of it, makes himſelf a mark, againſt which all the Creatures fight.*

All the Stars fought againſt *Siſera* for *Iſrael*: All the Stars in Heaven, and the Duſt on Earth fight for God againſt the Atheiſt. He hath as many Arguments againſt him, as there are Creatures in the whole compaſs of Heaven and Earth: He is moſt unreaſonable that denies or doubts of that whoſe Image and ſhadow he ſees round about him; he may ſooner deny the Sun that warms him, the Moon that in the Night walks in her Brightneſs, deny the Fruits he enjoys from the Earth, yea and deny that he doth exiſt. He muſt tear his own Conſcience, fly from his own thoughts, be changed into the Nature of a Stone which hath neither Reaſon nor Senſe, before he can diſingage himſelf from thoſe Arguments which evince the Being of a God. He that would make the natural Religion profeſſed in the World a meer Romance, muſt give the lye to the common ſenſe of Mankind; he muſt be at an irreconcileable enmity with his own Reaſon, reſolve to hear nothing that it ſpeaks, if he will not hear what it ſpeaks in this caſe, with a greater evidence than it can aſcertain any thing elſe. God hath ſo ſettled himſelf in the reaſon of Man, that he muſt vilifie the nobleſt Faculty God hath given him, and put off Nature it ſelf before he can blot out the Notion of a God.

3. No queſtion but *thoſe that have been ſo bold as to deny that there was a God, have ſometimes been much afraid they have been in an Error, and have at leaſt ſuſpected there was a God, when ſome ſuddain Prodigy hath preſented it ſelf to them and rouſed their fears.* And whatſoever Sentiments they might have in their blinding Proſperity, they have had other kind of Motions in them in their ſtormy Affections: and like *Jonah's* Mariners have been ready to cry to him for help, whom they diſdained to own ſo much as in Being, while they ſwam in their pleaſures. The Thoughts of a Deity cannot be ſo extinguiſh'd, but they will revive and ruſh upon a Man, at leaſt under ſome ſharp Affliction. Amazing Judgments will make them queſtion their own apprehenſions. God ſends ſome Meſſengers to keep alive the Apprehenſion of him as a Judge, while Men reſolve not to own or reverence him as a Governour. A Man cannot but keep a ſcent of what was born with him: As a Veſſel that hath been ſeaſoned firſt with a ſtrong juice will preſerve the ſcent of it, whatſoever Liquors are afterwards put into it.

4. *What*

4. *What is it for which such Men rack their Wits, to form Notions, that there is no God?* Is it not that they would indulge some *vicious habit*, which hath gained the possession of their Soul, which they know *cannot be favoured by that holy God*, whose Notion * Psal. 94. 6, 7. they would raze out *? Is it not for some brutish affection, as degenerative of Humane Nature, as derogatory to the Glory of God? A Lust as unmanly as sinful?

The terrors of God are the effects of guilt; and therefore Men would wear out the apprehension of a Deity, that they might be brutish without controul. They would fain believe there were no God, that they might not be Men, but Beasts. How great a folly is it to take so much pains in vain, for a slavery and torment? To cast off that which they call a yoke, for that which really is one? There is more pains and toughness of Soul requisite to shake off the apprehensions of God, than to believe that he is, and cleave constantly to him. What a madness is it in any to take so much pains to be less than a Man, by razing out the apprehensions of God, when with less pains, he may be more than an earthly Man, by cherishing the Notions of God, and walking answerably thereunto?

5. *How unreasonable is it for any Man to hazard himself at this rate in the denial of a God?* The Atheist, saith he, knows not that there is a God; but may he not reasonably think, there may be one for ought he knows? And if there be, what a desperate confusion will he be in, when all his bravado's shall prove false? What can they gain by such an Opinion? A freedom, say they, from the burdensome yoke of Conscience, a liberty to do what they list: That doth not subject them to Divine Laws. 'Tis an hard matter to perswade any that they can gain this. They can gain but a sordid pleasure, unworthy the Nature of Man. But it were well, that such would argue thus with themselves: If there be a God, and I fear and obey him, I gain a happy Eternity; but if there be no God, I lose nothing but my sordid Lusts, by firmly believing there is one. If I be deceived at last, and find a God, can I think to be rewarded by him, for disowning him? Do not I run a desperate hazard to lose his Favour, his Kingdom, and endless Felicity, for an endless Torment? By confessing a God I venture no loss; but by denying him, I run the most desperate hazard, if there be one.

He is not a reasonable Creature, that will not put himself upon such a reasonable arguing.

What a doleful meeting will there be between the God who is denied, and the Atheist that denies him, who shall meet with reproaches on Gods part, and terrors on his own? All that he gains is a liberty to defile himself here, and a certainty to be despised hereafter, if he be in an error, as undoubtedly he is.

6. *Can any such person say he hath done all that he can to inform himself of the Being of God, or of other things which he denies?* Or rather, they would fain imagine there is none, that they may sleep securely in their Lusts, and be free (if they could) from the Thunder-claps of Conscience? Can such say they have used their utmost endeavours to instruct themselves in this, and can meet with no satisfaction? Were it an abstruse *Truth* it might not be wondred at: But not to meet with satisfaction in this, which every thing minds us of, and helpeth, is the fruit of an extream negligence, stupidity, and a willingness to be unsatisfied, and a judicial process of God against them. 'Tis strange any Man should be so dark in that, upon which depends the conduct of his life, and the expectation of happiness hereafter.

I do not know what some of you may think, but I believe these things are not useless to be proposed for our selves to answer temptations: We know not what wicked temptation, in a debauched and sceptick Age, meeting with a corrupt heart, may prompt Men to: And tho' there may not be any Atheist here present, yet I know there is more than one, who have accidentally met with such, who openly denied a Deity. And if the like occasion happen, these considerations may not be unuseful to apply to their Consciences. But I must confess, that since those that live in this sentiment, do not judge themselves worthy of their own care, they are not worthy of the care of others; and a Man must have all the Charity of the Christian Religion, which they despise, not to contemn them, and leave them to their own folly. As we are to pity Mad-men, who sink under an unavoidable distemper, we are as much to abominate them, who wilfully hug this prodigious frenzy.

If it be the Atheists folly to deny or doubt of the Being of God, *'tis our Wisdom to be firmly settled in this Truth, That God is.* We should never be without our Arms, in an Age wherein Atheism appears bare-fac'd without a disguise. *Use* 3.

You may meet with suggestions to it; tho' the *Devil* formerly never attempted to demolish this Notion in the World, but was willing to keep it up, so the worship due to God might run in his own Channel; and was necessitated to preserve it, without which he could not have erected that Idolatry, which was his great design in opposition to God: Yet since the Foundations of that are torn up, and never like to be rebuilt, he may endeavour, as his last refuge, to banish the Notion of God out of the World, that he may reign as absolutely without it, as he did before by the mistakes about the Divine Nature. But we must not lay all upon *Satan*; the corruption of our own hearts ministers matter to such Sparks. 'Tis not said, Satan hath suggested to the Fool, but *the Fool hath said in his heart there is no God.* But let them come from what principle soever, silence them quickly, give them their dismiss; oppose the whole Scheme of Nature to fight against them, as the Stars did against *Sisera.* Stir up Sentiments of Conscience to oppose Sentiments of Corruption. Resolve sooner to believe, that your selves are not, than that God is not: And if you suppose they at any time come from Satan, object to him that you know he believes the contrary, to what he suggests. Settle this principle firmly in you, *let us behold Him that is invisible, as* Moses *did*: * Let us have the sentiments following upon the Notion of a God; to be restrained by a fear of him, excited by a love to him, not to violate his Laws and offend his Goodness. He is not a God careless of our actions, negligent to inflict punishment, and bestow rewards, *he forgets not the labour of our love,* * nor the integrity of our ways: He were not a God, if he were not a Governor: And punishments and rewards are as essential to Government, as a foundation to a building: His Being, and his Government in rewarding, [which] implies punishment, (*for the neglects of him are linkt together*) * and are not to be separated in our thoughts of him. * Heb. 11. 27. * Heb. 6. 10. * Heb. 11. 6.

1. *Without this truth fixed in us, we can never give him the worship due to his Name.* When the knowledge of any thing is fluctuating and uncertain, our actions about it are careless. We regard not that which we think doth not much concern us. If we do not firmly believe there is a God, we shall pay him no steady worship; and if we believe not the excellency of his Nature, we shall offer him but a slight service. * The *Jews* * call the knowledge of the Being of God, The Foundation and Pillar of Wisdom. The whole frame of Religion is dissolved without this apprehension, and totters if this apprehension be wavering. Religion in the Heart is as Water in a Weather-glass, which riseth or falls according * Mal. 1. 13, 14. * *Main funda. Legis cap.*

cording to the ſtrength or weakneſs of this belief. How can any Man worſhip that which he believes not to be, or doubts of? Could any Man omit the paying an homage to one, whom he did believe to be an Omnipotent, Wiſe Being, poſſeſſing (infinitely above our conceptions) the perfections of all Creatures? He muſt either think there is no ſuch Being, or that he is an eaſie, drowſie, inobſervant God, and not ſuch a one as our natural Notions of him, if liſtened to, as well as the Scripture, repreſent him to be.

2. *Without being rooted in this, we cannot order our lives.* All our baſeneſs, ſtupidity, dulneſs, wandrings, vanity, ſpring from a wavering and unſettledneſs in this principle. This gives ground to brutiſh pleaſures, not only to ſollicite, but conquer us. *Abraham* expected violence in any place where God was not owned, *Gen.* 20. 11. *Surely the fear of God is not in this place, and they will ſlay me for my Wifes ſake.* The natural knowledge of God firmly impreſt, would choak that which would ſtifle our Reaſon and deface our Souls. The belief that God is, and what he is, would have a mighty influence to perſwade us to a real Religion, and ſerious Conſideration, and caſting about how to be like to him, and united with him.

3. *Without it we cannot have any comfort of our lives.* Who would willingly live in a ſtormy World, void of a God? If we waver in this Principle, to whom ſhould we make our complaints in our afflictions? Where ſhould we meet with ſupports? How could we ſatisfie our ſelves with the hopes of a future Happineſs? There is a ſweetneſs in the Meditation of his Exiſtence, and that *he is a Creator.*

* Pſal. 104. 24. * Thoughts of other things have a bitterneſs mixed with them: Houſes, Lands, Children now are, ſhortly they will not be; but *God is*, that made the World: His Faithfulneſs, as he is a Creator, is a Ground to *depoſite our Souls* and Concerns in *our innocent Sufferings.*

* 1 Pet. 4. 19. * So far as we are weak in the acknowledgment of God, we deprive our ſelves of our content in the view of his infinite perfections.

4. *Without the rooting of this Principle, we cannot have a firm belief of Scripture.* The Scripture will be a ſlight thing to one that hath weak ſentiments of God. The Belief of a God muſt neceſſarily precede the belief of any Revelation: The latter cannot take place without the former as the foundation. We muſt firmly believe the Being of a God, wherein our happineſs doth conſiſt, before we can believe any means which conduct us to him: *Moſes* begins with the Author of Creation, before he treats of the Promiſe of Redemption. *Paul* preached *God as a Creator* to an Univerſity, before he preached Chriſt as Mediator.

* Acts 17. 24. * What influence can the Teſtimony of God have in his Revelation upon one that doth not firmly aſſent to the Truth of his Being? All would be in vain that is ſo often repeated [*thus ſaith the Lord*] if we do not believe there is a Lord that ſpeaks it. There could be no awe from his Soveraignty in his commands, nor any comfortable taſte of his Goodneſs in his Promiſes. The more we are ſtrengthened in this Principle, the more credit we ſhall be able to give to Divine Revelation, to reſt in his Promiſe, and to reverence his Precept; the Authority of all depends upon the Being of the Revealer.

To this purpoſe, ſince we have handled this diſcourſe by natural Arguments,

1. *Study God in the Creatures as well as in the Scriptures.* The primary uſe of the Creatures, is to acknowledge God in them; they were made to be witneſſes of himſelf and his Goodneſs, and Heralds of his Glory, which Glory of God as Creator, *ſhall endure for ever*, Pſal. 104. 31. that whole *Pſalm* is a Lecture of Creation and Providence. The World is a ſacred Temple; Man is introduced to contemplate it, and behold with Praiſe the Glory of God in the pieces of his Art. As Grace doth not deſtroy Nature, ſo the Book of Redemption blots not out that of Creation: Had he not ſhewn himſelf in his Creatures, he could never have ſhewn himſelf in his Chriſt: The order of things required it. God muſt be read where ever he is legible; the Creatures are one Book, wherein he hath writ a part of the *excellency of his name*, * as many Artiſts do in their Works and Watches. * Pſal. 8. 9. Gods Glory, like the Filings of Gold, is too precious to be loſt where ever it drops: nothing ſo vile and baſe in the World, but carries in it an inſtruction for Man, and drives in further the Notion of a God. As he ſaid of his Cottage; Enter here, *Sunt hic etiam Dii*, God diſdains not this place: So the leaſt Creature ſpeaks to Man, every Shrub in the Field, every Fly in the Air, every Limb in a Body; conſider me, God diſdains not to appear in me; he hath diſcover'd in me his Being, and a part of his Skill, as well as in the higheſt. The Creatures manifeſt the Being of God and part of his Perfections. We have indeed a more excellent way, a Revelation ſetting him forth in a more excellent manner, a firmer object of dependence, a brighter object of Love, raiſing our hearts from ſelf-confidence to a confidence in him. Tho' the appearance of God in the one be clearer than in the other, yet neither is to be neglected: The Scripture directs us to *Nature* to view God; it had been in vain elſe for the *Apoſtle* to make uſe of natural arguments: Nature is not contrary to Scripture, nor Scripture to Nature, unleſs we ſhould think God contrary to himſelf, who is the Author of both.

2. *View God in your own experiences of him.* There is a *taſte* and *ſight* of his Goodneſs, tho' no ſight of his Eſſence. * By the taſte of his Goodneſs you may know the reality of the Fountain, whence it ſprings, and from whence it flows: This ſurpaſſeth the greateſt Capacity of a meer natural Underſtanding. Experience of the ſweetneſs of the ways of Chriſtianity, is a mighty preſervative againſt Atheiſm. Many a Man knows not how to prove Honey to be ſweet by his Reaſon but by his Senſe; and if all the Reaſon in the World be brought againſt it, he will not be reaſoned out of what he taſtes. * Pſal. 34. 38.

Have not many found the delightful illapſes of God into their Souls, often ſprinkled with his inward Bleſſings upon their ſeeking of him? had ſecret warnings in their approaches to him? and gentle rebukes in their Conſciences upon their ſwervings from him? Have not many found ſometimes an inviſible hand raiſing them up when they were dejected? ſome unexpected Providence ſtepping in for their relief? and eaſily perceived that it could not be a Work of Chance, nor many times the intention of the Inſtruments he hath uſed in it? You have often found that he is, by finding that he is a Rewarder, and can ſet to your Seals that he is what he hath declared himſelf to be in his Word, Iſa. 43. 12. *I have declared, and have ſaved, therefore you are my witneſſes ſaith the Lord, that I am God.* The ſecret touches of God upon the heart and inward converſes with him, are a greater evidence of the Exiſtence of a ſupream and infinitely good Being, than all Nature.

4. Is it a folly to deny or doubt of the Being of God? *'Tis a folly alſo not to worſhip God, when we acknowledge his Exiſtence*: 'Tis our Wiſdom then to Worſhip him. As it is not indifferent whether we believe there is a God or no, ſo it is not indifferent whether we will give Honour to that God or no. A Worſhip is his Right as he is the Author of our Being, and Fountain of our Happineſs. By this only we acknowledge his Deity: Tho' we profeſs his Being, yet we deny that profeſſion in neglects of Worſhip. To deny him a Worſhip is as great a folly as to deny his Being. He that renounceth all homage to his Creator, envies him the Being which he cannot deprive *Uſe* 4.

him

him of. The natural Inclination to Worship is as universal as the Notion of a God; Idolatry else had never gained footing in the World. *The Existence of God* was never owned in any Nation, but a Worship of him was appointed. And many People who have turned their backs upon some other parts of the Law of Nature, have paid a continual homage to some Superior and invisible Being. The *Jews* give a reason why Man was created in the Evening of the Sabbath, because he should begin his Being with the Worship of his Maker. As soon as ever he found himself to be a Creature, his first solemn act should be a particular respect to his Creator. * *To fear God and keep his Commandments, is the whole of Man*, Hebr. whole Man; He is not a Man but a Beast, without observance of God. *Religion* is as requisite as Reason to compleat a Man: He were not Reasonable if he were not Religious; because by neglecting Religion, he neglects the chiefest Dictate of Reason. Either God framed the World with so much Order, Elegancy and Variety to no purpose, or this was his end at least, that reasonable Creatures should admire him in it, and honour him for it. The Notion of God was not stamp'd upon Men, the Shadows of God did not appear in the Creatures, to be the Subject of an idle Contemplation, but the Motive of a due Homage to God: He created the World for his Glory, a People for himself, that he might have the Honour of his Works: That since we *live* and *move in him* and *by him*, we should live and move *to him* and *for him*. It was the Condemnation of the Heathen World, that when they *knew* there was a God, they did *not give him the Glory* due to him. * He that denys his Being is an Atheist to his Essence: He that denies his Worship is an Atheist to his Honour.

* Eccl. 12.

* Rom. 1. 21

5. If it be a folly to deny the Being of God, *it will be our Wisdom then, since we acknowledge his Being, often to think of him.* Thoughts are the *first issue* of a Creature as reasonable: * He that hath given us the faculty whereby we are able to think, should be the principal object about which the power of it should be exercised. 'Tis a Justice to God the Author of our Understandings, a Justice to the Nature of our Understandings, that the noblest Faculty should be imployed about the most excellent Object. Our minds are a beam from God; and therefore, as the beams of the Sun, when they touch the Earth, should reflect back upon God: As we seem to deny the Being of God, not to think of him; we seem also to unsoul our Souls, in misimploying the Activity of them any other way: like Flies to be oftner on Dunghils than Flowers.

* *Pro.* 4. 23.

'Tis made the black mark of an ungodly Man or an Atheist, that *God is not in all his Thoughts*, Ps. 10. 4. What comfort can be had in the Being of God without thinking of him with Reverence and Delight? A God forgotten is as good as no God to us.

A DISCOURSE UPON Practical Atheism.

Psalm XIV. 1.

Doct. 2. *Practical Atheism is natural to Man in his depraved state, and very frequent in the Hearts and Lives of Men.*

The Fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. He regards him as little as if he had no Being: He said in his *Heart*, not with his Tongue, nor in his Head: He never firmly thought it, nor openly asserted it: Shame put a bar to the first, and natural Reason to the second. Yet perhaps he had sometimes some doubts whether there were a God or no: He wisht there were not any, and oft hoped there were none at all: He could not raze out the Notion of a Deity in his mind, but he neglected the fixing the sense of God in his Heart, and made it too much his Business to deface, and blot out those Characters of God in his Soul, which had been left under the ruines of original nature.

Men may have atheistical Hearts without atheistical Heads. Their Reasons may defend the Notion of a Deity, while their Hearts are empty of affection to the Deity: *Job*'s Children may *curse God in their Hearts*, tho' not with their Lips *.

* Job 1. 5.

There is no God. Most understand it of a denial of the Providence of God; as I have said in opening the former Doctrine.

He denies some Essential Attribute of God, or the Exercise of that Attribute in the World *.

* So the Chaldee reads, לית שולטנא Non potestas, *denying the Authority of God in the World.*

He that denies any *essential* Attribute, may be said to deny the Being of God. Whosoever denies Angels or Men to have Reason and Will, denies the humane and angelical Nature, because Understanding and Will are essential to both those Natures; there could neither be Angel nor Man without them. No Nature can subsist without the Perfections essential to that Nature, nor God be conceived of without his: The Apostle tells us, *Eph.* 2. 12. that the Gentiles were *without* God *in the World*: So in some sense all Unbelievers may be termed *Atheists*; for rejecting the Mediator appointed by God, they reject that God who appointed him.

But this is beyond the intended scope, natural Atheism being the only subject: Yet this is deducible from it. That the Title of ἄθεοι, doth not only belong to those who denyed the Existence of God: or to those who contemn all sense of a Deity, and would root the Conscience and Reverence of God out of their Souls: But it belongs also to these who give not that Worship to God which is due to him: Who Worship many Gods, or who Worship one God in a false and superstitious manner; when they have not right Conceptions of God, nor intend an adoration of him according to the excellency of his Nature: All those that are unconcerned for any particular Religion, fall under this Character. Tho' they own a God in general, yet are willing to acknowledge any God that shall be coined by the powers under whom they live. The *Gentiles* were without God in the World; without the true Notion of God, not without a God of their own framing.

This general or practical Atheism is natural to Men.

1. *Not*

1. *Not natural by Created, but by corrupted Nature:* 'Tis againſt Nature, as Nature came out of the hand of God: But univerſally Natural, as Nature hath been ſophiſticated and infected by the Serpents breath. Inconſideration of God, or miſrepreſentations of his Nature, are as agreeable to corrupt Nature, as the diſowning the Being of a God is contrary to common reaſon. God is not denied *natura ſed vitiis* *.

* Auguſtin de Civit. Dei.

2. *'Tis univerſally natural: The wicked are eſtranged from the Womb*, Pſal. 58. 3. *They go aſtray as ſoon as they be born, their poyſon is like the poyſon of a Serpent. The wicked:* And who by his birth hath a better Title? They go aſtray from the dictates of God, and the Rule of their Creation, as ſoon as ever they be born; their poyſon is like the poyſon of a Serpent, which is radically the ſame in all of the ſame ſpecies. 'Tis ſeminally and fundamentally in all Men, tho' there may be a ſtronger reſtraint by a Divine hand upon ſome Men, than upon others. This principle runs through the whole ſtream of Nature. The natural bent of every Mans heart is diſtant from God: When we attempt any thing pleaſing to God, 'tis like the climbing up a Hill, againſt Nature; when any thing is diſpleaſing to him, 'tis like a Current running down the Channel in its natural courſe. 'When we attempt any thing that is an acknowledgment of the Holineſs of God, we are fain to ruſh with Arms in our hands through a multitude of natural Paſſions, and fight the way through the oppoſitions of our own ſenſitive Appetite. How ſoftly do we naturally ſink down into that which ſets us at a greater diſtance from *God?* There is no active, potent, efficacious ſenſe of a God by Nature. *The heart of the Sons of men is fully ſet in them to do evil*, Eccl. 8. 11. *The heart* in the ſingular number; as if there were but one common heart beat in all Mankind, and bent as with one pulſe, with a joynt conſent and force to wickedneſs, without a ſenſe of the Authority of God in the Earth, as if one heart acted every Man in the World.

* Rom. 3. 9, 10, 11, 12.

The great *Apoſtle* cites the *Text*, to verifie the Charge he brought againſt all Mankind. * In his Interpretation, the *Jews*, who owned one God, and were dignified with ſpecial privileges, as well as the *Gentiles* that maintained many Gods, are within the compaſs of this Character: The *Apoſtle* leaves out the firſt part of the Text, *the Fool hath ſaid in his heart*, but takes in the latter part, and the verſes following: He charges *all*, becauſe *all*, every Man of them was under ſin: *There is none that ſeeks God.* And *v.* 19. he adds, *what the law ſaith, he ſpeaks to thoſe that are under the Law*, that none ſhould imagine he included only the *Gentiles*, and exempted the *Jews* from this deſcription. The Leproſie of Atheiſm had infected the whole Maſs of Humane Nature: No Man among *Jews* or *Gentiles* did naturally ſeek God, and therefore all were void of any ſpark of the practical ſence of the Deity. The effects of this Atheiſm are not in all externally of an equal ſize; yet in the fundamentals and radicals of it, there is not a hairs difference between the beſt and the worſt Men that ever traverſed the World. The diſtinction is laid either in common Grace, bounding and ſuppreſſing it, or in ſpecial Grace, killing and crucifying it. 'Tis in every one either Triumphant or Militant, reigning or depoſed. No Man is any more born with ſenſible acknowledgments of God, than he is born with a clear knowledge of the nature of all the Stars in the Heavens, or Plants upon the Earth. *None ſeeks after God.*

* Coccei.

* None ſeeks God as his Rule, as his End, as his Happineſs, which is a debt the Creature naturally owes to God; he deſires no communion with God: He places his happineſs in any thing inferior to God: He prefers every thing before him, glorifies every thing above him; he hath no delight to know him; he regards not thoſe paths which lead to him; he loves his own filth better than Gods holineſs; his actions are tinctured, and died with Self, and are void of that reſpect which is due from him to God.

The Nobleſt Faculty of Man, his Underſtanding, wherein the remaining Lineaments of the Image of God are viſible; the higheſt operation of that Faculty, which is Wiſdom, is in the Judgment of the Spirit of God *Deviliſh*, whiles it is *Earthly* and *Senſual* *: And the Wiſdom of the beſt Man is no better by Nature, a Legion of impure Spirits poſſeſs it. Deviliſh, as the *Devil*, who tho' he believe there is a God, yet acts as if there were none, and wiſhes he had no Superior to preſcribe him a Law, and inflict that puniſhment upon him which his Crimes have merited. Hence the Poyſon of Man by Nature is ſaid to be like the *Poyſon of a Serpent*, alluding to that Serpentine temptation which firſt infected Mankind, and changed the Nature of Man into the likeneſs of that of the Devil. * So that notwithſtanding the harmony of the World that preſents Men not only with the Notice of the Being of a God, but darts into their Minds ſome remarks of his Power and Eternity; yet the thoughts and reaſonings of Man are ſo corrupt, as may well be called Diabolical, and as contrary to the perfection of God, and the original Law of their Nature, as the actings of the Devil are; For ſince every natural Man is a Child of the Devil, and is acted by the Diabolical Spirit, he muſt needs have that nature which his Father hath, and the Infuſion of that Venom which the *Spirit* that acts him is poſſeſſed with, tho' the full diſcovery of it may be reſtrained by various circumſtances, *Eph.* 2. 2. To conclude, tho' no Man, or at leaſt very few arrive to a round and poſitive concluſion in their hearts that there is no God, yet there is no Man that naturally hath in his heart any reverence of God.

* Jam. 3. 15.

* Pſal. 58. 4.

In general, before I come to a particular proof, take ſome Propoſitions.

Propoſition 1. *Actions are a greater diſcovery of a Principle than Words.* The Teſtimony of Works is louder and clearer than that of Words, and the frame of Mens hearts muſt be meaſured, rather by what they do, than by what they ſay. There may be a mighty diſtance between the Tongue and the Heart, but a courſe of Actions is as little guilty of lying as Intereſt is, according to our common ſaying: All outward Impieties are the branches of an Atheiſm at the root of our Nature, as all peſtilential ſores are expreſſions of the Contagion in the Blood. Sin is therefore frequently called Ungodlineſs in our Engliſh Dialect. Mens Practices are the beſt Indexes of their Principles: The Current of a Mans Life is the counter-part of the frame of his Heart: Who can deny an Error in the Spring or Wheels, when he perceives an Error in the Hand of the Dial? Who can deny an Atheiſm in the Heart, when ſo much is viſible in the Life? The taſte of the Water diſcovers what Mineral 'tis ſtrained through. A practical denial of God is worſe than a verbal, becauſe Deeds have uſually more of deliberation than Words; Words may be the fruit of a Paſſion, but a Sett of evil Actions are the fruit and evidence of a predominant evil Principle in the Heart: All ſlighting words of a Prince do not argue an habitual Treaſon, but a ſucceſſion of overt Treaſonable Attempts ſignifie a ſetled Treaſonable diſpoſition in the Mind: Thoſe therefore are more deſervedly termed Atheiſts, who acknowledge a God, and walk as if there were none, than thoſe (if there can be any ſuch) that deny a God, and walk as if there were one.

A ſenſe of God in the Heart, would burſt out in the Life: Where there is no reverence of God in the Life, 'tis eaſily concluded there is leſs in the Heart.

What doth not influence a Man when it hath the addition of the Eyes, and cenſures of outward Spectators,

tors, and the care of a Reputation (ſo much the God of the World) to ſtrengthen it and reſtrain the action, muſt certainly have leſs power over the heart when it is ſingle without any other concurrence, the flames breaking out of a Houſe, diſcover the Fire to be much ſtronger and fiercer within. The Apoſtle judgeth thoſe of the Circumciſion, who gave heed to Jewiſh Fables, to be deniers of God, tho' he doth not tax them with any notorious Prophaneſs, *Tit.* 1. 16. *They profeſs that they know God, but in works they deny him*; he gives them Epithites contrary to what they arrogated to themſelves: * They boaſted themſelves to be holy, the Apoſtle calls them abominable. They bragged that they fulfilled the Law, and obſerved the Traditions of their Fathers; the Apoſtle calls them diſobedient, or unperſwadable. They boaſted that they only had the Rule of Righteouſneſs, and a ſound Judgment concerning it; the Apoſtle ſaid they had a Reprobate Senſe, and unfit for any good Work; and judges againſt all their vain-glorious braggs, that they had not a Reverence of God in their Hearts. There was more of the denial of God in their Works, than there was acknowledgment of God in their Words. Thoſe that have neither God in their Thoughts, nor in their Tongues, nor in their Works, cannot properly be ſaid to acknowledge him. Where the Honour of God is not practically owned in the Lives of Men, the Being of God is not ſenſibly acknowledged in the Hearts of Men: The Principle muſt be of the ſame kind with the Actions; if the Actions be Atheiſtical, the Principle of them can be no better.

* Illyric.

Prop. 2. *All ſin is founded in a ſecret Atheiſm.* Atheiſm is the Spirit of every Sin; all the Floods of Impieties in the World, break in at the Gate of a ſecret Atheiſm: And though ſeveral ſins may diſagree with one another, yet like *Herod* and *Pilate* againſt Chriſt, they joyn hand in hand againſt the intereſt of God. Though Luſts and Pleaſures be *divers*, yet they are all united in *Diſobedience* to him. * All the wicked inclinations in the heart, and ſtruggling motions, ſecret repinings, ſelf-applauding confidences in our own wiſdom, ſtrength, *&c.* envy, ambition, revenge, are ſparks from this latent fire; the language of every one of theſe is, *I would be a Lord to my ſelf, and would not have a God Superior to me.*

* Tit. 3. 3.

The variety of ſins againſt the *firſt* and *ſecond Table*, the neglects of God, and violences againſt Man, are derived from this in the Text, *firſt the fool hath ſaid in his heart*, and then follows a Legion of Devils. As all vertuous actions ſpring from an acknowledgment of God, ſo all vicious actions riſe from a lurking denial of him. All licentiouſneſs goes glib down where there is no ſenſe of God. *Abraham* judged himſelf not ſecure from Murder, nor his Wife from Defilement in *Gerar*, if there were no *fear of God there*. * He that makes no Conſcience of Sin, has no regard to the Honour, and conſequently none to the Being of God. *By the fear of God men depart from Evil*, Prov. 16. 6. By the non-regarding of God men ruſh into Evil: *Pharaoh* oppreſt *Iſrael* becauſe he *knew not the Lord*. If he did not deny the Being of a Deity, yet he had ſuch an unworthy Notion of God as was inconſiſtent with the Nature of a Deity; he, a poor Creature, thought himſelf a Mate for the Creator.

* Gen. 20. 11.

In ſins of Omiſſion we own not God, in neglecting to perform what he enjoyns: In ſins of Commiſſion, we ſet up ſome Luſt in the place of God, and pay to that the Homage which is due to our Maker. In both we diſown him; in the one by not doing what he commands, in the other by doing what he forbids.

We deny his Sovereignty when we violate his Laws; we diſgrace his Holineſs when we caſt our filth before his Face; we diſparage his Wiſdom when we ſet up another Rule as the Guide of our Actions than that Law he hath fixed; we ſlight his Sufficiency, when we prefer a ſatisfaction in ſin before a happineſs in him alone, and his Goodneſs, when we judge it not ſtrong enough to attract us to him. Every ſin invades the Rights of God, and ſtrips him of one or other of his Perfections: 'Tis ſuch a vilifying of God, as if he were not God, as if he were not the Supream Creator and Benefactor of the World, as if we had not our Being from him, as if the Air we breathed in, the Food we lived by, were our own by right of Supremacy, not of Donation. For a Subject to ſlight his Soveraign, is to ſlight his Royalty; or a Servant a Maſter, is to deny his Superiority.

Prop. 3. *Sin implies that God is unworthy of a Being.* Every ſin is a kind of *curſing God in the heart* *, an aim at the deſtruction of the Being of God, not actually but vertually; not in the intention of every Sinner, but in the nature of every ſin. That affection which excites a Man to break his Law, would excite him to annihilate his Being if it were in his power. A Man in every ſin aims to ſet up his own Will as his Rule, and his own Glory as the end of his Actions againſt the Will and Glory of God; and could a Sinner attain his end, God would be deſtroyed. God cannot out-live his Will and his Glory: God cannot have another Rule but his own Will, nor another End but his own Honour. Sin is called a *turning the back* upon God, * a *kicking againſt him* *, as if he were a ſlighter perſon than the meaneſt Beggar. What greater contempt can be ſhew'd to the meaneſt, vileſt perſon, than to turn the back, lift up the heel, and thruſt away with indignation? All which actions, though they ſignifie that ſuch a one hath a Being, yet they teſtifie alſo that he is unworthy of a Being, that he is an unuſeful Being in the World, and that it were well the World were rid of him.

* Job 1. 5.

* Jer. 32. 33.
* Deut. 32. 15.

All ſin againſt Knowledge is called a *Reproach of God*. * Reproach is a vilifying a Man as unworthy to be admitted into Company. We naturally judge God unfit to be converſed with. God is the *term* turned *from* by a ſinner: Sin is the *term* turned *to*; which implies a greater excellency in the nature of ſin, than in the nature of God. And as we naturally judge *it* more worthy to have a Being in our affections, ſo conſequently more worthy to have a Being in the World, than that infinite nature from whom we derive our Beings, and our All; and upon whom with a kind of diſdain we turn our backs. Whoſoever thinks the Notion of a Deity unfit to be cheriſhed in his mind by warm Meditation, implies that he cares not whether he hath a Being in the World or no. Now tho' the light of a Deity ſhines ſo clearly in Man, and the ſtings of Conſcience are ſo ſmart, that he cannot abſolutely deny the Being of a God, yet moſt Men endeavour to ſmother this knowledge, and make the Notion of a God a fapleſs and uſeleſs thing, *Rom.* 1. 28. *They like not to retain God in their knowledge.*

* Numb. 15. 20. Ezek. 20. 27.

It is ſaid, Cain *went out from the preſence of the Lord*, Gen. 4. 16. That is, from the Worſhip of God. Our refuſing or abhorring the preſence of a Man, implies a careleſſneſs whether he continue in the World or no: 'Tis a uſing him, as if he had no Being, or as if we were not concerned in it. Hence all Men in *Adam*, under the Emblem of the Prodigal, are ſaid to go into a far Country. Not in reſpect of place, becauſe of Gods Omnipreſence; but in reſpect of acknowledgment and affection; they mind and love any thing but God. And the deſcriptions of the Nations of the World, lying in the Ruines of *Adams* Fall, and the dregs of that Revolt, is that they *know not God*: They forget God, as if there were no ſuch Being above them; and indeed, he that doth the Works of the *Devil*, owns the Devil to be more

more worthy of observance, and consequently of a Being, than God, whose Nature he forgets and whose Presence he abhors.

Prop. 4. *Every sin in its own Nature would render God a foolish and impure Being.* Many Transgressors esteem their Acts, which are contrary to the Law of God, both Wise and Good: If so, the Law against which they are committed, must be both foolish and impure: What a reflection is there then upon the Law-giver? The Moral Law is not properly a meer act of God's Will considered in it self, or a Tyrannical Edict, like those of whom it may well be said, *stat pro ratione voluntas*: But it commands those things, which are good in their own Nature, and prohibits those things, which are in their own Nature evil, and therefore is an act of his Wisdom and Righteousness; the result of his wise Counsel, and an extract of his pure Nature; as all the Laws of just Law-givers, are not only the acts of their Will, but of a Will governed by Reason and Justice, and for the good of the Publick, whereof they are Conservators. If the Moral commands of God were only acts of his Will, and had not an intrinsick necessity, reason and goodness, God might have commanded the quite contrary, and made a contrary Law, whereby that which we now call Vice, might have been canonized for Vertue: He might then have forbid any Worship of him, Love to him, fear of his Name: He might then have commanded Murders, Thefts, Adulteries. In the first he would have untied the Link of Duty from the Creature, and dissolved the Obligations of Creatures to him, which is impossible to be conceived; for from the Relation of a Creature to God, obligations to God, and Duties upon those Obligations, do necessarily result. It had been against the Rule of Goodness and Justice, to have commanded the Creature not to love him, and fear and obey him: This had been a Command against Righteousness, Goodness, and intrinsick Obligations to Gratitude: And should Murder, Adulteries, Rapines have been commanded instead of the contrary, God would have destroyed his own Creation; he would have acted against the Rule of Goodness and Order; he had been an unjust Tyrannical Governor of the World: Publick Society would have been crack'd in Pieces, and the World become a Shambles, a Brothel-House, a place below the common Sentiments of a meer Man. All sin therefore being against the Law of God, the Wisdom and holy Rectitude of God's Nature is denyed in every act of Disobedience: And what is the consequence of this, but that God is both Foolish and Unrighteous, in commanding that which was neither an Act of Wisdom, as a Governour, nor an Act of Goodness, as a Benefactor to his Creature?

As was said before, presumptuous Sins are called Reproaches of God, *Numb.* 15. 30. *The Soul that doth ought presumptuously, reproacheth the Lord.* Reproaches of Men are either for Natural, Moral or Intellectual Defects. All Reproaches of God must imply a Charge either of Unrighteousness or Ignorance: If of Unrighteousness, 'tis a denial of his Holiness: If of Ignorance, 'tis a blemishing his Wisdom. If God's Laws were not wise and holy, God would not enjoyn them: And if they are so, we deny infinite Wisdom and Holiness in God by not complying with them. As when a Man believes not God when he promises, he *makes him a Liar*, 1 *Joh.* 5. 10. So he that obeys not a wise and Holy God commanding, makes him guilty either of Folly or Unrighteousness.

Now suppose you knew an absolute Atheist, who denied the Being of a God, yet had a life free from any notorious Spot or Deflement; would you in reason count him so bad as the other, that owns a God in Being, yet lays by his course of Action such a black Imputation of Folly and Impurity upon the God he professeth to own; an Imputation which renders any Man a most despicable Creature?

Proposition 5. *Sin in its own Nature endeavours to render God the most miserable Being.* It is nothing but an opposition to the Will of God: The Will of no Creature is so much contradicted, as the Will of God is by Devils and Men; And there is nothing under the Heavens that the Affections of Humane Nature stand more point blank against, than against God. There is a slight of him in all the faculties of Man; our Souls are as unwilling to know him, as our Wills are averse to follow him, *Rom.* 8. 7. *The carnal Mind is enmity against God, 'tis not subject to the Law of God, nor can be subject.* 'Tis true, God's Will cannot be hindred of its effect, for then God would not be supreamly blessed, but unhappy and miserable: All Misery ariseth from a want of that which a Nature would have, and ought to have: Besides, if any thing could frustrate God's Will, it would be Superior to him: God would not be Omnipotent, and so would lose the Perfection of the Deity, and consequently the Deity it self; for that which did wholly defeat God's Will, would be more powerful than he. But sin as a Contradiction to the Will of God's Revelation; to the Will of his Precept, and therein doth naturally tend to a Superiority over God, and would usurp his Omnipotence, and deprive him of his blessedness. For if God had not an infinite power to turn the Designs of of it to his own Glory, but the will of Sin could prevail, God would be totally deprived of his Blessedness. Doth not sin endeavour to subject God to the Extravagant and contrary Wills of Men, and make him more a slave than any Creature can be? For the Will of no Creature, not the meanest and most despicable *Creature*, is so much crost, as the Will of God is by sin, *Isa.* 43. 24. *Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins*: Thou hast endeavoured to make a meer slave of me by sin: Sin endeavours to subject the blessed God to the Humour and Lust of every Person in the World.

Proposition 6. *Men sometimes in some Circumstances do wish the not Being of God.* This some think to be the meaning of the Text, *The Fool hath said in his Heart, There is no God*; that is, he wishes there was no God. Many tamper with their own Hearts to bring them to a perswasion, That there is no God. And when they cannot do that, they conjure up wishes that there were none. Men naturally have some Conscience of Sin, and some Notices of Justice, *Rom.* 1. 32. *They know the Judgment of God*, and they know the demerit of Sin; they know the Judgment of God, and that *they which do such things are worthy of Death*. What is the consequent of this but fear of Punishment? and what is the issue of that fear, but a wishing the Judge either unwilling or unable to vindicate the Honour of his violated Law? When God is the object of such a wish, 'tis a vertual undeifying of him: Not to be able to punish, is to be impotent; not to be willing to punish, is to be unjust; Imperfections inconsistent with the Deity: God cannot be supposed without an infinite Power to act, and an infinite Righteousness as the Rule of Acting. Fear of God is natural to all Men; not a fear of offending him, but a fear of being punished by him: The wishing the Extinction of God has its degree in Men, according to the degree of their fears of his just Vengeance: And tho' such a wish be not in its *Meridian* but in the Damned in Hell, yet it hath its starts and motions in affrighted and awakened Consciences on the Earth.

Under this Rank of Wishers that there were no God,

God, or that God were deſtroyed, do fall,

1. *Terrified Conſciences*, that are *Magor Miſſabib*, ſee nothing but matter of fear round about. As they have lived without the bounds of the Law, they are afraid to fall under the ſtroak of his Juſtice: Fear wiſhes the Deſtruction of that which it apprehends hurtful: It conſiders him as a God to whom *Vengeance belongs*, as the Judge *of all the* *Pſ.94.12. *Earth* *. The leſs hopes ſuch a one hath of his Pardon, the more joy he would have to hear that his Judge ſhould be ſtript of his Life: He would entertain with delight any Reaſons, that might ſupport him in the conceit that there were no God: In his preſent State ſuch a Doctrine would be his ſecurity from an Account: He would as much rejoyce, if there were no God to enflame an Hell for him, as any guilty Malefactor would if there were no Judge to order a Gibbet for him. Shame may bridle Mens Words, but the Heart will be caſting about for ſome Arguments this way, to ſecure it ſelf: Such as are at any time in *Spira*'s Caſe, would be willing to ceaſe to be Creatures, that God might ceaſe to be Judge. *The Fool hath ſaid in his Heart*, there is no *Elohim* [no Judge] fancying God without any Exerciſe of his judicial Authority. And there is not any wicked Man under anguiſh of Spirit, but were it within the reach of his power, would take away the Life of God, and rid himſelf of his Fears, by deſtroying his Avenger.

2. *Debauch'd Perſons* are not without ſuch wiſhes ſometimes: An obſtinate Servant wiſhes his Maſters death, from whom he expects Correction for his Debaucheries. As Man ſtands in his Corrupt Nature, 'tis impoſſible but one time or other moſt debauch'd Perſons, at leaſt have ſuch kind of Velleities, or imperfect wiſhes. 'Tis as natural to Men to abhor thoſe things which are unſuitable and troubleſome, as it is to pleaſe themſelves in things agreeable to their Minds and Humours: And ſince Man is ſo deeply in love with Sin, as to count it the moſt eſtimable good, he cannot but wiſh the Abolition of that Law which checks it, and conſequently the change of the Law Giver which Enacted it; and in wiſhing a change in the holy Nature of God he wiſhes a Deſtruction of God, who could not be God, if he ceaſed to be immutably holy. They do as certainly wiſh, that God had not a holy Will to command them, as deſpairing Souls wiſh, that God had not a righteous Will to puniſh them; and to wiſh Conſcience extinct for the Moleſtations they receive from it, is to wiſh the power Conſcience repreſents out of the World alſo.

Since the State of Sinners is a State of diſtance from God, and the Language of Sinners to God is *Job 21.14 *depart from us* *: They deſire as little the continuance of his Being as they deſire the knowledge of his Ways: The ſame reaſon which moves them to deſire God's diſtance from them, would move 'em to deſire God's not Being: Since the greateſt diſtance would be moſt agreeable to them, the Deſtruction of God muſt be ſo too: Becauſe there is no greater diſtance from us, than in not Being. Men would rather have God not be, than themſelves under controul, that ſenſuality might range at pleaſure: He is like a *Heifer ſliding from the Yoke*, Hoſ. 4.16. The Curſing of God in the Heart feared by *Job* of his Children, intimates a wiſhing God deſpoiled of his Authority, that their Pleaſure might not be damp'd by his Law. Beſides, is there any natural Man that ſins againſt actuated Knowledge, but either thinks or wiſhes that God might not ſee him, that God might not know his Actions? And is not this to wiſh the Deſtruction of God, who could not be God unleſs he were Immenſe and Omniſcient?

3. Under this rank fall thoſe *who perform external Duties only out of a Principle of ſlaviſh Fear.* Many Men perform thoſe Duties that the Law enjoyns with the ſame Sentiments that Slaves perform their Drudgery, and are conſtrained in their Duties by no other Conſiderations but thoſe of the Whip and the Cudgel. Since therefore they do it with Reluctancy, and ſecretly murmur while they ſeem to obey, they would be willing that both the command were recall'd, and the Maſter that commands them were in another World. The Spirit of Adoption makes Men act towards God as a Father, a Spirit of Bondage only eyes him as a Judge. Thoſe that look upon their Superiors as tyrannical, will not be much concerned in their welfare; and would be more glad to have their Nails pared, than be under perpetual fear of them.

Many Men regard not the infinite goodneſs in their Service of him, but conſider him as Cruel, Tyrannical, injurious to their Liberty. *Adam*'s Poſterity are not free from the Sentiments of their common Father, till they are regenerate. You know what Conceit was the Hammer, whereby the helliſh *Jael* ſtruck the Nail into our firſt Parents, which conveyed Death, together with the ſame Imagination to all their Poſterity, *Gen.* 3. 5. *God knows that in the day you eat thereof, your Eyes ſhall be opened, and you ſhall be as Gods knowing Good and Evil.* Alas poor Souls! God knew what he did when he forbad you that Fruit: He was jealous you ſhould be too happy; It was a cruelty in him to deprive you of a Food ſo pleaſant and delicious. The Apprehenſion of the ſeverity of God's Commands riſeth up no leſs in deſires that there were no God over us, than *Adam*'s Apprehenſion of Envy in God for the reſtraint of one Tree mov'd him to attempt to be equal with God: Fear is as powerful to produce the one in his Poſterity, as Pride was to produce the other in the Common-Root. When we apprehend a thing hurtful to us, we deſire ſo much evil to it, as may render it uncapable of doing us the hurt we fear. As we wiſh the preſervation of what we love or hope for; ſo we are naturally apt to wiſh the not Being of that whence we fear ſome hurt or trouble. We muſt not underſtand this as if any Man did formally wiſh the deſtruction of God, as God. God in himſelf is an infinite Mirror of Goodneſs and raviſhing Lovelineſs: He is infinitely good, and ſo univerſally good, and nothing but good; and is therefore ſo agreeable to a Creature, as a Creature, that it is impoſſible that the Creature, while it bears it ſelf to God as a Creature, ſhould be guilty of this, but thirſt after him and cheriſh every Motion to him. As no Man wiſhes the Deſtruction of any Creature, as a Creature, but as it may conduce to ſomething which he counts may be beneficial to himſelf; ſo no Man doth, nor perhaps can wiſh the Ceſſation of the Being of God, as God, for then he muſt wiſh his own Being to ceaſe alſo: But as he conſiders him Cloathed with ſome Perfections, which he apprehends as injurious to him; as his Holineſs in forbidding Sin, his Juſtice in puniſhing Sin: And God being judged in thoſe Perfections contrary to what the revolted Creature thinks convenient and good for himſelf, he may wiſh God ſtrip'd of thoſe Perfections, that thereby he may be free from all fear of trouble and grief from him in his fallen State. In wiſhing God deprived of thoſe, he wiſhes God deprived of his Being; becauſe God cannot retain his Deity without a love of Righteouſneſs and Hatred of Iniquity; and he could not teſtifie his Love to the one, or his loathing of the other, without encouraging Goodneſs, and witneſſing his Anger againſt Iniquity.

Let us now appeal to our ſelves, and examine our own Conſciences: Did we never pleaſe our ſelves ſometimes in the Thoughts, how happy we ſhould be, how free in our vain Pleaſures, if there were no

God? Have we not deſired to be our own Lords without controul, ſubject to no Law but our own, and be guided by no Will but that of the Fleſh? Did we never rage againſt God under his Afflicting Hand? Did we never wiſh God ſtrip'd of his Holy Will to Command, and his Righteous Will to Puniſh, &c?

Thus much for the general.

For the proof of this many Conſiderations will bring in Evidence: Moſt may be reduced to theſe two Generals.

Man would ſet himſelf up, Firſt as his own Rule. Secondly, as his own End and Happineſs.

1. *Man would ſet himſelf up as his own Rule inſtead of God.* This will be evidenced in this Method.

1. *Man naturally diſowns the Rule which God ſets him.*

2. *He owns any other Rule rather than that of God's preſcribing.*

3. *Theſe he doth in order to the ſetting himſelf up as his own Rule.*

4. *He makes himſelf not only his own Rule, but would make himſelf the Rule of God, & give Laws to his Creator.*

1. *Man naturally diſowns the Rule which God ſets him.* 'Tis all one to deny his Royalty and to deny Being: When we diſown his Authority, we diſown his God-head: 'Tis the Right of God to be the Sovereign of his Creatures; and it muſt be a very looſe and trivial Aſſent that ſuch Men have to God's Superiority over them, (and conſequently to the Excellency of his Being, upon which that Authority is founded) who are ſcarce at eaſe in themſelves, but when they are invading his Rights, breaking his Bands, caſting away his Cords, and contradicting his Will.

Every Man naturally is a Son of *Belial*, would be without a Yoke, and leap over God's Incloſures; and in breaking out againſt his Soveraignty, we diſown his Being as God: For to be God and Sovereign are inſeparable: He could not be God, if he were not Supream; nor could he be a Creator without being a Law-giver. To be God and yet inferior to another, is a contradiction. To make Rational Creatures without preſcribing them a Law, is to make them without Holineſs, Wiſdom and Goodneſs.

1. *There is in Man naturally an unwillingneſs to have any acquaintance with the Rule God ſets him,* Pſal. 14. 2. *None that did underſtand and ſeek God. The refuſing Inſtruction and caſting his Word behind the back* is a part of Atheiſm *. We are heavy in hearing the Inſtructions either of Law or Goſpel, and ſlow in the Apprehenſion of what we hear. The People that God had hedged in from the Wilderneſs of the World for his own Garden, were *fooliſh* and did not know God; were *ſottiſh* and had no underſtanding of him. * The Law of God is accounted a *ſtrange thing*; * a thing of a different Climate, and a far Country from the heart of Man; wherewith the Mind of Man had no natural Acquaintance, and had no deſire to have any; or they regarded it as a ſordid thing: What God accounts great and valuable, they account mean and deſpicable. Men may ſhew a Civility to a Stranger, but ſcarce contract an Intimacy: There can be no amicable Agreement between the holy Will of God, and the Heart of a depraved Creature: One is holy, the other unholy; one is univerſally good, the other ſtark naught. The purity of the Divine Rule renders it nauſeous to the impurity of a Carnal Heart. Water and Fire may as well friendly kiſs each other and live together without quarrelling and hiſſing, as the holy Will of God and the unregenerate heart of a fallen Creature.

* Pſ. 50. 17.

* Heb. 5. 11, 12.

* Jer. 4. 22.

* Hoſ. 8. 12

The nauſeating a *Holy Rule* is an Evidence of Atheiſm in the Heart, as the nauſeating wholeſom Food is of putrified Flegm in the Stomach. 'Tis found more or leſs in every Chriſtian, in the Remainders, tho' not a full Empire. As there is a Law in his *Mind*, whereby he delights in the Law of God, ſo there is a Law in his *Members* whereby he wars againſt the Law of God, *Rom.* 7. 22, 23, 25. Now predominant is this loathing of the Law of God, when corrupt Nature is in its full ſtrength, without any principle to controul it? There is in the Mind of ſuch a one a Darkneſs whereby it is ignorant of it, and in the *Will* a Depravedneſs whereby it is repugnant to it. If Man were naturally willing and able to have an intimate acquaintance with, and delight in the Law of God, it had not been ſuch a ſignal favour for God to promiſe to *write the Law in the Heart.* A Man may ſooner engrave the Chronicle of a whole Nation, or all the Records of God in the Scripture upon the hardeſt Marble with his bare Finger, than write one Syllable of the Law of God in a Spiritual manner upon his heart. For,

1. *Men are negligent in uſing the means for the knowledge of God's Will.* All natural Men are Fools, who know not how to uſe the *price God puts in their Hands*; * They put not a due eſtimate upon Opportunies and means of Grace, and account that Law folly which is the Birth of an infinite and holy Wiſdom. The Knowledge of God which they may glean from Creatures, and is more pleaſant to the natural Guſt of Men, is not improved to the Glory of God, if we will believe the Indictment the Apoſtle brings againſt the Gentiles. * And moſt of thoſe that have dived into the depths of Nature, have been more ſtudious of the Qualities of the Creatures, than of the excellency of the Nature, or the diſcovery of the mind of God in them; who regard only the riſing and motions of the Star, but follow not with the wiſe Men, its conduct to the King of the Jews. How often do we ſee Men fill'd with an eager thirſt for all other kind of Knowledge, that cannot acquieſce in a twilight Diſcovery, but are inquiſitive into the Cauſes and Reaſons of Effects, yet are contented with a weak and languiſhing Knowledge of God and his Law, and are eaſily tired with the Propoſals of them?

* Pro. 17. 16

* Rom. 1. 21

He now that nauſeates the means whereby he may come to know and obey God, has no intention to make the Law of God his Rule: There is no Man that intends ſeriouſly an end, but he intends means in order to that end. As when a Man intends the preſervation or recovery of his health, he will intend means in order to thoſe ends, otherwiſe he cannot be ſaid to intend his health: So he that is not diligent in uſing means to know the mind of God, has no ſound intention to make the Will and Law of God his Rule. Is not the inquiry after the Will of God made a work by the by, and fain to lacquy after other concerns of an inferior Nature, if it hath any place at all in the Soul? which is a deſpiſing the Being of God: The Notion of the Soveraignty of God, bears the ſame date with the Notion of his Godhead; and by the ſame way that he reveals himſelf, he reveals his Authority over us, whether it be by Creatures without, or Conſcience within. All Authority over Rational Creatures conſiſts in commanding and directing; the duty of Rational Creatures, in compliance with that Authority, conſiſts in obeying. Where there is therefore a careleſs neglect of thoſe means, which convey the knowledge of Gods Will and our Duty, there is an utter diſowning of God as our Soveraign and our Rule.

2. *When any part of the Mind and Will of God breaks in upon Men, they endeavour to ſhake it off:* As a Man would a Sergeant that comes to Arreſt him; *they like not to retain God in their Knowledge*, Rom. 1. *v.* 28. *A natural Man receives not the things of the Spirit of God*; that is, into his Affection; he puſheth them back as Men do troubleſome and importunate Beggers: They have no kindneſs to beſtow upon it: They thruſt with both ſhoulders againſt the Truth of God, when it preſſeth in upon them, and daſh as much contempt upon it as the *Phariſees* did upon the

Doctrine

Doctrine our Saviour directed against their Covetousness. As Men naturally delight to be without God in the World, so they delight to be without any Offspring of God in their thoughts. Since the Spiritual Palate of Man is depraved, Divine Truth is unsavory and ungrateful to us, till our taste and relish is restor'd by Grace. Hence Men damp and quench the motions of the Spirit to Obedience and Compliance with the Dictates of God; strip them of their Life and Vigor, and kill them in the Womb. How unable are our Memories to retain the substance of Spiritual Truth, but like Sand in a Glass, put in at one part and runs out at the other? Have not many a secret wish, that the Scripture had never mentioned some Truths, or that they were blotted out of the *Bible*, because they face their Consciences, and discourage those boiling Lusts they would with eagerness and delight pursue? Methinks that interruption *John* gives our Saviour, when he was upon the reproof of their *Pride*, looks little better, * than a design to divert him from a discourse so much against the grain, by telling him a story of their *prohibiting one to cast out Devils*, because he followed not them. How glad are Men when they can raise a Battery against a Command of God, and raise some smart Objection whereby they may shelter themselves from the strictness of it?

* Mark 9. 33, 38.

3. *When Men cannot shake off the Notices of the Will and Mind of God, they have no pleasure in the consideration of them.* Which could not possibly be, if there were a real and fixed design to own the Mind and Law of God as our Rule: Subjects or Servants that love to obey their Prince and Master, will delight to read and execute their Orders. The Devils understand the Law of God in their Minds, but they loath the impressions of it upon their Wills: Those miserable Spirits are bound in Chains of Darkness, evil Habits in their Wills, that they have not a thought of obeying that Law they know. It was an unclean Beast under the Law, that did not chew the Cud: 'Tis a corrupt Heart, that doth not chew Truth by Meditation. A natural Man is said not to know God, or the things of God; he may know them notionally, but he knows them not affectionately. A Sensual Soul can have no delight in a Spiritual Law. To be *sensual* and *not to have the Spirit* are inseparable, *Jude* 19.

Natural Men may indeed meditate upon the Law and Truth of God, but without delight in it: if they take any pleasure in it, 'tis only as 'tis knowledge, not as it is a *Rule*; for we delight in nothing that we desire, but upon the same account that we desire it. Natural Men desire to know God, and some part of his Will and Law, not out of a sense of their practical excellency, but a natural thirst after knowledge: And if they have a delight, 'tis in the Act of knowing, not in the Object known, not in the Duties that stream from that knowledge; they design the furnishing their Understandings, not the quickning their Affections; like idle Boys that strike Fire, not to warm themselves by the heat, but sport themselves with the sparks: Whereas a gracious Soul accounts not only his *Meditation*, or the Operations of his Soul about God and his Will to be *sweet*, but he hath a joy in the object of that Meditation. * Many have the knowledge of God, who have no delight in him or his Will. *Owls* have Eyes to perceive that there is a Sun, but by reason of the weakness of their sight have no pleasure to look upon a beam of it: So neither can a Man by Nature love, or delight in the Will of God, because of his Natural Corruption. That Law that riseth up in Men for Conviction and Instruction, they keep down under the power of Corruption, making their Souls not the Sanctuary, but Prison of Truth, *Rom.* 1. 18. They will keep it down in their Hearts, if they cannot keep it out of their Heads, and will not endeavour to know and taste the Spirit of it.

* Psal. 104. 34.

4. *There is further, a rising and swelling of the Heart against the Will of God.* (1.) *Internal.* Gods Law cast against a hard Heart, is like a Ball thrown against a stone Wall, by reason of the resistance rebounding the further from it: The meeting of a Divine Truth and the Heart of Man, is like the meeting of two Tides, the weaker swells and foams: We have a natural Antipathy against a Divine Rule, and therefore when it is clapt close to our Consciences, there is a snuffing at it, high reasonings against it, Corruption breaks out more strongly: As Water poured on Lime sets it on fire by an *Antiperistasis*, and the more Water is cast upon it, the more furiously it burns: Or as the Sun Beams shining upon a Dunghill, makes the steams the thicker and the stench the noysomer, neither being the positive cause of the smoke in the Lime, or the stench in the Dunghill; but by accident the causes of the eruption, *Rom.* 7. 8. *But Sin taking occasion by the Commandment, wrought in me all manner of Concupiscence, for without the Law Sin was dead.* Sin was in a languishing posture, as if it were dead, like a lazy Garison in a City, till upon an Alarm from the Adversary it takes Arms and revives its Courage; all the sin in the heart gathers together its force, to maintain its standing; like the vapours of the Night, which unite themselves more closely to resist the Beams of the Rising Sun. Deep Conviction often provokes fierce Opposition; sometimes disputes against a Divine Rule, and end in Blasphemies, *Acts* 13, 45. *Contradicting and Blaspheming* are coupled together. Men naturally desire things that are forbidden, and reject things commanded, from the corruption of Nature, which affects an unbounded Liberty, and is impatient of returning under that Yoke it hath shaken off, and therefore rageth against the bars of the Law, as the waves roar against the restraint of a Bank: When the Understanding is dark, and the Mind ignorant, sin lies as dead; * [a Man scarce knows he hath such motions of Concupiscence in him, he finds not the least breath of wind, but a full calm in his Soul; but when he is awakened by the Law, then the vitiousness of Nature being sensible of an Invasion of its Empire, arms it self against the Divine Law, and the more the Command is urged, the more vigorously it bends its strength, and more insolently lifts up it self against it] he perceives more and more Atheistical Lusts than before; *all manner of Concupiscence*, more leprous and contagious than before. When there are any motions to turn to God, a reluctancy is presently perceived; Atheistical thoughts bluster in the Mind like the Wind, they know not whence they come, nor whither they go: So unapt is the heart to any acknowledgment of God as his Ruler, and any re-union with him. Hence Men are said to *resist the Holy Ghost*, Acts 7. 51. to fall against it, as the word signifies, as a stone, or any ponderous body falls against that which lies in its way: They would dash to pieces, or grind to powder, that very motion which is made for their Instruction, and the Spirit too which makes it, and that not from a fit of passion, but an habitual repugnance. *Ye always resist*, &c. (2.) *External*; 'tis a fruit of Atheism, in the *fourth Verse* of this *Psalm*; *Who eat up my people as they eat bread.* How do the Revelations of the Mind of God meet with opposition? And the Carnal World like Dogs bark against the shining of the Moon? So much Men hate the Light, that they spurn at the Lanthorns that bear it: And because they cannot endure the Treasure, often fling the Earthen Vessels against the ground wherein it is held. If the entrance of Truth render the Market worse for *Diana's* Shrines, the

* Thes. Salmur. *De Spiritu Servitutis*, *Thes.* 19.

* Acts 19. 24,28,29. whole City will be in an *uproar*. * When *Socrates* upon natural Principles confuted the Heathen Idolatry, and asserted the Unity of God, the whole city of *Athens*, a Learned University, is against him; and because he opposed the publick received Religion, though with an undoubted Truth, he must end his Life by Violence. How hath every corner of the World steam'd with the blood of those, that would maintain the Authority of God in the World? The Devils Children will follow the steps of their Father, and endeavour to bruise the Heel of Divine Truth, that would endeavour to break the Head of corrupt Lust.

5. *Men often seem desirous to be acquainted with the Will of God, not out of any respect to his Will, and to make it their Rule, but upon some other Consideration.* Truth is scarce received as Truth. There is more of Hypocrisie than Sincerity in the Pale of the Church, and attendance on the Mind of God. The outward dowry of a Religious Profession, makes it often more desirable than the Beauty. *Judas* was a Follower of Christ for the Bag, not out of any affection to the Divine Revelation: Men sometime pretend a desire to be acquainted with the Will of God, to satisfie their own passions, rather than to conform to Gods Will: The Religion of such is not the judgment of the Man, but the passion of the Brute. Many entertain a Doctrine for the Persons sake, rather than a Person for the Doctrine's sake; and believe a thing because it comes from a Man they esteem, as if his Lips were more Canonical than Scripture.

* 1 Thes. 2. 13. The Apostle implies, in the Commendation he gives the *Thessalonians*, * that some receive the Word for Humane Interest, not *as it is in truth the Word* and *Will of God*, to command and govern their Consciences by its Soveraign Authority: Or else they have *the Truth of God* (as St. *James* speaks of the Faith of Christ) *with respect of persons*: * and receive it not for the sake of the Fountain, but of the Channel: So that many times the same Truth delivered by another is disregarded, which when dropping from the fancy and mouth of a Mans own Idol, is cried up as an Oracle. This is to make not God, but Man the *Rule*: For tho' we entertain that which materially is the Truth of God, yet not formally as his Truth, but as conveyed by one we affect: And that we receive a Truth and not an Errot, we owe the obligation to the honesty of the Instrument, and not to the strength and clearness of our own Judgment. VVrong considerations may give admittance to an unclean, as well as a clean Beast, into the Ark of the Soul: That which is contrary to the Mind of God, may be entertained, as well as that which is agreeable. 'Tis all one to such that have no respect to God, what they have; as it is all one to a Spunge to suck up the foulest VVater or the sweetest VVine, when either is applied to it.

* Jam. 2. 2.

6. *Many that entertain the Notions of the Will and Mind of God, admit them with unsettled and wavering Affections.* There is a great Levity in the heart of Man. The *Jews* that one day applaud our Saviour with *Hosannahs* as their King, vote his Crucifixion the next, and use him as a Murderer. VVe begin in the Spirit and end in the Flesh. Our hearts like Lute-strings are changed with every change of VVeather, with every appearance of a Temptation; scarce one motion of God in a thousand prevails with us for a setled Abode. 'Tis a hard task to make a Signature of those Truths upon our Affections, which will with ease pass currant with our Understandings; Our Affections will as soon loose them, as our Understandings embrace them. The *Heart* of Man is *unstable as Water* *. Some were willing to rejoyce in *Johns light*, which reflected a lustre on their Minds; but not in his *Heat*, which would have conveyed a warmth to their hearts: and the light was pleasing to them but for a season, * while their corruptions lay as if they were dead, not when they were awakened. Truth may be admitted one day, and the next day rejected. As *Austin* saith of a wicked Man, he *loves* the Truth shining, but he *hates* the Truth reproving. This is not to make God, but our own humours our Rule and Measure.

* Gen. 49. 4. Jam. 1. 8.

* Joh. 5. 35.

7. *Many desire an acquaintance with the Laws and Truth of God, with a design to improve some lust by it.* To turn the VVord of God to be a Pander to the Breach of his Law. This is so far from making Gods VVill our Rule, that we make our own vile Affections the Rule of his Law. How many forced Interpretations of Scripture have been coyned to give content to the lusts of Men; and the Divine Rule forced to bend and be squared to Mens loose and carnal apprehensions! 'Tis a part of the inftability or falseness of the heart, to *wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction* *, which they could not do, if they did not first wring them to countenance some detestable Error or filthy Crime. In *Paradise* the first Interpretation made of the first Law of God was point blank against the mind of the Law-giver, and venemous to the whole Race of Mankind. *Paul* himself feared that some might put his Doctrine of Grace to so ill a use, as to be an Altar and Sanctuary to shelter their presumption, *Rom.* 6. 1, 15 *Shall we then continue in sin, that grace may abound?* Poysonous consequences are often drawn from the sweetest Truths: As when Gods *Patience* is made a *Topick*, whence to argue against his *Providence*, * or an encouragement to commit Evil more greedily; as tho' because he had not presently a revenging Hand, he had not an All-seeing Eye: Or when the Doctrine of Justification by Faith, is made use of to depress a Holy Life; or Gods readiness to receive returning Sinners, an encouragement to defer repentance till a Death-Bed. A Lyar will hunt for shelter in the reward God gave the Midwives that lyed to *Pharaoh* for the preservation of the Males of *Israel*, and *Rahabs* saving the Spies by false Intelligence. God knows how to distinguish between grace and corruption, that may lie close together; or between something of moral goodness and moral evil, which may be mixed: VVe find their fidelity rewarded, which was a moral good; but not their lye approved, which was a moral evil. Nor will Christs conversing with Sinners, be a Plea for any to thrust themselves into evil Company. Christ conversed with Sinners, as a Physician with diseased Persons, to cure them, not approve them; others with profligate Persons to receive infection from them, not to communicate holiness to them. *Satans* Children have studied their Fathers Art, who wanted not perverted *Scripture* to second his Temptations against our Saviour. * How often do carnal hearts turn Divine Revelation to carnal ends, as the Sea fresh VVater into salt? As Men subject the Precepts of God to carnal Interests, so they subject the Truths of God to carnal Fancies. VVhen Men will allegorize the VVord, and make a humorous and crazy fancy the Interpreter of Divine Oracles, and not the Spirit speaking in the VVord, this is to enthrone our own imaginations as the Rule of Gods Law, and depose his Law from being the Rule of our Reason: This is to rifle Truth of its true mind and intent. 'Tis more to rob a Man of his Reason, the essential constitutive part of Man, than of his Estate. This is to refuse an intimate acquaintance with his VVill. VVe shall never tell what is the matter of a Precept, or the matter of a Promise, if we impose a sense upon it contrary to the plain meaning of it; thereby we shall make the Law of God to have a distinct sense, according to the variety of Mens imaginations, and so make every Mans fancy a Law to himself.

* 2 Pet. 3. 16

* Psal. 94. 1.

* Mat. 4. 4, 6

Now

Now that this unwillingneſs to have Spiritual acquaintance with Divine Truth, is a diſowning God as our Rule, and a ſetting up Self in his ſtead, is evident; becauſe this unwillingneſs reſpects Truth,

1. *As it is moſt Spiritual and Holy.* A fleſhly mind is moſt contrary to a Spiritual Law, and particularly as it is a ſearching and diſcovering Law, that would dethrone all other Rules in the Soul. As Men love to be without a Holy God in the World, ſo they love to be without a holy Law, the tranſcript and image of God's Holineſs in their Hearts; and without holy Men, the lights kindled by the Father of Lights. As the holineſs of God, ſo the holineſs of the Law moſt offends a carnal Heart, *Iſa.* 30. 11. *Cauſe the Holy one of Iſrael to ceaſe from before us, prophecy to us right things*: They could not endure God as the holy One. Herein God places their Rebellion, rejecting him as their Rule, ver. 9. *Rebellious Children that will not hear the Law of the Lord.* The more pure and precious any Diſcovery of God is, the more it is diſreliſh'd by the World: As Spiritual ſins are ſweeteſt to a carnal heart, ſo Spiritual truths are moſt diſtaſtful. The more of the brightneſs of the Sun any Beam conveys, the more offenſive it is to a diſtempered Eye.

2. *As it doth moſt relate to, or lead to God.* The Devil directs his fierceſt Batteries againſt thoſe Doctrines in the Word, and thoſe Graces in the Heart, which moſt exalt God, debaſe Man, and bring Men to the loweſt ſubjection to their Creator; Such is the Doctrine and Grace of juſtifying Faith. That Men hate not knowledge as knowledge, but as it directs them to chooſe the fear of the Lord, was the Determination of the Holy Ghoſt long ago, *Pro.* 1. 29. *For that they hated knowledge, and did not chooſe the fear of the Lord.* Whatſoever reſpects God, clears up guilt, witneſſes Man's revolt to him, rouzeth up Conſcience, and moves to a return to God, a Man naturally runs from, as *Adam* did from God, and ſeeks a ſhelter in ſome weak buſhes of Error, rather than appear before it. Not that Men are unwilling to inquire into, and contemplate ſome Divine Truths, which lie furtheſt from the heart, and concern not themſelves immediately with the rectifying the Soul: They may view them with ſuch a pleaſure, as ſome might take in beholding the Miracles of our Saviour, who could not endure his ſearching Doctrine. The light of Speculation may be pleaſant, but the light of Conviction is grievous; that which galls their Conſciences, and would affect them with a ſenſe of their duty to God.

Is it not eaſie to perceive, that when a Man begins to be ſerious in the concerns of the Honour of God, and the Duty of his Soul, he feels a reluctancy within him, even againſt the Pleas of Conſcience? which evidenceth that ſome unworthy principle has got footing in the hearts of Men, which fights againſt the declarations of God without, and the impreſſions of the Law of God within, at the ſame time when a Mans own Conſcience takes part with it, which is the ſubſtance of the Apoſtles diſcourſe, *Rom.*7.15,16, *&c.*

Cloſe diſcourſes of the Honour of God, and our Duty to him, are irkſome, when Men are upon a merry pin: They are like a damp in a Mine that takes away their breath; they ſhuffle them out as ſoon as they can, and are as unwilling to retain the ſpeech of them in their mouths, as the knowledge of them in their hearts. Gracious ſpeeches, inſtead of bettering many Men, diſtemper them, as ſometimes ſweet Perfumes affect a weak head with Aches.

3. *As 'tis moſt contrary to ſelf.* Men are unwilling to acquaint themſelves with any Truth that leads to God, becauſe it leads from ſelf. Every part of the Will of God, is more or leſs diſpleaſing, as it ſounds harſh againſt ſome carnal intereſt Men would ſet above God, or as a Mate with him. Man cannot deſire any intimacy with that Law which he regards as a Bird of prey, to pick out his Right-eye, or gnaw off his Right-hand, his Luſt dearer than himſelf. The reaſon we have ſuch hard thoughts of Gods Will, is becauſe we have ſuch high thoughts of our ſelves. 'Tis a hard matter to Believe or Will that, which hath no affinity with ſome principle in the Underſtanding, and no intereſt in our Will and Paſſions: Our unwillingneſs to be acquainted with the Will of God, ariſeth from the diſproportion between that and our corrupt hearts, *We are alienated from the life of God in our minds*, Eph.4.18,19. As we live not like God, ſo we neither think, or will as God: There is an antipathy in the heart of Man againſt that Doctrine, which teaches us to deny our ſelves, and be under the Rule of another: But whatſoever favours the ambition, luſts, and profits of Men, is eaſily entertainable. Many are fond of thoſe Sciences, which may enrich their Underſtandings, and grate not upon their ſenſual delights. Many have an admirable dexterity in finding out *Philoſophical* Reaſons, *Mathematical* Demonſtrations, or raiſing Obſervations upon the Records of *Hiſtory*, and ſpend much time, and many ſerious and affectionate thoughts, in the ſtudy of them; in thoſe they have not immediately to do with God, their beloved pleaſures are not impaired; 'tis a ſatisfaction to *Self*, without the exerciſe of any hoſtility againſt it. But had thoſe Sciences been againſt *Self*, as much as the Law and Will of God, they had long ſince been rooted out of the World. Why did the *Young-man* turn his back upon the Law of Chriſt? Becauſe of his worldly *Self*: Why did the *Phariſees* mock at the Doctrine of our Saviour, and not at their own Traditions? Becauſe of Covetous *Self*. Why did the *Jews* ſlight the perſon of our Saviour and put him to death, after the reading ſo many Credentials of his being ſent from Heaven? Becauſe of ambitious *Self*, that the *Romans* might not come and take away their Kingdom. If the Law of God were fitted to the humours of *Self*, it would be readily and cordially obſerved by all Men: *Self* is the meaſure of a world of ſeeming Religious actions; while God ſeems to be the object, and his Law the motive, *Self* is the rule and end, *Zach.*7.5. *Did you faſt unto me*, &c.

2. As men diſcover their diſowning the Will of God, as a rule by unwillingneſs to be acquainted with it, ſo they diſcover it *by the contempt of it, after they cannot avoid the Notions and ſome impreſſions of it.* The rule of God is burthenſome to a Sinner, he flies from it as from a frightful bug-bear, and unpleaſant yoke: Sin againſt the knowledge of the Law is therefore called, *a going back from the Commandment of Gods lips*, Job 23.12. *A caſting Gods word behind them* *, as a contemptible thing, fitter to be trodden in the dirt, than lodged in the heart: Nay, it is as a caſting it off as an abominable thing, for ſo the word *Heb.* ſignifies, *Hoſ.*8.3. *Iſrael hath caſt off the thing that is good*; an utter refuſal of God, *Jer.* 44. 16. *As for the word which thou haſt ſpoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken.* In the ſlight of his Precepts his eſſential perfections are ſlighted. In diſowning his Will as a *Rule*, we diſown all thoſe Attributes which flow from his Will, as Goodneſs, Righteouſneſs and Truth. As an Act of the Divine Underſtanding is ſuppoſed to precede the Act of the Divine Will, ſo we ſlight the infinite Reaſon of God. Every Law, tho' it proceeds from the Will of the Law-giver, and doth formally conſiſt in an Act of the Will, yet it doth preſuppoſe an Act of the Underſtanding. If the *Commandment be holy, juſt and good*, as it is, *Rom.*7. *v.*12. If it be the Image of Gods Holineſs, a Tranſcript of his Righteouſneſs, and the Efflux of his Goodneſs, then in every breach of it dirt is caſt upon

* Pſal. 50. 17.

upon those Attributes which shine in it, and a slight of all the regards he hath to his own Honour, and all the Provisions he makes for his Creature. This *Atheism* or contempt of God, is more taken notice of by God than the matter of the sin it self. As a respect to God in a weak and imperfect Obedience is more than the matter of the Obedience it self; because it is an acknowledgment of God: So a contempt of God in an act of Disobedience, is more than the matter of Disobedience. The Creature stands in such an Act not only in a posture of distance from God, but defiance of him: It was not the bare act of Murder and Adultery which *Nathan* charged upon *David*, but the Atheistical principle which Spirited those evil acts. The *despising the Commandment of the Lord*, was the venom of them *. 'Tis possible to break a Law without Contempt; But when Men pretend to believe there is a God, and that this is the Law of God, it shews a Contempt of His Majesty: Men naturally account God's Laws too strict, his Yoak too heavy, and his limits too strait: And he that liveth in a contempt of this Law, curseth God in his Life: How can they believe there is a God, who despise him as a Ruler? How can they believe him to be a Guide, that disdain to follow him? To think we firmly believe a God without living conformable to his Law, is an idle and vain imagination. The true and sensible Motion of a God cannot subsist with disorder and an affected unrighteousness.

* 2Sam. 12. 9, 10.

This Contempt is seen,

1. *In any presumptuous breach of any part of his Law.* Such sins are frequently called in Scripture *Rebellions*, which are a denial of the Allegiance we owe to him. By a wilful Refusal of his Right in one part, we root up the Foundation of that Rule he doth justly challenge over us: His Right is as extensive to command us in one thing, as in another: And if it be disown'd in one thing, 'tis vertually disowned in all, and the whole Statute-Book of God is contemned, *Jam.* 2. 10, 11. *Whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all.* A willing breaking one part, tho' there be a willing observance of all the other points of it, is a breach of the whole, because the Authority of God, which gives Sanction to the whole, is slighted: The Obedience to the rest is dissembled: For the Love which is the root of all Obedience, is wanting; *For love is the fulfilling the whole law* *. The rest are obeyed because they cross not Carnal desire so much as the other, and so 'tis an Observance of himself, not of God. Besides, the Authority of God, which is not prevalent to restrain us from the Breach of one Point, would be of as little force with us to restrain us from the breach of all the rest, did the Allurements of the flesh give us as strong a diversion from the one, as from the other: And though the command that is transgrest be the least in the whole Law, yet the Authority which enjoyns it is the same with that which enacts the greatest. And it is not so much the matter of the command, as the Authority commanding which lays the Obligation.

*Ro. 13. 10.

2. *In the natural averseness to the declarations of God's Will and Mind, which way so ever they tend.* Since Man affected to be as God, he desires to be boundless; he would not have Fetters, tho' they be golden ones, and conduce to his happiness; tho' the Law of God be a strength to them, yet they will not, *Isa.* 30. 15. *In returning shall be your strength, and you would not.* They would not have a bridle to restrain them from running into the pit, nor be hedged in by the Law, tho' for their security: As if they thought it too slavish and low spirited a thing to be guided by the Will of another: Hence Man is compared to a *Wild-Ass*, that loves to *snuff up the Wind in the Wilderness at her pleasure*, rather than come under the guidance of God; From whatsoever quarter of the Heavens you pursue her, she will run to the other. * Jer. 2. 24.

The Israelites *could not endure what was Commanded*, * tho' in regard of the Moral part, agreeable to what they found written in their own Nature; And to the observance whereof, they had the highest Obligations of any People under Heaven, since God had by many Prodigies delivered them from a Cruel slavery: The memory of which preface the *Decalogue*, Exod. 20. 2. *I am the Lord thy God which have brought thee out of the Land of Egypt, out of the House of Bondage*: They could not think of the Rule of their Duty, but they must reflect upon the grand Incentive of it in their Redemption from Ægyptian Thraldom; Yet his people were cross to God, which way soever he moved: When they were in the Brick-kilns they cryed for deliverance; when they had heavenly Manna, they longed for their Onions and Garlick. In *Numb.* 14. 3. they repent of their deliverance from *Ægypt*, and talk of *returning* again to seek the Remedy of their Evils in the hands of their cruelest Enemies; and would rather put themselves into the Irons, whence God had deliver'd them, than believe one word of the promise of God for giving them a fruitful Land. But when *Moses* tells them God's order, that they should turn back by the way of the *Red-Sea*, *ver.* 25. and that God had confirmed it by an Oath, that they should not see the Land of *Canaan*, *ver.* 28. they then run cross to this Command of God, and instead of marching towards the Red-Sea, which they had wished for before, they will go up to *Canaan*, as in spight of God and his Threatning. *We will go to the Place which the Lord hath promised*, ver. 40. which *Moses* calls a *Transgressing the Commandment of the Lord*, ver. 41. They would presume to go up, notwithstanding *Moses*'s Prohibition, and are smitten by the *Amalekites*. When God gives them a Precept, with a Promise to go up to *Canaan*, they long for *Ægypt*; when God commands them to return to the *Red-Sea*, which was nearer to the place they longed for; they will shift sides and go up to *Canaan* *. And when they found they were to traverse the Solitudes of the Desart, they took Pett against God, and instead of thanking him for the late Victory against the *Canaanites*, they reproach him for his Conduct from *Ægypt*, and the Manna wherewith he nourished them in the Wilderness: They would not go to *Canaan*, the way God had chosen, nor preserve themselves by the means God had ordained: They would not be at God's disposal, but complain of the badness of the way, and the lightness of Manna, empty of any necessary juyce to sustain their Nature. They murmuringly sollicite the Will and Power of God to change all that order which he had resolved in his Council, and take another conformable to their vain foolish desires: And they signified thereby that they would invade his Conduct, and that he should act according to their fancy; which the *Psalmist* calls a *tempting of God, and limiting the holy One of Israel*, Psalm 78. 41.

* Num. 21. 4, 5. & Daillé Ser. 1 Cor. 10. Ser. 9. page 234, 235, 240.

To what point soever the Declarations of God stand, the Will of Man turns the quite contrary way. Is not the carriage of this Nation (the best then in the World) a discovery of the depth of our natural Corruption, how cross Man is to God? And that charge God brings against them, may be brought against all Men by Nature, that they *despised his Judgments*, and have a rooted Abhorrency of his Statutes in their Soul, *Lev.* 26. 43. No sooner had they recovered from one Rebellion, but they revolted to another: So difficult a thing it is for Man's Nature to be rendred capable of conforming to the Will

of

of God: The carriage of his People is but a Copy of the Nature of Mankind, and is *written for our admonition*, 1 *Cor.* 10. 11. From this temper Men * Pſal. 119. v. 126. are ſaid to make *void the Law of God**: To make it of no Obligation, an antiquated and moth-eaten Record. And the *Phariſees* by ſetting up their Traditions againſt the Will of God, are ſaid to make his Law of *none effect*, to ſtrip it of all its *Authority*, as the Greek word ſignifies, *Mat.* 15. 6.

3. *We have the greateſt ſlight of that Will of God which is moſt for his Honour and his greateſt Pleaſure.* 'Tis the Nature of Man ever ſince *Adam* to do ſo, *Hoſ.* 6. 6, 7. *God deſired mercy and not ſacrifice, the knowledge of himſelf more than burnt offering; but they like men, as* Adam, *have tranſgreſſed the Covenant*, invade God's Rights, and not let him be Lord of one Tree.

We are more curious Obſervers of the Fringes of the Law, than of the greater concerns of it. The Jews were diligent in Sacrifices and Offerings, which God did not urge upon them as Principals, but as Types of other things; but negligent of the Faith which was to be eſtabliſhed by him: Holineſs, Mercy, Pity, which concerned the Honour of God, as Governour of the World, and were imitations of the Holineſs and Goodneſs of God, they were *Strangers to*. This is God's Complaint, *Iſa.* 1. 11, 12. and 16, 17.

We ſhall find our Hearts moſt averſe to the Obſervation of thoſe Laws which are Eternal and Eſſential to Righteouſneſs; ſuch that he could not but command, as he is a Righteous Governour; in the obſervation of which, we come neareſt to him and expreſs his Image more clearly: As thoſe Laws for an inward and ſpiritual Worſhip, a ſupream Affection to him. God in regard of his Righteouſneſs and Holineſs of his Nature, and the Excellency of his Being, could not command the contrary to theſe: But this part of his Will our Hearts moſt ſwell againſt, our corruption doth moſt ſnarl at; whereas thoſe Laws which are only poſitive and have no intrinſick Righteouſneſs in them, but depend purely upon the Will of the Law-giver, and may be changed at his pleaſure (which the other, that have an intrinſick Righteouſneſs in them, cannot) we better comply with, than that part of his Will that doth * Pſ. 50. 6, 17, 19. expreſs more the Righteouſneſs of his Nature; * ſuch as the Ceremonial part of Worſhip, and the Ceremonial Law among the Jews: We are more willing to obſerve Order in ſome outward Attendances and glavering Devotions, than diſcard ſecret Affections to Evil, Crucifie inward Luſts and delightful Thoughts: A hanging down the head like a Bulruſh is not difficult, but the breaking the Heart like a Potter's Veſſel to ſhreds and duſt, (a Sacrifice God delights in, whereby the excellency of God and the vileneſs of the Creature is owned) goes againſt the Grain: To cut off an outward branch is not ſo hard, as to hack at the Root. What God moſt loaths, as moſt contrary to his Will, we moſt love: No ſin did God ſo ſeverely hate, and no ſin were the Jews more enclined unto, than that of Idolatry. The Heathen had not changed their God, as the Jews had changed their Glory, *Jer.* 2. 11. And all Men are naturally tainted with this ſin, which is ſo contrary to the Holy and excellent Nature of God: By how much the more defect there is of purity in our reſpects to God, by ſo much the more reſpect there is to ſome Idol within or without us, to Humour, Cuſtom and Intereſt, *&c.*

Never did any Law of God meet with ſo much Oppoſition as Chriſtianity, which was the deſign of God from the firſt promiſe to the exhibiting the Redeemer, and from thence to the end of the World: All People drew Swords at firſt againſt it: The Romans prepared Yokes for their Neighbours, but provided Temples for the Idols thoſe People Worſhipped. But Chriſtianity, the choiceſt deſign and moſt delightful part of the will of God, never met with a kind entertainment at firſt in any place: *Rome* that entertained all others, perſecuted this with Fire and Sword, tho' ſealed by greater Teſtimonies from Heaven, than their own Records could report in favour of their Idols.

4. *In running the greateſt hazards, and expoſing our ſelves to more trouble to croſs the Will of God, than is neceſſary to the obſervance of it.* 'Tis a vain charge Men bring againſt the Divine Precepts, that they are rigorous, ſevere, difficult: When, beſides the Contradiction to our Saviour, who tells us his *Yoke is eaſie*, and his *Burthen light*, they thwart their own calm Reaſon and Judgment. Is there not more difficulty to be Vicious, Covetous, Violent, Cruel, than to be Vertuous, Charitable, Kind? Doth the Will of God enjoyn that, that is not conformable to right Reaſon, and ſecretly delightful in the exerciſe and iſſue? And on the contrary what doth Satan and the World engage us in, that is not full of Moleſtation and Hazard? Is it a ſweet and comely thing to combate continually againſt our own Conſciences, and reſiſt our own Light, and commence a perpetual Quarrel againſt our ſelves, as we ordinarily do when we ſin? They in the Prophet, *Mich.* 6. 6, 7, 8. would be at the expence of *thouſands of Rams, and ten thouſand Rivers of Oyl*, if they could compaſs them, yea, would ſtrip themſelves of their Natural Affection to their firſt-born to expiate the *ſin of their Soul*, rather than *to do Juſtice, love Mercy and walk humbly with God*; things more conducible to the Honour of God, the welfare of the World, the ſecurity of their Souls, and of a more eaſie practice than the Offerings they wiſhed for.

Do not Men then diſown God when they will walk in ways hedged with Thorns, wherein they meet with the Arrows of Conſcience at every turn in their ſides, and ſlide down to an everlaſting Puniſhment, ſink under an intolerable ſlavery to contradict the Will of God? When they will prefer a ſenſual ſatisfaction, with a Combuſtion in their Conſciences, Violation of their Reaſons, gnawing Cares and weary Travels, before the Honour of God, the Dignity of their Natures, the happineſs of Peace and Health, which might be preſerved at a cheaper rate, than they are at to deſtroy them?

5. *In the unwillingneſs and awkardneſs of the heart, when it is to pay God a Service.* Men *do evil with both hands earneſtly*, * but do good with one hand * Mic. 7. 3. faintly; no Life in the Heart, nor any diligence in the hand. What ſlight and looſe Thoughts of God doth this unwillingneſs imply? 'Tis a wrong to his Providence, as tho' we were not under his Government, and had no need of his Aſſiſtance. A wrong to his excellency, as though there were no amiableneſs in him to make his ſervice deſirable. An injury to his Goodneſs and Power, as if he were not able or willing to reward the Creature's Obedience, or careleſs not to take notice of it. 'Tis a ſign we receive little ſatisfaction in him, and that there is a great unſuitableneſs between him and us.

1. *There is a kind of conſtraint in the firſt engagement.* We are rather preſt to it than enter our ſelves Volunteers. What we call ſervice to God, is done naturally, much againſt our Wills; 'tis not a delightful Food, but a bitter Potion; we are rather haled than run to it. There is a contradiction of ſin within us againſt our Service, as there was a Contradiction of Sinners without our Saviour againſt his doing the Will of God. Our Hearts are unweildy to any Spiritual Service of God; we are fain to uſe a violence with them ſometimes. *Hezekiah*, it is

ſaid,

ſaid, *walked before the Lord with a perfect Heart*, 2 Kings 20. 9. he walked, he made himſelf to walk: Man naturally cares not for a walk with God: If he hath any Communion with him, 'tis with ſuch a dulneſs and heavineſs of Spirit, as if he wiſhed himſelf out of his Company. Man's Nature being contrary to Holineſs, hath an averſion to any act of Homage to God; becauſe Holineſs muſt at leaſt be pretended: In every Duty wherein we have a Communion with God, Holineſs is requiſite. Now as Men are againſt the truth of Holineſs, becauſe it is unſuitable to them, ſo they are not Friends to thoſe Duties which require it, and for ſome ſpace divert them from the Thoughts of their beloved Luſts. The Word of the Lord is a Yoke, Prayer a Drudgery, Obedience a ſtrange Element. We are like Fiſh, * Job 15. 16. that *drink up Iniquity like Water* *, and come not to the Bank without the force of an Angle: No more willing to do ſervice for God, than a Fiſh is of it ſelf to do ſervice for Man. 'Tis a conſtrained act to ſatisfie Conſcience, and ſuch are Servile, not Son-like Performances, and ſpring from bondage more than Affection: If Conſcience, like a Task-maſter, did not ſcourge them to Duty, they would never perform it.

Let us appeal to our ſelves, whether we are not more unwilling to Secret, Cloſet, Hearty Duty to God, than to joyn with others in ſome external Service; as if thoſe inward Services, were a going to the Rack, and rather our Pennance than Priviledge. How much ſervice hath God in the World from the ſame Principle that Vagrants perform their Task in *Bridewel*? How glad are many of Evaſions to back them in the neglect of the Commands of God, of corrupt Reaſonings from the Fleſh to way-lay an act of Obedience, and a multitude of Excuſes to blunt the edge of the Precept? The very Service of God ſhall be a pretence to deprive him of the Obedience due to him. *Saul* will not be ruled by God's Will in the deſtroying the Cattle of the *Amalekites*, but by his own; and will impoſe upon the Will and Wiſdom of God, judging God miſtaken in his Command, and that the Cattle God thought fitteſt to be *meat to the Fouls*, were fitter to be *Sacrifices* on the Altar *. * 1 Sam. 15. 3, 9, 15, 21.

If we do perform any part of his Will, is it not for our own ends to have ſome deliverance from trouble? *Iſa.* 26. 16. *In trouble have they viſited thee, they poured out a Prayer when thy Chaſtning was upon them.* In Affliction he ſhall find them kneeling in Homage and Devotion. In proſperity, he ſhall feel them picking with Contempt; they can pour out a Prayer in Diſtreſs, and ſcarce drop one when they are delivered.

2. *There is a ſlightneſs in our Service of God.* We are loth to come into his Preſence, and when we do come, we are loth to continue with him. We pay not an Homage to him heartily, as to our Lord and Governour; we regard him not as our Maſter, whoſe Work we ought to do, and whoſe Honour we ought to aim at.

1. *In regard of the matter of Service.* When the *Torn*, the *Lame* and the *Sick* is offered to God; * ſo thin and lean a Sacrifice, that you might have thrown it to the ground with a puff; ſo ſome underſtand the meaning of [*You have ſnuff'd at it.*] Men have naturally ſuch ſlight Thoughts of the Majeſty and Law of God, that they think any Service is good enough for him, and conformable to his Law. The dulleſt and deadeſt times we think fitteſt to pay God a Service in; When ſleep is ready to cloſe our Eyes, and we are unfit to ſerve our ſelves, we think it a fit time to open our Hearts to God. *How few Morning Sacrifices* hath God from any Perſons and Families? Men leap out of their Beds to their carnal Pleaſures or worldly Employments, without any thought of their Creator and Preſerver, or any reflection upon his Will as the Rule of our daily Obedience. And as many reſerve the Dregs of their Lives, their Old-age, to offer up their Souls to God: So they reſerve the Dreggs of the Day, their ſleeping time for the offering up their Service to him: How many grudge to ſpend their beſt time in the ſerving the Will of God, and reſerve for him the ſickly and rheumatick part of their Lives; the remainder of that which the Devil and their own Luſts have fed upon? * Mal. 1. 13, 14.

Would not any Prince or Governour judge a Preſent half eaten up by wild Beaſts, or that which died in a Ditch, a contempt of his Royalty? A Corrupt Thing is too baſe and vile for ſo great a King as God is, whoſe Name is *Dreadful*. When by Age Men are weary of their own Bodies, they would preſent them to God; yet grudgingly, as if a tired Body were too good for him, ſnuffing at the Command for Service. God calls for our beſt, and we give him the worſt.

2. *In reſpect of Frame.* We think any Frame will ſerve God's turn, which ſpeaks our ſlight of God as a *Ruler*. Man naturally performs Duty with an unholy Heart, whereby it becomes an Abomination to God, *Pro.* 28. 9. *He that turns away his Ear from hearing the Law, even his Prayers ſhall be an abomination to God.* The Services which he commands, he hates for their evil Frames or corrupt ends, *Am.* 5. 21. *I hate, I deſpiſe your Feaſt-days, I will not ſmell in your ſolemn Aſſemblies*: God requires gracious Services, and we give him corrupt ones: We do not rouze up our Hearts, as *David* called upon his Lute and Harp to awake, *Pſ.* 57. 8. Our Hearts are not given to him, we put him off with bodily exerciſe: The Heart is but Ice to what it doth not affect.

1. *There is not that natural vigor in the obſervance of God, which we have in worldly Buſineſs*: When we ſee a livelineſs in Men in other things, change the Scene into a Motion towards God, how ſuddenly doth their vigor ſhrink and their Hearts freeze into ſluggiſhneſs? Many times we ſerve God as languiſhingly as if we were afraid he ſhould accept us, and pray as coldly as if we were unwilling he ſhould hear us, and take away that Luſt by which we are Governed, and which Conſcience forces us to pray againſt; as if we were afraid God ſhould ſet up his own Throne and Government in our Hearts. How fleeting are we in Divine Meditation, how ſleepy in Spiritual Exerciſes? but in other Exerciſes active: The Soul doth not awaken it ſelf, and excite thoſe Animal and Vital Spirits, which it will in bodily Recreations and Sports; much leſs the Powers of the Soul; whereby 'tis evident we prefer the latter before any Service to God: Since there is a fulneſs of Animal Spirits, why might they not be excited in holy Duties as well as in other Operations, but that there is a Reluctancy in the Soul to exerciſe its Supremacy in this Caſe, and perform any thing becoming a Creature in Subjection to God as a Ruler?

2. 'Tis evident alſo *in the Diſtractions we have in his Service*: How loth are we to ſerve God fixedly one Hour, nay, a part of an Hour, notwithſtanding all the Thoughts of His Majeſty, and the Eternity of Glory ſet before our Eye? What Man is there ſince the fall of *Adam*, that ſerved God one Hour without many Wandrings and unſuitable Thoughts unfit for that Service? How ready are our Hearts to ſtart out and unite themſelves with any worldly Objects that pleaſe us?

3. *Wearineſs in it* evidenceth it. To be weary of our Dulneſs ſignifies a Deſire; to be weary of Service ſignifies a Diſcontent to be ruled by God: ——— How tired are we in the Performance of Spiritual Duties, when in the Vain Triflings of Time we have a perpetual Motion. How will

How will many willingly revel whole Nights, when their hearts will flag at the Threshold of a Religious Service? Like *Dagon*, * lose, both our heads to think, and hands to act, when the Ark of God is present: Some in the *Prophet* wished the *new Moon* and the *Sabbath over*, that they might sell their Corn, and be busied again in their worldly Affairs: * A slight and weariness of the *Sabbath*, was a slight of the Lord of the *Sabbath*, and of that freedom from the yoke and rule of sin, which was signified by it. The design of the Sacrifices in the New Moon, was to signifie a rest from the tyranny of sin, and a consecration to the Spiritual Service of God. Servants that are quickly weary of their work, are weary of the Authority of their Master that enjoyns it: If our hearts had a value for God, it would be with us as with the Needle to the Loadstone; there would be upon his beck a speedy motion to him, and a fixed union with him. When the Judgments and Affections of the Saints shall be fully refined in glory, they shall be willing to behold the face of God, and be under his Government to Eternity, without any weariness. As the holy Angels have owned God as their Soveraign near these six thousand years, without being weary of running on his Errands: But alas! while the flesh clogs us, there will be some relicks of unwillingness to hear his Injunctions, and weariness in performing them; tho' Men may excuse those things by extrinsick causes, yet Gods unerring Judgment calls it a weariness of himself, *Isa.* 43.22. *Thou hast not called upon me, oh* Jacob, *but thou hast been weary of me, oh* Israel. Of this he taxeth his own people, when he tells them he would have the Beasts of the Field; The *Dragons* and the *Owls*; the *Gentiles*, that the *Jews* counted no better than such, to honour him and acknowledge him their Rule in a way of duty, v. 20. 21.

6. This contempt is seen in a deserting the Rule of God, when our expectations are not answered upon our Service. When Services are performed from carnal Principles, they are soon cast off when carnal ends meet not with desired satisfaction. But when we own our selves Gods Servants, and God our Master, *our eyes will wait upon him till he have mercy on us* *. 'Tis one part of the duty we owe to God as *our Master* in Heaven, *to continue in Prayer*, Col. 4.1,2. and by the same reason in all other service, and to watch in the same with Thanksgiving: To watch for occasions of praise, to watch with chearfulness for further manifestations of his Will, strength to perform it, success in the performance, that we may from all draw matter of praise: As we are in a posture of obedience to his precepts, so we should be in a posture of waiting for the blessing of it.

But naturally we reject the duty we owe to God, if he do not speed the blessing we expect from him. How many do secretly mutter the same as they in *Job* 21.15. *What is the Almighty that we should serve him, and what profit shall we have if we pray to him?* They serve not God out of Conscience to his Commands, but for some carnal profit; and if God make them to wait for it, they will not stay his leisure, but cease soliciting him any longer. Two things are exprest, that God was not worthy of any homage from them. *What is the Almighty that we should serve him?* And that the Service of him would not bring them in a good Revenue, or an advantage of that kind they expected. Interest drives many Men on to some kind of Service, and when they do not find an advance of that, they will acknowledge God no more; but like some Beggers, if you give them not upon their asking, and calling you good Master, from blessing they will turn to cursing.

How often do men do that secretly, practically, if not plainly, which *Jobs* Wife advised him to, Curse God, and cast off that disguise of Integrity they had assumed? *Job* 2.9. *Dost thou still retain thy integrity? Curse God.* What a stir and puling, and crying, is here? Cast off all thoughts of Religious Service, and be at Daggers drawing with that God, who for all thy service of him, has made thee so wretched a spectacle to men, and a banquet for worms. The like temper is deciphered in the *Jews*, Mal. 3.14. *'Tis in vain to serve God, and what profit is it that we have kept his Ordinances, that we have walked mournfully before the Lord?* What profit is it that we have regarded his Statutes, and carried our selves in a way of subjection to God, as our Soveraign, when we inherit nothing but sorrow, and the Idolatrous Neighbours swim in all kind of pleasures? As if it were the most miserable thing to acknowledge God. If men have not the benefits they expect, they think God unrighteous in himself, and injurious to them, in not conferring the favour they imagine they have merited: And if they have not that recompence, they will deny God that subjection they owe to him as Creatures. Grace moves to God upon a sence of duty; corrupt Nature upon a sence of Interest: Sincerity is encouraged by gracious returns, but is not melted away by Gods delay or refusal: Corrupt Nature would have God at its beck, and steers a course of Duty by hope of some Carnal profit, not by a sence of the Soveraignty of God.

7. This contempt is seen in breaking promises with God *. [One while the Conscience of a man makes Vows of new Obedience, and perhaps binds himself with many an Oath, but they prove like *Jonah*'s Gourd, withering the next day after their birth. This was *Pharaoh*'s temper; under a storm he would submit to God, and let *Israel* go; but when the storm is ended, he will not be under Gods controul, and *Israels* slavery shall be increased: The fear of Divine wrath, makes many a Sinner turn his back upon his sin, and the love of his ruling Lust makes him turn his back upon his true Lord. This is from the prevalency of sin, that disputes with God for the Sovereignty.]

When God hath sent a sharp Disease, as a Messenger to bind men to their Beds, and make an interruption of their sinful pleasures, their mouths are full of promises of a new Life, in hope to escape the just vengeance of God: The sence of Hell, which strikes strongly upon them, makes them full of such pretended resolutions when they howl upon their Beds. But if God be pleased in his patience, to give them a respite, to take off the Chains wherewith he seemed to be binding them for destruction, and recruit their strength, they are more earnest in their sins, than they were in their promises of a Reformation; as if they had got the mastery of God, and had outwitted him. How *often* doth God charge them * *of not returning to him after a succession of Judgments?* So hard it is, not only to allure, but to scourge men to an acknowledgment of God as their Ruler.

Confider then,

Are we not naturally inclined to disobey the known Will of God? Can we say, Lord, for thy sake we refrain the thing to which our hearts incline? Do we not allow our selves to be licentious, earthly, vain, proud, revengeful, tho' we know it will offend him? Have we not been peevishly cross to his declared Will? Run Counter to him and those Laws which express most of the glory of his holiness? Is not this to disown him as our Rule? Did we never wish there were no Law to bind us, no Precept to check our Idols? What is this, but to wish that God would depose himself from being our Governor, and leave us to our own Conduct? Or else to wish that he were as unholy as our selves, as careless of his own Laws as we are; that is, that he were no more a God than we, a God as sinful and unrighteous as our selves? He whose heart riseth against the Law of

God to unlaw it, riſeth againſt the Author of that Law to undeifie him. He that caſts contempt upon the deareſt thing God hath in the World, that which is the Image of his Holineſs, the delight of his Soul; that which he hath given a ſpecial charge to maintain, and that becauſe it is holy, juſt and good; would not ſtick to rejoyce at the deſtruction of God himſelf. If God's Holineſs and Righteouſneſs in the beam be deſpiſed, much more will an immenſe Goodneſs and Holineſs in the Fountain be rejected: He that wiſheth a beam far from his eyes, becauſe it offends and ſcorcheth him, can be no friend to the Sun, from whence that beam doth iſſue. How unworthy a Creature is Man, ſince he only, a rational Creature, is the ſole Being that withdraws it ſelf from the Rule of God in this Earth? And how miſerable a Creature is he alſo, ſince departing from the Order of Gods Goodneſs, he falls into the Order of his Juſtice; and while he refuſeth God to be the Rule of his Life, he cannot avoid him being the Judge of his puniſhment? 'Tis this is the Original of all Sin, and the Fountain of all our Miſery.

This is the firſt thing; Man diſowns the Rule which God ſets him.

Secondly, 2. *Man naturally owns any other rule rather than that of Gods preſcribing.* The Law of God orders one thing, the heart of Man deſires another. There is not the baſeſt thing in the World, but Man would ſooner ſubmit to be guided by it, rather than by the holineſs of God; and when any thing that God commands croſſes our own Wills, we value it no more, than we would the advice of a poor deſpicable Beggar.

How many are *lovers of Pleaſure, more than lovers of God?* * To make ſomething which contributes to the perfection of Nature, as Learning, Wiſdom, Moral Vertues, our Rule, would be more tolerable: But to pay that homage to a Swiniſh pleaſure, which is the right of God, is an inexcuſable contempt of him. The greateſt excellency in the World is infinitely below God; much more a beſtial delight, which is both diſgraceful and below the nature of Man. If we made the vileſt Creature on Earth our Idol, 'tis more excuſable than to be the ſlave of a brutiſh pleaſure. The viler the thing is that doth poſſeſs the Throne in our heart, the greater contempt it is of him who can only claim a right to it, and is worthy of it. Sin is the firſt object of Mans election, as ſoon as the faculty whereby he chuſes comes to exerciſe its power: And it is ſo dear to Man, that it is, in the eſtimate of our Saviour, counted as the right hand, and the right eye, dear, precious, and uſeful Members.

* 2 Tim. 3. v. 4.

1. *The rule of Satan is owned before the rule of God.* The natural Man would rather be under the guidance of Satan than the yoke of his Creator. *Adam* choſe him to be his Governor in Paradice. No ſooner had Satan ſpoke of God in a way of deriſion, *Gen.* 3. *v.* 1, 5. *Yea, hath God ſaid?* But Man follows his Counſel, and approves of the ſcoff; and the greateſt part of his poſterity, have not been wiſer by his fall, but would rather ramble in the Devils Wilderneſs, than to ſtay in Gods fold. 'Tis by the ſin of Man that the Devil is become the God of the World, as if Men were the Electors of him to the Government: Sin is an Election of him for a Lord, and a putting the Soul under his Government. Thoſe that live according to the courſe of the World, and are loth to diſpleaſe it, are under the Government of the Prince of it. The greateſt part of the Works done in the World, is to enlarge the Kingdom of *Satan*; for how many Ages were the Laws, whereby the greateſt part of the World was governed in the Affairs of Religion, the fruits of his Uſurpation and Policy? When Temples were erected to him, Prieſts conſecrated to his Service: The Rites uſed in moſt of the Worſhip of the World, were either of his own Coining, or the miſapplying the Rites, God had ordained to himſelf, under the notion of a God. Whence the Apoſtle calls all Idolatrous Feaſts, *the Table of Devils, the Cup of Devils, Sacrifice to Devils, fellowſhip with Devils* *, Devils being the real object of the *Pagan* Worſhip, tho' not formally intended by the Worſhipper; tho' in ſome parts of the *Indies*, the direct and peculiar worſhip is to the *Devil*, that he might not hurt them. And tho' the intention of others was to offer to *God*, and not the *Devil*, yet ſince the action was contrary to the Will of God, he regards it as a Sacrifice to Devils. It was not the intention of *Jeroboam* to eſtabliſh Prieſts to the Devil, when he Conſecrated them to the Service of his Calves, for *Jehu* afterwards calls them *the Servants of the Lord*, 2 Kings 10. 23. *See if there be here none of the Servants of the Lord*, to diſtinguiſh them from the Servants of *Baal*, ſignifying that the *true God* was worſhipped under thoſe Images, and not *Baal*, nor any of the Gods of the Heathens; yet Scripture couples the *Calves* and *Devils* together, and aſcribes the Worſhip given to one, to be given to the other. * *He ordained him Prieſts for the high places, and for the Devils, and for the Calves which he had made*; ſo that they were Sacrifices to Devils, notwithſtanding the intention of *Jeroboam* and his Subjects, that had ſet them up and worſhipped them, becauſe they were contrary to the mind of God, and agreeable to the Doctrine and Mind of Satan, tho' the object of their worſhip, in their own intention, were not the Devil, but ſome Deified Man, or ſome Canonized Saint: The intention makes not a good action: If ſo, when men *kill* the beſt Servants of God with a deſign to do *God Service*, as our Saviour foretels, * the action would not be Murder; yet who can call it otherwiſe, ſince God is wronged in the perſons of his Servants? Since moſt of the worſhip of the World, which mens corrupt natures incline them to, is falſe and different from the revealed Will of God, 'tis a practical acknowledgment of the Devil, as the Governor, by acknowledging and practiſing thoſe Doctrines, which have not the ſtamp of Divine Revelation upon them, but were minted by Satan to depreſs the Honour of God in the World. It doth concern men then to take good heed, that in their acts of worſhip they have a Divine Rule, otherwiſe it is an owning the Devil as the Rule, for there is no *Medium*: Whatſoever is not from *God*, is from *Satan*.

* 1 Cor. 10. v. 20, 21.

* 2 Chron. 11. 15.

* Joh. 16. 2.

But to bring this cloſer to us, and conſider that which is more common among us: Men that are in a natural condition, and wedded to their luſts, are under the paternal Government of Satan, *Joh.* 8. 44. *Ye are of your Father the Devil, and the luſts of your Father you will do.* If we divide Sin into Spiritual and Carnal, which diviſion comprehends all, the Devils Authority is owned in both: In Spiritual, we conform to his *example*, becauſe thoſe he commits. In Carnal, we obey his *Will*, becauſe thoſe he directs: He acts the one, and ſets us a *Copy*: He tempts to the other, and gives us a kind of a *Precept*. Thus Man by Nature being a willing Servant of Sin, is more deſirous to be bound in the Devils Iron Chains, than in Gods ſilken Cords.

What greater Atheiſm can there be, than to uſe God as if he were inferiot to the Devil? To take the part of his greateſt Enemy, who drew all others into the faction againſt him? To pleaſure Satan by offending God, and gratifie our Adverſary with the injury of our Creator? For a Subject to take Arms againſt his Prince with the deadlieſt Enemy, both himſelf and Prince hath, in the whole world, adds a greater blackneſs to the Rebellion.

2. *The more viſible Rule preferred before God in*

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the World, is Man. The Opinion of the World is more our Rule than the Precept of God; and many Mens Abſtinence from Sin, is not from a ſenſe of the Divine Will, no, not from a Principle of Reaſon, but from an Affection to ſome Man on whom they depend, or fear of Puniſhment from a Superior: The ſame Principle with that in a ravenous Beaſt, who abſtains from what he deſires for fear only of a Stick or Club: Men will walk with the Herds, go in faſhion with the moſt, ſpeak and act as the moſt do: While we conform to the World, we cannot perform a *reaſonable Service* to God, nor prove, nor approve practically what the good and acceptable Will of God is. The Apoſtle puts them in Oppoſition to one another *. *Rom. 12. v. 1, 2.

This appears,

1. *In complying more with the Dictates of Men, than the Will of God.* Men draw Encouragement from God's Forbearance, to ſin more freely againſt him; but the fear of Puniſhment for breaking the Will of Man, lays a reſtraint upon them: The fear of Man is a more powerful Curb to reſtrain Men in their Duty, than the fear of God: So we may pleaſe a Friend, a Maſter, a Governour, we are regardleſs whether we pleaſe God or no: Men-pleaſers are more than God-pleaſers: Man is more advanced as a Rule, than God, when we ſubmit to humane Orders, and ſtagger and diſpute againſt Divine. Would not a Prince think himſelf ſlighted in his Authority, if any of his Servants ſhould decline his Commands, by the Order of one of his Subjects? And will not God make the ſame Account of us, when we deny or delay our Obedience, for fear of one of his Creatures? In the fear of Man, we as little acknowledge God for our Sovereign, as we do for our Comforter: *Iſa.* 51. 12, 13. *I, even I am he, that comforteth you, who art thou, that thou ſhouldſt be afraid of a Man that ſhall die,* &c. *and forgetteſt the Lord thy Maker,* &c? We put a ſlight upon God, as if he were not able to bear us out in our Duty to him, and uncapable to ballance the ſtrength of an arm of fleſh.

2. *In obſerving that which is materially the Will of God, not becauſe 'tis his Will, but the Injunctions of Men.* As the Word of God may be *received*, yet not as *his Word*, ſo the Will of God may be perform'd yet not as his Will. 'Tis materially done, but not formally obeyed: An *Action*, and *Obedience* in that Action are *two* things: As when Man commands the ceaſing from all Works of the ordinary Calling on the Sabbath, 'tis the ſame that God enjoyns; the Ceſſation, or Attendance of his Servants on the hearing the Word, are conformable in the matter of it to the Will of God; but it is only conformable in the obediential part of the acts to the Will of Man, when it is done only with reſpect to a Humane Precept. As God hath a right to enact his Laws without conſulting his Creature in the way of his Government: So Man is bound to obey thoſe Laws, without conſulting whether they be agreeable to Mens Laws or no: If we act the Will of God, becauſe the Will of our Superiors concurs with it, we obey not God in that, but Man; a humane Will being the Rule of our Obedience, and not the Divine: This is to vilifie God, and make him inferior to Man in our eſteem, and a valuing the Rule of Man above that of our Creator.

Since God is the higheſt Perfection and infinitely good, whatſoever Rule he gives the Creature muſt be good, elſe it cannot proceed from God. A baſe thing cannot be the product of an infinite Excellency: and an unreaſonable thing cannot be the product of an infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs: Therefore as the reſpecting God's Will before the Will of Man is excellent and worthy of a Creature, and is an acknowledging the Excellency, Goodneſs and Wiſdom of God; ſo the eying the Will of Man before and above the Will of God, is, on the contrary, a denyal of all thoſe in a lump, and a preferring the Wiſdom, Goodneſs and Power of Man in his Law above all thoſe perfections of God in his. Whatſoever Men do that looks like Moral Vertue or Abſtinence from Vices, not out of Obedience to the Rule God hath ſet, but becauſe of Cuſtom, Neceſſity, Example or Imitation, they may in the doing of it be rather ſaid to be Apes than Chriſtians.

3. *In obeying the Will of Man, when 'tis contrary to the Will of God.* As the Iſraelites willingly *walked after the Commandment*, * not of *God*, but of *Jeroboam* in the caſe of the Calves: And *made the Kings Heart glad with their Lies.* *They cheered him with their ready Obedience to his Command for Idolatry (which was a lie in it ſelf, and a lie in them) againſt the Commandment of God and the Warnings of the Prophets; rather than cheer the Heart of God with their Obedience to his worſhip inſtituted by him. Nay, and when God offered them, to cure their wound, their Iniquity breaks out afreſh; they would neither have him as a Lord to rule them, nor a Phyſician to cure them, *Hoſ.* 7. 1. *When I would have healed* Iſrael, *then the Iniquity of* Ephraim *was diſcovered.* The whole Perſian Nation ſhrunk at once from a Duty due by the Light of Nature to the Deity, upon a Decree, *That neither God or Man ſhould be petitioned to for thirty Days, but only their King*. One, only *Daniel*, excepted againſt it, who preferred his Homage to God above Obedience to his Prince. An Adulterous Generation is many times made the Rule of Mens Profeſſions, as is implyed in thoſe Words of our Saviour, Mark 8. 38. *Whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of Me and my Words in this Adulterous and Sinful Generation*: Own him among his Diſciples, and be aſhamed of him among his Enemies: Thus Men are ſaid to deny God, *Tit.* 1. 16. When they *attend to Jewiſh Fables and the Precepts of Men rather than the Word of God*: When the Decrees or Canons of fallible Men are valued at a higher rate, and preferr'd before the Writings of the Holy Ghoſt by his Apoſtles. *Hoſ.* 5. 11. *Hoſ. 7. 3. *Daniel 6.

As Man naturally diſowns the Rule God ſets him, and owns any other Rule than that of God's preſcribing, ſo,

Thirdly, 3. *He doth this in order to the ſetting himſelf up as his own Rule.* As tho' our own Wills, and not God's, were the true ſquare and meaſure of Goodneſs. We make an Idol of our own Wills: and as much as *Self* is exalted, God is depoſed: The more we eſteem our own Wills, the more we endeavour to annihilate the Will of God: Account nothing of him, the more we account of our ſelves: And endeavour to render our ſelves his Superiors by exalting our own Wills: No Prince but would look upon his Authority as invaded, his Royalty derided, if a Subject ſhould reſolve to be a Law to himſelf, in Oppoſition to his known Will: True Piety is to hate our ſelves, deny our ſelves, and cleave ſolely to the Service of God. To make our ſelves our own *Rule*, and the object of our chiefeſt Love is *Atheiſm*. If *Self-denial* be the greateſt part of Godlineſs, the great Letter in the Alphabet of Religion; *Self-love* is the great Letter in the Alphabet of Practical Atheiſm. *Self* is the great Anti-Chriſt and Anti-God in the World, that ſets up it ſelf above all that is called *God*: *Self-love* is the Captain of that black band, 2 *Tim.* 3. 2. It ſits in the Temple of God and would be ador'd as God: Self-love *begins*, but denying the Power of Godlineſs, which is the ſame with denying the ruling Power of God, *ends* the Liſt: 'Tis ſo far from binding to the Righteous Will of the Creator, that it would have the Eternal

Will of God ſtoop to the Humour and Unrighteous Will of a Creature: And this is the Ground of the Contention between the Fleſh and the Spirit in the Heart of a renewed Man; Fleſh Wars for the God-head of *Self*, the Spirit fights for the God-head of God: The one would ſettle the Throne of the Creator, and the other maintain a Law of Coveteouſneſs, Ambition, Envy, Luſt in the ſtead of God.

The evidence of this will appear in theſe *Propoſitions.*

1. *This is Natural to Man as he is corrupted.* What was the Venom of the Sin of *Adam*, is naturally deriv'd with his Nature to all his Poſterity. It was not the eating a Forbidden Apple, or the pleaſing his Palate that *Adam* aimed at, or was the chief Object of his Deſire; but to live *independently on his Creator*, and be a God to himſelf, *Gen.* 3. 5. *You ſhall be as Gods.* That which was the matter of the Devils Temptation, was the incentive of Man's Rebellion: A likeneſs to God he aſpired to in the Judgment of God himſelf, an infallible interpreter of Man's Thoughts; *Behold, Man is become as one of us, to know Good and Evil*, in regard of Self-ſufficiency and being a Rule to himſelf. The Jews underſtand the Ambition of Man to reach no further than an equality with the Angelical Nature: But *Jehovah* here underſtands it in another Senſe: God had ordered Man by this Prohibition not to eat of the Fruit of the *Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*; not to attempt the Knowledge of Good and Evil of himſelf, but to wait upon the Dictates of God; not to truſt to his own Counſels, but to depend wholly upon him for Direction and Guidance. Certainly he that would not hold off his Hand from ſo ſmall a thing as an Apple, when he had his choice of the Fruit of the Garden, would not have denyed himſelf any thing his Appetite had deſired, when that principle had prevailed upon him: He would not have ſtuck at a greater matter to pleaſure himſelf with the diſpleaſing of God, when for ſo ſmall a thing he would incur the anger of his Creator.

Thus would he deifie his own Underſtanding againſt the Wiſdom of God, and his own Appetite againſt the Will of God: This Deſire of equality with God, a Learned Man thinks the Apoſtle intimates, *Phil.* 2. 6. *Who being in the form of God, thought it not Robbery to be equal with God*: The Son's being in the form of God, and thinking it not robbery to be equal with God, implies that the Robbery of Sacriledge committed by our firſt Parents, for which the Son of God humbled himſelf to the Death of the Croſs, was an attempt to be equal with God, and depend no more upon God's Directions, but his own Conduct, which could be no leſs than an invaſion of the Throne of God, and endeavour to put himſelf into a poſture to be his Mate: Other ſins, Adultery and Theft, *&c.* could not be committed by him at that time, but he immediately puts forth his Hand to uſurp the Power of his Maker: This Treaſon is the old *Adam* in every Man. The firſt *Adam* contradicted the Will of God to ſet up himſelf: The *ſecond Adam* humbled himſelf, and did nothing but by the Command and Will of his Father. This principle wherein the venom of the old *Adam* lies, muſt be Crucified to make way for the Throne of the humble and obedient Principle of the new *Adam* or quickning Spirit. Indeed ſin in its own nature is nothing elſe, but *a willing according to* ſelf, *and contrary to the Will of God*: Luſts are therefore called the *Wills* of the Fleſh and of the Mind *. As the Precepts of God are God's Will, ſo the Violations of theſe Precepts is Man's VVill: And thus Man uſurps a God-head to himſelf, by giving that Honour to his own VVill which belongs to God; appropriating the Right of Rule to himſelf and denying it to his Creator. That Servant that acts according to his own Will with a neglect of his Maſters, refuſeth the Duty of a Servant, and invades the Right of his Maſter: This Self-love and deſire of Independency on God has been the Root of all ſin in the World: The great controverſie between God and Man hath been, whether he or they ſhall be God; whether his Reaſon or theirs, his Will or theirs ſhall be the guiding Principle: As Grace is the union of the Will of God and the Will of the Creature; ſo ſin is the oppoſition of the Will of *Self* to the Will of God. *Leaning to our own Underſtanding*, is oppoſed as a Natural Evil, *to truſting in the Lord*,* a Supernatural Grace. Men commonly love what is their own, their own Inventions, their own Fancies; therefore the Ways of a wicked Man are called the *ways of his own heart*; * and the ways of a Superſtitious Man his own Devices, *Jer.* 18. 11. *We will walk after our own Devices*: We will be a Law to our ſelves: And what the *Pſalmiſt* ſaith of the Tongue, our Tongues are *our own*, who ſhall controul us? is as truly the Language of Mens Hearts, our Wills are our own, who ſhall check us?

2. *This is evident in the Diſſatisfaction of Men with their own Conſciences when they contradict the deſires of Self.* Conſcience is nothing but an actuated or reflex Knowledge of a ſuperior Power and an equitable Law; a Law impreſt, and a Power above it impreſſing it. Conſcience is not the Law-giver, but the Remembrancer to mind us of that Law of Nature imprinted upon our Souls, and actuate the conſiderations of the Duty and Penalty, to apply the Rule to our Acts, and paſs Judgment upon Matter of Fact: 'Tis to give the Charge, urge the Rule, enjoyn the Practice of thoſe Notions of Right, as part of our Duty and Obedience.

But Man is much diſpleaſed with the Directions of Conſcience, as he is out of Love with the Accuſations and condemning Sentence of this Officer of God: VVe cannot naturally endure any quick and lively practical Thoughts of God and his VVill, and diſtaſte our own Conſciences for putting us in mind of it: They therefore like *not to retain God in their Knowledge*, * that is, God in their own Conſciences; they would blow it out as it is the Candle of the Lord in them to direct them, and their acknowledgments of God, to ſecure themſelves againſt the practice of its Principles: They would ſtop all the Avenues to any Beam of Light, and would not ſuffer a ſparkle of Divine Knowledge to flutter in their Minds, in order to ſet up another directing rule ſuited to the fleſhly Appetite: And when they cannot ſtop the light of it from glaring in their Faces, they rebel againſt it, and cannot endure to abide in its Paths*: He ſpeaks not of thoſe which had the written word or ſpecial Revelations; but only a natural light or traditional, handed from *Adam*: Hence are all the endeavours to ſtill it when it begins to ſpeak, by ſome carnal Pleaſures; as *Saul*'s evil Spirit with a fit of Muſick; or bribe it with ſome fits of a glavering Devotion when it holds the Law of God in its commanding Authority before the mind: they would wipe out all the Impreſſions of it when it preſſes the advancement of God above *Self*, and entertain it with no better Complement than *Ahab* did *Elijah*, *Haſt thou found me O my Enemy?*

If we are like to God in any thing of our natural Fabrick, 'tis in the Superior and more Spiritual part of our Souls: The reſiſtance of that which is moſt like to God, and inſtead of God in us, is a diſowning of the Sovereign repreſented by that Officer: He that *would be without Conſcience*, would be *without God*, whoſe *Vicegerent* it is, and make the *ſenſitive part*, which Conſcience oppoſes, his *Law-giver*. Thus a Man out of reſpect to ſinful *Self*, quarrels with his natural Self; and cann't comport himſelf in a friendly behaviour to his internal implanted Principles:

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*Pro. 3. 5.

*Eccl. 11. 9.

*Rom. 1. 28

*Job 24. 13.

*Eph. 2. 3

Dr. Jackſon

He hates to come under the rebukes of them, as much as *Adam* hated to come into the preſence of God, after he turned Traytor againſt him: The bad entertainment Gods Deputy hath in us, reflects upon that God whoſe cauſe it pleads: 'Tis upon no other account that men loath the upright Language of their own reaſons in thoſe matters, and wiſh the eternal ſilence of their own Conſciences, but as they maintain the rights of God, and would hinder the *Idol* of *Self* from uſurping his Godhead and Prerogative. Tho' this power be part of a Mans ſelf, rooted in his Nature, as eſſential to him, and inſeparable from him, as the beſt part of his Being, yet he quarrels with it as it is Gods Deputy, and ſtickling for the honour of God in his Soul, and quarrelling with that ſinful Self he would cheriſh above God: We are not diſpleaſed with this faculty barely as it exerciſeth a Self-reflection, but as it is Gods Vicegerent, and bears the mark of his Authority in it. In ſome caſes this Self-reflecting Act meets with good Entertainment, when it acts not in contradiction to *Self*, but ſuitable to natural affections. As ſuppoſe a man hath in his paſſion ſtruck his Child, and cauſed thereby ſome great miſchief to him, the reflection of Conſcience will not be unwelcome to him, will work ſome tenderneſs in him, becauſe it takes the part of *Self* and of natural affection: But in the more Spiritual concerns of God, it will be rated as a buſie body.

3. *Many, if not moſt actions, materially good in the World, are done more becauſe they are agreeable to* Self, *than as they are honourable to God.* As the *Word of God* may be heard not *as his Word*, * but as there may be pleaſing Notions in it, or diſcourſes againſt an Opinion or Party we diſaffect: So the Will of God may be performed, not as his Will, but as it may gratifie ſome ſelfiſh conſideration, when we will pleaſe God ſo far as it may not diſpleaſe our ſelves, and ſerve him as our Maſter, ſo far as his Command may be a Servant to our humour; when we conſider not who it is that Commands, but how ſhort it comes of diſpleaſing that ſin which rules in our heart, pick and chuſe what is leaſt burdenſome to the fleſh, and diſtaſtful to our luſts.

* 1 Theſ. 2. 13.

He that doth the Will of God, not out of Conſcience of that Will, but becauſe it is agreeable to himſelf, caſts down the Will of God, and ſets his own Will in the place of it; takes the Crown from the head of God, and places it upon the head of *Self*. If things are done, not becauſe they are commanded by God, but deſirable to us, 'tis a diſobedient obedience, a conformity to Gods Will in regard of the *matter*, a conformity to our own Will in regard of the *motive*; either as the things done are agreeable to Natural and Moral Self, or Sinful Self.

1. *As they are agreeable to Natural or Moral Self.* When men will practiſe ſome points of Religion, and walk in the track of ſome Divine Precepts; not becauſe they are Divine, but becauſe they are agreeable to their humour or conſtitution of Nature, from the ſway of a natural bravery, the *byas* of a ſecular intereſt, not from an ingenuous ſenſe of Gods Authority, or a voluntary ſubmiſſion to his Will: As when a man will avoid exceſs in drinking, not becauſe it is diſhonorable to God, but as it is a blemiſh to his own reputation, or an impair of the health of his body. Doth this deſerve the name of an obſervance of the Divine injunction, or rather an obedience to our ſelves? Or when a man will be liberal in the diſtribution of his Charity, not with an eye to Gods precept, but in compliance with his own natural compaſſion, or to pleaſure the generoſity of his nature: The one is obedience to a mans own preſervation, the other an obedience to the intereſt or impulſe of a moral Vertue. 'Tis not reſpect to the *rule* of God, but the Authority of *Self*; and at the beſt, is but the performance of the material part of the Divine Rule, without any concurrence of a Spiritual motive or a Spiritual manner. That only is a maintaining the rights of God, when we pay an obſervance to his Rule, without examining the agreeableneſs of it to our ſecular intereſt, or conſulting with the humour of fleſh and blood; when we will not decline his ſervice, tho' we find it croſs, and hath no affinity with the pleaſure of our own nature: Such an obedience as *Abraham* manifeſted in his readineſs to Sacrifice his Son: Such an obedience as our Saviour demands in cutting off the right hand. When we obſerve any thing of Divine Order, upon the account of its ſuitableneſs to our natural Sentiments, we ſhall readily divide from him, when the intereſt of Nature turns its point againſt the intereſt of Gods honour; we ſhall fall off from him, according to the change we find in our own humours: And can that be valued as a ſetting up the Rule of God, which muſt be depos'd upon the mutable intereſt of an inconſtant mind? *Eſau* had no regard to God, in delaying the execution of his reſolution to ſhorten his Brothers days, tho' he was awed by the reverence of his Father to delay it; he conſidered perhaps, how juſtly he might lie under the imputation of haſtening crazy *Iſaacs* death, by depriving him of a beloved Son: But had the old mans head been laid, neither the contrarary Command of God, nor the nearneſs of a Fraternal Relation, could have bound his hands from the act, no more than they did his heart from the reſolution, *Gen.* 27.41. Eſau *hated* Jacob *becauſe of the bleſſing wherewith his Father bleſſed him; and* Eſau *ſaid in his heart, the days of mourning for my Father are at hand, then will I ſlay my Brother.*

So many Children, that expect at the death of their Parents great Inheritances or Portions, may be obſervant of them, not in regard of the Rule fixed by God, but to their own hopes, which they would not fruſtrate by a diſobligement: Whence is it that many men abſtain from groſs ſins, but in love to their reputation? Wickedneſs may be acted privately, which a mans own credit puts a bar to the open commiſſion of. The preſerving his own eſteem, may divert him from entring into a Brothel-houſe, to which he hath ſet his mind before, againſt a known precept of his Creator. As *Pharaoh* parted with the *Iſraelites*, ſo do ſome men with their blemiſhing ſins; not out of a ſence of Gods Rule, but the ſmart of preſent Judgments, or fear of a future wrath: Our ſecurity then and reputation, is ſet up in the place of God.

This alſo may be, and is in renewed men, who have the Law written in their hearts; that is, an habitual diſpoſition to an agreement with the Law of God; when what is done is with a reſpect to this habitual inclination, without eying the Divine precept, which is appointed to be their Rule: This alſo is to ſet up a Creature, as renewed *Self* is, inſtead of the Creator, and that Law of his in his Word, which ought to be the Rule of his actions. Thus it is when men chuſe a moral Life, not ſo much out of reſpect to the Law of Nature, as it is the Law of God, but as it is a Law become one with their Souls and Conſtitutions: There is more of *Self* in this, than conſideration of God: For if it were the latter, the revealed Law of God would, upon the ſame reaſon, be received as well as his natural Law. From this principle of *Self*, Morality comes by ſome to be advanced above Evangelical dictates.

2. *As they are agreeable to ſinful Self.* Not that the Commands of God are ſuited to bolſter up the Corruptions of Men, no more than the Law can be ſaid to excite or *revive* ſin; * but it is like a ſcandal taken, not given; an occaſion taken by the tumultuouſneſs of our depraved Nature. The *Phariſees* were devout in *long Prayers*, not from a ſence of duty, or a care of Gods honour, but to ſatisfie their ambition,

* Rom. 7. 8, 9.

and

and rake together fuel for their *covetousness*; * that they might have the greater esteem and richer offerings, to free by their Prayers the Souls of deceased persons from Purgatory; an opinion that some think the Jewish Synagogue had then entertain'd, * since some of their Doctors have defended such a Notion. Men may observe some Precepts of God, to have a better conveniency to break others. *Jehu* was ordered to cut off the House of *Ahab*: The service he undertook was in it self acceptable, but corrupt Nature misacted that which Holiness and Righteousness commanded: God appointed it to magnifie his Justice, and check the Idolatry that had been supported by that Family: *Jehu* acted it to satisfie his revenge and ambition; he did it to fulfil his Lust, not the Will of God who enjoyn'd him: *Jehu* applauds it as zeal, and God abhors it as Murder, and therefore would *avenge the blood of* Jezreel *on the House of Jehu*, Hos. 1.4. Such kind of services are not paid to God for his own sake, but to our selves for our Lusts sake.

*Matth. 23. 14. *Turn Widows Houses and for a pretence make long Prayers.* * Gerhard in loc.

4. *This is evident in neglecting to take* Gods *direction upon emergent occasions.* This follows the Text [*none did seek God*]. When we consult not with him, but trust more to our own Will and Counsel, we make our selves our own Governors and Lords, independent upon him: As tho' we could be our own Counsellors, and manage our Concerns without his leave and assistance; as tho' our Works were in our own hands, and not in the *hands of God*, * that we can by our own strength and sagacity, direct them to a successful end without him. If we must *acquaint our selves with God* before we decree a thing, * then to decree a thing without acquainting God with it, is to prefer our purblind Wisdom before the infinite Wisdom of God; to resolve without consulting God, is to depose God, and deifie *Self*, our own wit and strength. We would rather, like *Lot*, follow our own humour, and stay in *Sodom*, than observe the Angels order to go out of it.

* Eccl. 9.1.

* Job 22.28.

5. *As we account the actions of others to be good or evil, as they suit with, or spurn against our fancies and humours.* Vertue is a Crime, and Vice a Vertue, as it is contrary or concurrent with our humours: Little reason have many men to blame the actions of others, but because they are not agreeable to what they affect and desire: We would have all men take directions from us, and move according to our beck: Hence that common Speech in the World, Such an one is an honest-friend, why? Because he is of their humour, and lackies according to their Wills. Thus we make *Self* the measure and square of good and evil in the rest of Mankind, and judge of it by our own Fancies, and not by the Will of God, the proper Rule of Judgment.

Well then let us Consider,

Is not this very common, are we not naturally more willing to displease God than displease our selves, when it comes to a point that we must do one or other? Is not our own Counsel of more value with us than Conformity to the Will of the Creator? Do not our Judgments often run Counter to the Judgment of God? Have his Laws a greater respect from us, than our own humours? Do we scruple the staining his Honour, when it comes in competition with our own? Are not the Lives of most Men a pleasing themselves, without a repentance that ever they displeased God? Is not this to undeifie God, to deifie our selves, and disown the propriety he hath in us by the right of Creation and Beneficence? We order our own ways by our own humours, as tho' we were the Authors of our own Being, and had given our selves Life and Understanding. This is to destroy the Order that God hath placed between our Wills and his own, and a lifting up of the foot above the head; 'tis the deformity of the Creature. The honour of every rational Creature, consists in the service of the first Cause of his Being, as the welfare of every Creature consists in the orders and proportionable motion of its members, according to the Law of its Creation.

He that moves and acts according to a Law of his own, offers a manifest wrong to God, the highest Wisdom and chiefest Good; disturbs the order of the World, nulls the design of the Righteousness and Holiness of God: The Law of God is the Rule of that Order he would have observed in the World: He that makes another Law his Rule, thrusts out the Order of the Creator, and establishes the Disorder of the Creature.

But this will yet be more evident in the fourth thing.

4. *Man would make himself the Rule of God, and give Laws to his Creator.* We are willing God should be our Benefactor, but not our Ruler; we are content to admire his Excellency, and pay him a Worship, provided he will walk by our Rule.

* [This commits a Riot upon his Nature. To think him to be what we our selves *would have him and wish him to be*, Psal. 50. 21. We would amplifie his Mercy and contract his Justice: We would have his power enlarg'd to supply our wants, and streightned when it goes about to revenge our Crimes: We would have him wise to defeat our Enemies, but not to disappoint our unworthy projects: We would have him all eye to regard our Indigence, and blind, not to discern our Guilt: We would have him true to his Promises, regardless of his Precepts, and false to his Threatnings. We would new mint the Nature of God according to our models, and shape a God according to our Fancies, as he made us at first according to his own Image:] Instead of obeying him, we would have him obey us: Instead of owning and admiring his perfections, we would have him strip himself of his infinite excellency, and cloth himself with a nature agreeable to our own. This is not only to set up *Self* as the Law of God, but to make our own Imaginations the model of the Nature of God.

* *Decay of Christian Piety*, p. 169. *somewhat changed.*

Corrupted man takes a pleasure to accuse or suspect the actions of God: We would not have him act conveniently to his Nature, but act what doth gratifie us, and abstain from what distasts us. Man is never well, but when he is impeaching one or other perfection of Gods Nature, and undermining his Glory, as if all his Attributes must stand Indicted at the Bar of our purblind Reason: This VVeed shoots up in the exercise of Grace: *Peter* intended the refusal of our Saviours washing his feet as an act of *humility*, but *Christ* understands it to be a prescribing *a Law to himself*, a correcting his love, *John* 13. 8, 9.

This is evidenc'd,

1. *In the strivings against his Law.* How many men imply by their Lives, that they would have God depos'd from his Government, and some unrighteous Being step into his Throne, as if God had or should change his Laws of Holiness into Laws of Licentiousness, as if he should abrogate his old eternal Precepts, and enact contrary ones in their stead? VVhat is the Language of such practices, but that they would be Gods Law-givers and not his Subjects? that he should deal with them according to their own VVills, and not according to his Righteousness? that they could make a more holy, wise and righteous Law, than the Law of God? that their imaginations, and not Gods righteousness, should be the Rule of his doing good to them? *Jer.* 9.31. *They have forsaken my Law, and walked after the imaginations of their own heart.*

VVhen an act is known to be a sin, and the Law that forbids it acknowledg'd to be the Law of God, and after this we persist in that which is contrary to it, we tax his Wisdom as if he did not understand what

was

*Job 21.22 was convenient for us, *we would teach God knowledge* *; 'tis an implicite wish that God had laid aside the holiness of his Nature, and framed a Law to pleasure our Lusts. When God calls for *weeping and mourning, and girding with sackcloath*, upon approaching Judgments, then the corrupt heart is for joy and gladness, *eating of Flesh and drinking of Wine, because to* *Isa. 22.12, 13. *morrow they should die* *: As if God had mistaken himself, when he ordered them so much sorrow, when their lives were so near an end; and had lost his Understanding, when he ordered such a Precept. Disobedience is therefore called contention, *Rom.* 2. 8. *Contentious and obey not the truth*: Contention against God, whose truth it is that they disobey; a dispute with him, which hath more of Wisdom in it self, and conveniency for them, his truth or their imaginations. The more the love, goodness and holiness of God appears in any command, the more are we naturally averse from it, and cast an imputation on him, as if he were foolish, unjust, cruel, and that we could have advised and directed him better. The goodness of God is eminent to us, in appointing a day for his own Worship, wherein we might converse with him, and he with us, and our Souls be refresh'd with Spiritual Communications from him; and we rather use it for the ease of our bodies, than the advancement of our Souls; as if God were mistaken and injured his Creature, when he urg'd the Spiritual part of duty. Every disobedience to the Law is an implicite giving Law to him, and a Charge against him that he might have provided better for his Creature.

2. *In disapproving the methods of Gods Government of the World.* If the Counsels of Heaven roul not about according to their Schemes, instead of adoring the unsearchable depths of his Judgments, they call him to the Bar, and accuse him, because they are not fitted to their narrow Vessels; as if a Nut-shell could contain an Ocean. As corrupt Reason esteems the highest Truths foolishness, so it counts the most Righteous ways unequal. Thus we commence a Suit against God, as tho' he had not acted righteously and wisely, but must give an account of his proceedings at our Tribunal. This is to make our selves Gods Superiors, and presume to instruct him better in the Government of the World; As tho' God hinder'd himself and the World, in not making us of his Privy Council, and not ordering his Affairs according to the contrivances of our dim Understandings.

Is not this manifest in our immoderate complaints of Gods dealings with his Church, as tho' there were a coldness in Gods affections to his Church, and a glowing heat towards it only in us? Hence are those importunate desires for things which are not established by any promise, as tho' we would over-rule and over-perswade God to comply with our humour. We have an ambition to be Gods Tutors, and direct him in his Counsels: *Who hath been his Counsellor*, saith the *Apostle* *? Who ought not to be his Counsellor, * Rom. 11. 34. saith corrupt Nature? Men will find fault with God in what he suffers to be done according to their own minds, when they feel the bitter fruit of it. When *Cain* had kill'd his Brother, and his Conscience rackt him, how sawcily and discontentedly doth he answer God, Gen. 4. 9. *Am I my Brothers keeper*? Since thou dost own thy self the Rector of the World, thou shouldst have preserved his person from my fury; since thou dost accept his Sacrifice before my Offering, preservation was due as well as acceptance. If this temper be found on Earth, no wonder it is lodged in Hell. That deplorable person under the sensible stroke of God's Soveraign Justice, would oppose his Nay to Gods Will, *Luke* 16. 30. (*And he said, nay, Father Abraham, but if one went to them from the dead, they will repent*:) He would presume to prescribe more effectual means than *Moses* and the *Prophets*, to inform men of the danger they incurr'd by their Sensuality: *David was displeas'd*, it's said, 2 *Sam.* 6. 8. *when the Lord had made a breach upon Uzzah*; not with *Uzzah*, who was the object of his pity, but with God who was the inflicter of that punishment.

When any of our friends have been struck with a Rod against our sentiments and wishes, have not our hearts been apt to swell in complaints against God, as tho' he disregarded the goodness of such a person, did not see with our eyes, and measure him by our esteem of him? As if he should have ask'd our Counsel, before he had resolved, and managed himself according to our Will, rather than his own. If he be patient to the wicked, we are apt to tax his holiness, and accuse him as an enemy to his own Law. If he inflict severity upon the righteous, we are ready to suspect his goodness, and charge him to be an enemy to his affectionate Creature. If he spare the *Nimrods* of the World, we are ready to ask *where is the God of Judgment*? *If he afflict the Pillars of the Earth, * Mal. 2. 17. we are ready to question where is the God of Mercy? 'Tis impossible, since the depraved nature of Man, and the various interests and passions in the World, that infinite Power and Wisdom can act righteously for the good of the Universe, but he will shake some corrupt interest or other upon the Earth; so various are the inclinations of Men, and such a Weather-cock Judgment hath every Man in himself, that the divine method he applauds this day, upon a change of his interest he will cavil at the next: 'Tis impossible for the just Orders of God to please the same person many Weeks, scarce many minutes together: God must cease to be God, or to be holy, if he should manage the Concerns of the World according to the fancies of Men.

How unreasonable is it thus to impose Laws upon God: Must God revoke his own Orders? Govern according to the dictates of his Creature? Must God, who hath only Power and Wisdom to sway the Scepter, become the obedient Subject of every Mans humour, and manage every thing to serve the design of a simple Creature? This is not to be God, but to set the Creature in his Throne: Tho' this be not formally done, yet that it is interpretatively and practically done, is every hours experience.

3. *In impatience in our particular concerns.* 'Tis ordinary with Man to charge God in his complaints in the time of affliction. Therefore 'tis the commendation the Holy Ghost gives to *Job*, Job 1.22. That *in all this*, that is, in those many waves that roll'd over him, he did *not charge God foolishly*, he never spake nor thought any thing unworthy of the Majesty and Righteousness of God; yet afterwards we find him warping, he nicknames the affliction to be Gods oppression of him, and no act of his goodness, *Job* 10. *v.* 3. *Is it good for thee, that thou shouldst oppress?* He seems to charge God with Injustice, for punishing him when he was not wicked, for which he appeals to God; *Thou knowest that I am not wicked*, ver. 7. and that God acted not like a Creator, *ver.* 8.

If our Projects are disappointed, what fretfulness against Gods management are our hearts rack'd with? How do uncomely passions bubble up in us, interpretatively at least, wishing that the arms of his power had been bound, and the eye of his Omniscience been hoodwink'd, that we might have been left to our own liberty and designs? And this oftentimes, when we have more reason to bless him than repine at him: The *Israelites* murmured more against God in the Wilderness, with Manna in their Mouths, than they did at *Pharaoh* in the Brickilns, with their Garlike and Onyons between their Teeth: Tho' we repine at Instruments in our Affliction, yet God counts it a Reflection upon himself: The Israelites

elites ſpeaking againſt *Moſes*, was in God's interpretation a Rebellion againſt himſelf *. And Rebellion is always a deſire of impoſing Laws and Conditions upon thoſe againſt whom the Rebellion is raiſed. The ſottiſh Dealings of the Vine-dreſſers in *Franconia*, with the Statue of St. *Urban*, the Protector of the Vines, upon his own Day, is an Emblem of our dealing with God: If it be a clear Day and portend a proſperous Vintage, they honour the Statue and drink Healths to it; if it be a rainy day, and preſage a ſcantineſs, they daub it with Dirt in indignation. We caſt out our Mire and Dirt againſt God when he acts croſs to our Wiſhes, and flatter him when the VVind of his Providence joyns it ſelf to the tide of our intereſt.

* Num. 16. v. 41. compar'd with 17. 10.

Men ſet a high prize upon themſelves, and are angry God values them not at the ſame rate, as if their Judgment concerning themſelves, were more piercing than his. This is to diſannul God's Judgment, and condemn him, and *count our ſelves righteous*, as 'tis *Job* 40. 8. This is the Epidemical Diſeaſe of humane Nature; they think they deſerve Careſſes inſtead of Rods, and upon Croſſes are more ready to tear out the Heart of God, than reflect humbly upon their own Hearts. When we accuſe God, we applaud our ſelves, and make our ſelves his Superiors, intimating that we have acted more righteouſly to him than he to us, which is the higheſt manner of impoſing Laws upon him; as that Emperor accuſed the Juſtice of God for ſnatching him out of the World too ſoon *. What an high piece of Practical Atheiſm is this, to deſire that that infinite Wiſdom ſhould be guided by our folly, and aſperſe the Righteouſneſs of God rather than blemiſh our own? Inſtead of ſilently ſubmitting to his Will and adoring his Wiſdom, we declaim againſt him, as an unwiſe and unjuſt Governour. We would invert his Order, make him the Steward and our ſelves the Proprietors of what we are and have: We deny our ſelves to be ſinners, and our mercies to be forfeited.

* *Cælum Juſpiciens vitam, &c. Vita Titi, ca. 10.*

4. 'Tis evidenced, *in envying the gifts and proſperities of others.* Envy hath a deep Tincture of Practical Atheiſm, and is a cauſe of Atheiſm *. We are unwilling to leave God to be the Proprietor and do what he will with his own, and as a Creator to do what he pleaſes with his Creatures: VVe aſſume a Liberty to direct God what Portions, when and how he ſhould beſtow upon his Creatures: VVe would not let him chuſe his own Favourites, and pitch upon his own Inſtruments for his Glory: As if God ſhould have ask'd Counſel of us how he ſhould diſpoſe of his Benefits. VVe are unwilling to leave to his VViſdom the Management of his own Judgments to the VVicked, and the Diſpenſation of his own Love to our ſelves. This temper is natural: 'Tis as ancient as the firſt Age of the VVorld: *Adam* envyed God a Felicity by himſelf, and would not ſpare a Tree that he had reſerved as a mark of his Sovereignty: The Paſſion that God had given *Cain* to employ againſt his Sin, he turns againſt his Creator: He was *wroth* with God * and with *Abel*; but envy was at the root, becauſe his Brothers Sacrifice was *accepted* and his *refuſed*. How could he envy his accepted Perſon, without reflecting upon the Acceptor of his Offering? Good Men have not been free from it. *Job* queſtions the Goodneſs of God, that he ſhould *ſhine upon the Counſel of the wicked*, Job 10. 3. *Jonah* had too much of *Self* in fearing to be counted a *falſe Prophet*, when he came with abſolute Denunciations of VVrath. * And when he could not bring a volley of deſtroying Judgments upon the *Ninivites*, he would ſhoot his Fury againſt his Maſter, envying thoſe poor People the Benefit, and God the honour of his Mercy: And this after he had been ſent into the VVhale's Belly to learn Humiliation; which tho' he exerciſed there, yet thoſe two great Branches of Self-pride and Envy were not lopp'd off from him in the Belly of Hell. And God was fain to take pains with him, and by a Gourd, ſcarce makes him aſhamed of his Peeviſhneſs. Envy is not like to ceaſe till all Atheiſm be caſhier'd, and that is in Heaven.

* *Because wicked Men flouriſh in the World,* Sollicitor nullos eſſe putare Deos

* Gen. 4. 5.

* Jon 4. 2.

This ſin is an imitation of the Devil, whoſe firſt ſin upon Earth was Envy, as his firſt in Heaven was Pride. 'Tis a wiſhing that to our ſelves which the Devil aſſerted as his Right, to give the *Kingdoms of the World to whom he pleaſed* *: 'Tis an anger with God, becauſe he hath not given us a Patent for Government. It utters the ſame Language in Diſparagement of God, as *Abſolom* did in reflection on his Father, *If I were King in Iſrael, Juſtice* ſhould be better managed: If I were Lord of the VVorld, there ſhould be more VViſdom to diſcern the merits of Men, and more Righteouſneſs in diſtributing to them their ſeveral Portions. Thus we impoſe Laws upon God, and would have the Righteouſneſs of his VVill ſubmit to the Corruptions of ours, and have him lower himſelf to gratifie our Minds, rather than fulfil his own: VVe charge the Author of thoſe gifts with Injuſtice, that he hath not dealt equally; or with Ignorance, that he hath miſtook his Mark. In the ſame breath that we cenſure him by our peeviſhneſs, we would Guide him by our VVills.

* Luke 4.6.

This is an unreaſonable part of *Atheiſm.* 'If all were in the ſame ſtate and condition, the order of the VVorld would be impaired: Is God bound to have a care of thee, and neglect all the world beſides? *Shall the Earth be forſaken for thee?* * *Joſeph* had reaſon to be diſpleaſed with his Brothers, if they had muttered, becauſe he gave *Benjamin* a double Portion, and the reſt a ſingle. It was unfit that they, who had deſerved no gift at all, ſhould preſcribe him rules how to diſpenſe his own doles; much more unworthy it is to deal ſo with God; yet this is too rife.

* Job 18.4.

5. It is evidenced *in corrupt Matter or ends of Prayer and Praiſe.* VVhen we are importunate for thoſe things, that we know not whether the Righteouſneſs, Holineſs and Wiſdom of God can grant, becauſe he hath not diſcovered his Will in any promiſe to beſtow them; we would then impoſe ſuch conditions on God, which he never obliged himſelf to grant; when we pray for things not ſo much to *glorifie God*, which ought to be the *end* of Prayer, as to gratifie our ſelves. We acknowledge indeed by the act of petitioning, *That there is a God*; but we would have him Un-God himſelf to be at our beck, and debaſe himſelf to ſerve our turns. When we deſire thoſe things, which are repugnant to thoſe Attributes, whereby he doth manage the Government of the World? When by ſome ſuperficial Services we think we have gained indulgence to ſins: Which ſeems to be thought of the Strumpet in her paying her Vows, to wallow more freely in the mire of her ſenſual Pleaſures; * *I have Peace-offerings with me, this day I have paid my Vows, I have made my Peace with God, and have Entertainment for thee*: Or when Men deſire God to bleſs them in the Commiſſion of ſome ſin. As when *Balak* and *Balaam* offered *Sacrifices*, that they might proſper in the Curſing of the *Iſraelites*, Num. 25. 1, &c.

* Pro. 7. 14.

So for a Man to pray to God to ſave him while he neglects the means of Salvation appointed by God: Or to renew him when he ſlights the Word, the only Inſtrument to that purpoſe: This is to impoſe Laws upon God, contrary to the declared Will and Wiſdom of God, and to deſire him to ſlight his own inſtitutions. VVhen we come into the Preſence of God

with

with Lusts reeking in our Hearts, and leap from sin to duty, we would impose the Law of our Corruption on the Holiness of God. While we pray the *will of God may be done*, Self-love wishes its own will may be performed, as tho' God should serve our Humours, when we will not obey his Precepts. And when we make Vows under any Affliction, what is it often but a secret Contrivance to bend and flatter him to our Conditions? We will serve him if he will restore us; we think thereby to compound the business with him and bring him down to our terms.

6. 'Tis evidenced, *in positive and bold interpretations of the Judgments of God in the World.* To interpret the Judgments of God to the disadvantage of the sufferer, unless it be an unusual Judgment, and have a remarkable hand of God in it, and the sin be rendred plainly legible in the affliction, is a presumption of this Nature. When Men will judge the Galileans, [*whose Blood* Pilate *mingled with the Sacrifices*,] *greater sinners than others*, and themselves righteous, because no drops of it were dash'd upon them. Or when *Shimei*, being of the House of *Saul*, shall judge according to his own interest, and desires *David*'s flight upon *Absolom*'s Rebellion to be a punishment for invading the Rights of *Saul*'s Family, and depriving him of the Succession in the Kingdom *, as if he had been of God's Privy Council when he decreed such acts of Justice in the World.

*2 Sam. 16. verse 5.

Thus we would fasten our own Wills as a Law or Motive upon God, and interpret his acts according to the Motions of *Self*. Is it not too ordinary when God sends an Affliction upon those that bear ill will to us, to judge it to be a righting of our cause, to be a fruit of God's concern for us in revenging our wrongs, as if we *had heard the secrets of God*, or as *Eliphaz* saith, *had turned over the Records of Heaven*, Job 15. *v.* 8. This is a judgment according to self-love, not a divine rule; and imposeth Laws upon Heaven, implying a secret wish, that God would take care only of them, make our concerns his own; not in ways of kindness and justice, but according to our fancies: And this is common in the profane world in those curses they so readily spit out upon any affront; as if God were bound to draw his Arrows and shoot 'em into the heart of all their offenders at their beck and pleasure.

7. It is evidenced, *in mixing rules for the worship of God, with those which have been ordered by him.* Since Men are most prone to live by sense, 'tis no wonder that a sensible worship, which affects their outward sense, with some kind of amazement, is dear to them, and spiritual worship most loathsom.

Pompous rites have been the great Engine wherewith the Devil hath deceived the Souls of Men, and wrought them to a nauseating the *simplicity* of divine worship, as unworthy the Majesty and Excellency of God *. Thus the *Jews* would not understand the glory of the *second Temple* in the presence of the *Messiah*, because it had not the pompous grandeur of that of *Solomon*'s erecting.

*2 Cor. 11. verse 3.

Hence in all Ages Men have been forward to disfigure God's Models, and dress up a brat of their own, as, tho' God had been defective in providing for his own honour in his institutions without the assistance of his Creature. This hath always been in the world: The old world had their imaginations, and the new world hath continued them. The *Israelites* in the midst of Miracles, and under the memory of a famous deliverance would erect a Calf. The *Pharisees* that sate in *Moses's Chair*, would coin *new Traditions* and enjoyn them to be as currant as the Law of God *. Papists will be blending the Christian appointments with Pagan Ceremonies, to please the carnal fancies of the common People. *Altars have been multiplied*, under the knowledge of the Law of God *. Interest is made the ballance of the conveniency of God's injunctions. *Jeroboam* fitted a worship to politick ends, and posted up *Calves* to prevent his Subjects revolting from his Scepter, which might be occasioned by their resort to *Jerusalem*, and converse with the body of the People from whom they were separated. *Men will be putting in their own Dictates with God's Laws, and are unwilling he should be the sole Governour of the world without their Counsel: They will not suffer him to be Lord of that which is purely and solely his concern. How often hath the practice of the Primitive Church, the custom wherein we are bred, the Sentiments of our Ancestors been owned as a more authentick rule in Matters of worship, than the mind of God delivered in his word *? 'Tis natural by Creation to worship God; and it is as natural by corruption for Man to worship him in a humane way, and not in a Divine. Is not this to impose Laws upon God? To [illegible]em our selves wiser than he? To think him negligent of his own service, and that our feeble brains can find out ways to accommodate his honour, better than himself hath done? Thus do Men for the most part equal their own imaginations to God's oracles: As *Solomon* built a high place to *Moloch* and *Chemoch*, upon the Mount of Olives, to face on the East part *Jerusalem* and the *Temple*: *This is not only to impose Laws on God, but also to make *Self* the Standard of them.

*Mat. 13 6.

* Hos. 8. 12.

* 1 Kin. 12. verse 27.

* 1 Kin. 11. verse 7.

8. 'Tis evidenced, *in fitting interpretations of Scripture to their own minds and humors.* Like the *Lacedemonians*, that dress the Images of their Gods according to the fashion of their own Country: We would wring Scripture to serve our own designs; and Judge the Law of God by the Law of sin, and make the Serpentine Seed in us to be the interpreter of divine Oracles. This is like *Belshazzar*, to drink healths out of the Sacred Vessels. As God is the Author of his Law and Word, so he is the best Interpreter of it; the Scripture having an impress of divine Wisdom, Holiness and Goodness, must be regarded according to that impress, with a submission and meekness of Spirit and Reverence of God in it. But when in our Enquiries into the word, we enquire not of God, but consult Flesh and Blood, the temper of the times wherein we live, or the satisfaction of a party we side withal, and impose glosses upon it according to our own fancies; it is to put Laws upon God and make *Self* the rule of him. He that interprets the Law to bolster up some eager appetite against the Will of the Law-giver, ascribes to himself as great an Authority as he that enacted it.

In falling off from God after some fair compliances, when his Will grateth upon us and crosseth ours. They will walk with him as far as he pleaseth them, and leave him upon the first distaste, as though God must observe their Humors more than they his Will. *Amos* must be suspended from Prophecying, because the *Land could not bear his Words*, and his Discourses condemned their unworthy Practices against God *. The *young Man* came not to receive directions from our Saviour, but expected a Confirmation of his own Rules, rather than an imposition of new *. He rather cares for Commendations than Instructions, and upon the disappointment turns his Back; *He was sad*, that Christ would not suffer him to be rich and a Christian together, and leaves him because his command was not suitable to the Law of his Covetousness. Some Truths that are at a further distance from us, we can *hear gladly*. But when the Conscience begins to smart under others, if God will not observe our Wills, we will with *Herod* be a Law to our selves *.

* Amos 7. 10. &c.

* Mark 10. 17, 22.

* Mark 6. 20, 27.

More instances might be observed.

Ingratitude is a setting up *Self*, and an imposing Laws on God. 'Tis as much as to say, God did no more than he was obliged to do; as if the Mercies we have, were an Act of Duty in God, and not of Bounty. Insatiable desires after Wealth. Hence are those speeches, *Jam.* 4. 13. *We will go into such a City and buy and sell*, &c. *to get gain.* As tho' they had the Command of God, and God must Lacquey after their Wills. When our hearts are not contented with any supply of our wants, but are craving an overplus for our Lust: When we are unsatisfied in the midst of Plenty, and still like the *Grave*, cry *give, give.*

Incorrigibleness under affliction, *&c.*

Secondly, 2. The second main thing. As Man would be a Law to himself; *So he would be his own End and Happiness in opposition to God.*

Here four things shall be discoursed on.

1. *Man would make himself his own End and Happiness.*

2. *He would make any thing his End and Happiness rather than God.*

3. *He would make himself the End of all Creatures.*

4. *He would make himself the End of God.*

First, 1. *Man would make himself his own End and Happiness.* As God ought to be esteemed the *first Cause*, in point of our dependance on him, so he ought to be our *last End*, in point of our enjoyment of him. When we therefore trust in our selves, we refuse him as the first Cause; and when we act for our selves, and expect a blessedness from our selves, we refuse him as the Chiefest good, and last End, which is an undeniable piece of Atheism. For Man is a Creature of a higher rank than others in the World, and was not made as Animals, Plants, and other Works of the Divine Power, materially to glorifie God; but a rational Creature, intentionally to Honour God by obedience to his Rule, dependance on his goodness, and zeal for his glory. 'Tis therefore as much a slighting of God, for Man, a Creature, to set himself up as his own End, as to regard himself as his own Law.

For the discovery of this, observe that there is a *threefold Self-love.*

1. *Natural*; which is common to us by the Law of Nature with other Creatures, Inanimate as well as Animate, and so closely twisted with the Nature of every Creature, that it cannot be dissolved, but with the dissolution of Nature it self. It consisted not with the Wisdom and Goodness of God to create an unnatural Nature, or to command any thing unnatural: Nor doth he, for when he commands us to Sacrifice our selves, and dearest lives for himself, 'tis not without a promise of a more noble State and Being, in exchange for what we lose. This Self-love is not only commendable, but necessary, as a *Rule* to measure that Duty we owe to our Neighbour, whom we cannot love as our selves, if we do not *first love* our selves: God having planted this Self-love in our Nature, makes this Natural Principle the measure of our Affection to all Mankind of the same blood with our selves.

2. *Carnal Self-Love*; when a Man loves himself above God, in opposition to God, with a contempt of God; when our thoughts, affections, designs, center only in our own fleshly interest; and rifle God of his honour, to make a present of it to our selves. Thus the natural Self-love, in it Self good, becomes Criminal by the excess, when it would be superior and not subordinate to God.

3. *A gracious Self-love*: When we love our selves for higher ends than the nature of a Creature, as a Creature dictates, *viz.* in subserviency to the glory of God. This is a reduction of the revolted Creature, to his true and happy Order. A Christian is therefore said to be *Created in Christ to good Works* *. As all Creatures were Created, not only for themselves, but for the honour of God, so the grace of the new Creation carries a Man to answer this end, and to order all his operations to the honour of God, and his well pleasing.

* Eph. 1. 10.

The *first* is from *Nature*, the *second* from *Sin*, the *third* from *Grace*. The *first* is implanted by *Creation*, the *second* the fruit of *Corruption*, and the *third* is by the powerful *operation of Grace.*

This *Carnal Self-love* is set up in the stead of God as our last end; like the Sea, which all the little and great streams of our actions run to, and rest in.

And this is,

1. *Natural.* It sticks as close to us as our Souls; it is as natural as Sin; the foundation of all the evil in the World: As *Self-abhorrency* is the first stone that is laid in Conversion, so an inordinate Self-love was the first inlet to all Iniquity. As grace is a rising from *Self* to center in God, so is sin a shrinking from God, into the mire of a Carnal selfishness. Since every Creature is neerest to it self, and next to God, it cannot fall from God, but must immediately sink into *Self.* * And therefore all sins are well said to be branches, or modifications of this fundamental passion. What is wrath, but a defence and strengthning *self*, against the attempts of some real or imaginary evil? Whence springs envy, but from a Self-love, grieved at its own wants in the midst of anothers enjoyment, able to supply it? What is impatience, but a regret, that *self* is not provided for at the rate of our wish, and that it hath met with a shock against supposed merit? What is pride, but a sence of self-worth, a desire to have *self* of a higher elevation than others? What is drunkenness, but a seeking a satisfaction for sensual *self* in the spoils of Reason? No sin is committed as sin, but as it pretends a self-satisfaction. Sin indeed may well be term'd a mans self, because it is, since the loss of original Righteousness, the form that over-spreads every part of our Souls. The Understanding assents to nothing false, but under the Notion of true, and the Will embraceth nothing evil but under the Notion of good; but the Rule whereby we measure the truth and goodness of propos'd objects, is not the unerring Word, but the inclinations of *Self*, the gratifying of which is the aim of our whole lives.

* More, Dial. 2. § 17. p. 247.

Sin and *Self* are all one: What is called a *living to sin* in one place, * is called a living to *Self* in another: * *That they that live should not live unto themselves.* And upon this account it is, that both the Hebrew word, חטא and the Greek word, ἁμαρτάνειν, used in Scripture to express sin, properly signifie to miss the mark, and swerve from that *white* to which all our actions should be directed, *viz.* the glory of God. When we fell to loving our selves, we fell from loving God: And therefore when the *Psalmist* saith, *Psal.* 14. 2. There were none that *sought God*, viz. as the last end, he presently adds, *They are all gone aside*, viz. from their true mark, and therefore become filthy.

* Rom. 6. * 1 Cor. 5. v. 15.

2. Since 'tis natural, *'Tis also universal.* * The not seeking God is as universal as our ignorance of him. No Man in a State of Nature, but hath it predominant; no renewed Man on this side Heaven, but hath it partially: The one hath it flourishing, the other hath it strugling. If to aim at the glory of God as the chief end, *and not to live to our selves*, be the greatest mark of the restauration of the Divine Image, * and a conformity to Christ, who *glorified not himself*, * but the *Father* *, then every Man wallowing in the mire of corrupt Nature, pays a homage to *Self*, as a renewed Man is byass'd by the honour of God.

* Psal. 14. 1. * 1 Cor. 5. v. 15. * Heb. 1. 5. * Joh. 17. 5.

The Holy Ghost excepts none from this Crime, *Phil.* 2. 21. *All seek their own.* 'Tis rare for them to look above or beyond themselves: Whatsoever may be

be the immediate ſubject of their thoughts and enquiries, yet the utmoſt end and ſtage, is their profit, honour or pleaſure: Whatever it be, that immediately poſſeſſes the Mind and Will, *Self* ſits like a Queen, and ſways the Scepter, and orders things at that rate, that God is excluded, and can find no room in all his thoughts, *Pſal.*10.4. *The wicked through the pride of his Countenance will not ſeek after God; God is not in all his thoughts.* The whole little World of Man is ſo overflowed with a Deluge of *Self*, that the *Dove*, the Glory of the Creator, can find no place where to ſet its foot; and if ever it gain the favour of admittance, 'tis to diſguiſe, and be a Vaſſal to ſome Carnal Project, as the Glory of God was a Mask for the murdering his Servants.

'Tis from the Power of this Principle, that the difficulty of Converſion ariſeth. As there is no greater pleaſure to a believing Soul, than the giving it ſelf up to God, and no ſtronger deſire in him, than to have a fixed and unchangeable Will to ſerve the deſigns of his Honour; ſo there is no greater torment to a wicked Man, than to part with his Carnal Ends, and lay down the *Dagon* of *Self* at the feet of the Ark. Self-Love, and Self-Opinion, in the *Phariſees*, way-laid all the entertainment of Truth, *John* 5. 44. *They ſought Honour one of another, and not the Honour which comes from God.* 'Tis of ſo large an Extent, and ſo inſinuating Nature, that it winds it ſelf into the Exerciſe of Moral Virtues, mixeth with our *Charity*, *Matt.* 6. 2. and finds nouriſhment in the Aſhes of *Martyrdom*, 1 Cor.13.3.

This making *our ſelves our End*, will appear in a few things.

1. *In frequent Self-applauſes, and inward overweening Reflections.* Nothing more ordinary in the Natures of Men, than a dotage on their own Perfections, Acquiſitions, or Actions in the World: *Moſt think of themſelves above what they ought to think*, Rom.12.3,4. Few think of themſelves ſo meanly as they ought to think. This ſticks as cloſe to us as our Skin. And as Humility is the Beauty of Grace, this is the filthieſt Soil of Nature; our thoughts run more delightfully upon the track of our own Perfections, than the excellency of God. And when we find any thing of a ſeeming worth, that may make us glitter in the eyes of the World, how cheerfully do we graſp and embrace our ſelves? When the groſſer prophaneſſes of Men have been diſcarded, and the Flouds of them damm'd up, the Head of Corruption, whence they ſprang, will ſwell the higher within, in *Self-applauding* ſpeculations of their own Reformation, without acknowledgments of their own weakneſſes, and deſires of Divine Aſſiſtance to make a further Progreſs. *I thank God I am not like this Publican* *. A Self-reflection, with a contempt rather than compaſſion to his Neighbour, is frequent in every *Phariſee*. The vapours of Self-affections, in our clouded Underſtandings, like thoſe in the Air in miſty mornings, alter the appearance of things, and make them look bigger than they are. This is thought by ſome to be the Sin of the fallen Angels, who reflecting upon their own natural Excellency ſuperior to other Creatures, would find a Bleſſedneſs in their own Nature, as God did in his, and make themſelves the laſt end of their actions. 'Tis from this Principle we are naturally ſo ready to compare our ſelves, rather with thoſe that are below us, than with thoſe that are above us; and often think thoſe that are above us, inferior to us, and ſecretly glory that we are become none of the meaneſt and loweſt in Natural or Moral Excellencies.

* Luk. 18. v. 11.

How far were the gracious Pen-men of the *Scripture* from this, who when poſſeſſed and directed by the Spirit of God, and filled with a Senſe of him, inſtead of applauding *themſelves*, publiſh upon Record their *own faults* to all the Eyes of the World? And if *Peter*, as ſome think, dictated the Goſpel which *Mark* wrote as his Amanuenſis; 'tis obſervable, that his Crime in denying his Maſter, is aggravated in that Goſpel in ſome Circumſtances, and leſs ſpoken of his Repentance, than in the other Evangeliſts: *When he thought thereon he wept* *. But in the other, *He went out and wept bitterly* *.

* Mark 14. v.72. * Matt. 26. v.37. * Luke 22. v. 62.

This is one part of Atheiſm and Self-Idolatry, to magnifie our ſelves with the Forgetfulneſs, and to the injury of our Creator.

2. *In aſcribing the glory of what we do or have, to our ſelves, to our own Wiſdom, Power, Vertue*, &c. How flaunting is *Nebuchadnezzar*, at the Proſpect of *Babylon*, which he had exalted to be the Head of ſo great an Empire, *Dan.*4.30. *Is not this great* Babylon *that I have built? For*, &c. He ſtruts upon the Battlements of his Palace, as if there were no God but himſelf in the World, while his eye could not but ſee the Heavens above him to be none of his own framing; attributing his Acquiſitions to his own Arm, and referring them to his own Honour, for his own delight, not for the Honour of God, as a Creature ought, nor for the advantage of his Subjects, as the Duty of a Prince: He regards *Babylon* as his Heaven, and himſelf as his Idol, as if he were all, and God nothing. An Example of this we have in the preſent Age: But it is often obſerved, that God vindicates his own Honour, brings the moſt Heroical Men to contempt and unfortunate ends, as a puniſhment of their Pride, as he did here, *Dan.*4.31. *While the word was in the Kings Mouth, there fell a voice from Heaven*, &c. * This was *Herods* Crime, to ſuffer others to do it: He had diſcovered his Eloquence actively, and made himſelf his own end paſſively, in approving the flatteries of the People; and offered not with one hand to God *the glory*, he received from his people with the other. * *Samoſatenus* is reported to put down the Hymns which were ſung for the glory of God and Chriſt, and cauſed Songs to be ſung in the Temple for his own Honour.

* *Sanderſons Sermons.*

* Acts 12. v. 22,23.

When any thing ſucceeds well, we are ready to attribute it to our own Prudence and Induſtry: If we meet with a Croſs, we fret againſt the Stars and Fortune, and ſecond Cauſes, and ſometimes againſt God; as they *curſe God* as well as *their King*, Iſa. 8. 21. not acknowledging any defect in themſelves. The *Pſalmiſt* by his Repetition of *Not unto us, not unto us, but to thy Name give glory*, Pſal. 115. 1. implies the naturality of this temper, and the difficulty to cleanſe our hearts from thoſe Self reflections. If it be *Angelical* to refuſe an undue Glory ſtolen from God's Throne, *Rev.* 22. 8, 9. 'tis *Diabolical* to accept and cheriſh it. To ſeek our *own glory is not glory*, Prov.25. *v.*27. 'Tis vile, and the diſhonour of a Creature, who by the Law of his Creation is referred to another end. So much as we Sacrifice to our own credit, to the dexterity of our hands, or the ſagacity of our wit, we detract from God.

3. *In deſires to have ſelf-pleaſing Doctrines.* When we cannot endure to hear any thing that croſſes the Fleſh; tho' the Wiſe man tells us, 'tis better to hear the *Rebuke of the Wiſe, than the Song of Fools*, Eccl.7. *v.*5. If *Hanani* the Seer reprove King *Aſa* for not relying on the Lord, his paſſion ſhall be armed for *ſelf* againſt the Prophet, and arreſt him a Priſoner. 2 *Chron.*16.10. If *Micaiah* declare to *Ahab* the Evil that ſhall befal him, *Amon* the Governor ſhall receive Orders to clap him up in a Dungeon. Fire doth not ſooner ſeize upon combuſtible matter, than Fury will be kindled, if *ſelf* be but pinch'd. This intereſt of luſtful *ſelf* barr'd the heart of *Herodias* againſt the entertainment of the Truth, and cauſed her ſavagely to dip her hands in the blood of the *Baptiſt*, to make him a Sacrifice to that *inward Idol* *.

* Mark 6. v.18,19,20

4. *In being highly concerned for injuries done to our ſelves, and little or not at all concerned for injuries done to God.* How will the blood riſe in us, when our Honour and Reputation is invaded, and ſcarce reflect upon the Diſhonour God ſuffers in our ſight and hearing, violent Paſſions will transform us into *Bonaarges* in the one caſe, and our unconcernedneſs render us *Gallios* in the other. We ſhall extenuate that which concerns God, and aggravate that which concerns our ſelves. Nothing but the Death of *Jonathan*, a firſt born and a generous Son, will ſatisfie his Father *Saul*, when the Authority of his Edict was broken by his taſting of Hony, tho' he had recompenced his Crime committed in Ignorance, by the purchaſe of a gallant Victory. But when the Authority of God was violated in ſaving the *Amalekites* Cattle, againſt the Command of a greater Soveraign than himſelf, he can daub the buſineſs, and excuſe it with a deſign of Sacrificing. He was not ſo earneſt in hindring the people from the breach of *Gods Command*, as he was in vindicating the Honour of his *own**: He could hardly admit of an excuſe to ſalve his own Honour; but in the Concerns of Gods Honour, pretends Piety, to cloak his Avarice.

*1 Sam. 15. v. 21.

And it is often ſeen, when the violation of Gods Authority, and the ſtain of our own Reputation, are coupled together, we are more troubled for what diſgraces us, than for what diſhonours God. When *Saul* had thus tranſgreſt, he is deſirous that *Samuel* would turn again to preſerve his own honour before the Elders, rather than grieved that he had broken the Command of God, *v.* 30.

5. *In truſting in our ſelves.* When we conſult with our own Wit and Wiſdom, more than inquire of God, and ask leave of him: As the *Aſſyrian*, *Iſa.* 10. *v.* 13. *By the ſtrength of my hands I have done it, and by Wiſdom, for I am prudent.* When we attempt things in the ſtrength of our own heads and parts, and truſt in our own Induſtry, without application to God, for direction, bleſſing and ſucceſs, we affect the priviledge of the Deity, and make Gods of our ſelves. The ſame language in reality with *Ajax* in *Sophocles*: Others think to overcome with the aſſiſtance of the Gods, but I hope to gain Honour without them. Dependence and Truſt is an act due from the Creature only to God. Hence God aggravates the crime of the Jews in truſting in *Egypt*, Iſa. 31. 3. *The Egyptians are Men and not Gods.* Confidence in our ſelves is a defection from God, *Jer.* 17. 5. And when we depart from, and caſt off God to depend upon our ſelves, which is but an arm of fleſh, we chuſe the arm of fleſh for our God: We rob God of that confidence we ought to place in him, and that adoration which is due to him, and build it upon another foundation; not that we are to neglect the reaſon and parts God hath given us, or ſpend more time in Prayer than in conſulting about our own affairs, but to mix our own intentions in buſineſs, with Ejaculations to Heaven, and take God along with us in every motion: But certainly it is an Idolizing of *ſelf*, when we are more diligent in our attendance on our own Wit, than fervent in our recourſes to God.

6. The power of ſinful *Self*, above the efficacy of the Notion of God, is evident *in our workings for Carnal Self againſt the light of our own Conſciences.* When Men of ſublime Reaſon, and clear natural Wiſdom, are voluntary Slaves to their own Luſts, row againſt the ſtream of their own Conſciences, ſerve Carnal *Self* with a diſgraceful and diſturbing Drudgery, making it their God, Sacrificing natural *Self*, all ſentiments of Virtue, and the quiet of their Lives, to the pleaſure, honour, and ſatisfaction of Carnal *Self*: This is a proſtituting God in his Deputy Conſcience, to Carnal Affections, when their eyes are ſhut againſt the inlightnings of it, and their ears deaf to its voice, but open to the leaſt breath and whiſper of *Self*: A debt that the Creature owes Supreamly to God.

Much more might be ſaid, but let us ſee what Atheiſm lurks in this, and how it intrencheth upon God.

1. *'Tis an uſurping God's Prerogative.* 'Tis God's Prerogative to be his own end, and act for his own glory, becauſe there is nothing Superior to him in Excellency and Goodneſs to act for: He had not his Being from any thing without himſelf, whereby he ſhould be obliged to act for any thing but himſelf. To make our ſelves then our *laſt End*, is to corrival God in his being the Supream Good, and Bleſſedneſs to himſelf: As if we were our own Principle, the Author of our own Being, and were not obliged to a higher Power than our ſelves, for what we are and have. To direct the Lines of all our Motions to our ſelves, is to imply that they firſt iſſued only from our ſelves. When we are Rivals to God in his chief end, we own or deſire to be Rivals to him in the Principle of his Being: This is to ſet our ſelves in the place of God. All things have ſomething without them, and above them as their end: All inferior Creatures act for ſome ſuperior Order in the rank of Creation; the leſſer Animals are deſign'd for the greater, and all for Man; Man therefore for ſomething nobler than himſelf. To makes our ſelves therefore our own end, is to deny any Superior, to whom we are to direct our actions. God alone being the Supream Being, can only be his own Ultimate End; for if there were any thing higher and better than God, the purity and righteouſneſs of his own nature would cauſe him to act for and toward that as his chiefeſt mark. This is the higheſt Sacriledge, to alienate the proper Good and Rights of God, and employ them for our own uſe; to ſteal from him his own Honour, and put it into our own Cabinets; like thoſe Birds that raviſh'd the Sacrifice from the Altar, and carried it to their own Neſts *. When we love only our ſelves, and act for no other end but our ſelves, we inveſt our ſelves with the Dominion which is the Right of God, and take the Crown from his Head: For as the Crown belongs to the King, ſo to love his own Will, to Will by his own Will, and for himſelf, is the property of God, becauſe he hath no other Will, no other End, above him, to be the rule and ſcope of his Actions.

* Sabunde tit. 140.

When therefore we are by Self-love transformed wholly into our ſelves. we make our ſelves our own foundation, without God and againſt God; when we mind our own glory and praiſe, we would have a Royal State equal with God, *who created all things for himſelf* *. What can Man do more for God than he naturally doth for himſelf, ſince he doth all thoſe things for himſelf which he ſhould do for God? We own our ſelves to be our own Creators and Benefactors, and fling off all ſentiments of gratitude to him.

* Pro. 16. 4.

2. *It is a vilifying of God.* When we make our ſelves our End, 'tis plain Language that God is not our happineſs: We poſtpone God to our ſelves, as if he were not an object ſo excellent and fit for our love as our ſelves are: (for it is irrational to make that our end, which is not God, and not the chiefeſt good.) 'Tis to deny him to be better than we, to make him not to be ſo good as our ſelves, and ſo fit to be our chiefeſt good as our ſelves are; that he hath not deſerved any ſuch acknowledgment at our hands by all that he hath done for us: we aſſert our ſelves his ſuperiors by ſuch kind of acting, tho' we are infinitely more inferior to God than any Creature can be to us. Man cannot diſhonour God more than by referring that to his own glory, which God made for his own praiſe, upon account whereof he only hath a right to glory and praiſe, and none elſe.

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He thus changeth *the glory of the incorruptible God into a Corruptible Image*; * a perishing fame and reputation, which extends but little beyond the Limits of his own habitation; or if it doth, survives but a few Years, and perishes at last with the Age wherein he lived. *Rom. 1. 23

3. *'Tis as much as in us lies a destroying of God.* By this temper we destroy that God that made us, because we destroy his Intention and his Honour. God cannot outlive his Will and his Glory: Because he cannot have any other Rule but his own Will, or any other end but his own Honour. The setting up *Self* as our end, puts a nullity upon the true Deity; by paying to our selves that respect and honour which is due to God, we make the true God as no God. Whosoever makes himself a King of his Princes Rights and Territories, manifests an intent to throw him out of his Government: To chuse our selves as our end is to undeifie God, since to be the last end of a rational Creature is a right inseparable from the nature of the Deity; and therefore not to set God, but *Self* always before us is to acknowledge no Being but our selves to be God.

Secondly, 2. The second thing, *Man would make any thing his End and Happiness rather than God.* An end is so necessary in all our Actions, that he deserves not the name of a rational Creature, that proposeth not one to himself. This is the distinction between rational Creatures and others; they act with a formal intention, whereas other Creatures are directed to their end by a natural instinct, and moved by nature to what the others should be moved by reason: When a Man therefore Acts for that end, which was not intended him by the Law of his Creation, nor is suited to the noble Faculties of his Soul; He acts contrary to God, overturns his order, and merits no better a Title than that of an Atheist.

A Man may be said two ways to make a thing his last end and chief good.

1. *Formally.* When he actually Judges this or that thing to be his chiefest good, and orders all things to it. So Man doth not formally judge sin to be good, or any object which is the incentive of sin to be his last end: This cannot be while he hath the exercise of his rational Faculties.

2. *Vertually and implicitely.* When he loves any thing against the command of God, and prefers in the stream of his Actions the enjoyment of that, before the fruition of God; and lays out more strength and expends more time in the gaining that, than answering the true end of his Creation: When he acts so as if something below God could make him happy without God, or that God could not make him happy without the addition of something else. Thus the Glutton makes a God of his Dainties; the ambitious Man of his Honour; the incontinent Man of his Lust; and the covetous Man of his Wealth; and consequently esteems them as his chiefest good, and the most noble end, to which he directs his Thoughts: Thus he vilifies and lessens the true God, which can make him happy, in a multitude of false Gods, that can only render him miserable. He that loves Pleasure more than God, says in his heart, There is no God but his Pleasure. He that loves his Belly more than God, says in his heart, There is no God but his Belly: Their happiness is not accounted to lie in that God that made the World, but in the Pleasure or Profit they make their God.

In this, tho' a created object be the immediate and subordinate term to which we turn, yet principally and ultimately, the affection to it terminates in *self*: nothing is naturally entertained by us, but as it affects our sense or mingles with some promise of advantage to us.

This is seen,

1. *In the fewer thoughts we have of God than of any thing else.* Did we apprehend God to be our chiefest good and highest end, should we grudge him the pains of a few days thoughts upon him? Men in their Travels are frequently thinking upon their intended Stage: But our Thoughts run upon new acquisitions to increase our Wealth, rear up our Families, revenge our Injuries, and support our Reputation: Trifles possess us; but *God is not in all our Thoughts*, * seldom the sole object of them. We have durable Thoughts of transitory things, and flitting Thoughts of a durable and eternal good. The Covenant of Grace engageth the whole heart to God, and bars any thing else from ingrossing it: But what Strangers are God and the Souls of most Men? Though we have the Knowledge of him by Creation, yet he is for the most part an unknown God in the Relations wherein he stands to us, because a God undelighted in. Hence it is, as one observes, * that because we observe not the ways of God's Wisdom, conceive not of him in his vast Perfections, nor are striken with an admiration of his Goodness, that we have fewer good sacred Poems, than of any other kind. The wits of Men hang the wing when they come to exercise their Reasons and Fancies about God. Parts and Strength are given us, as well as Corn and Wine to the *Israelites* for the Service of God; but those are consecrated to some cursed *Baal*. * Like *Venus* in the *Poet*, we forsake Heaven to follow some *Adonis*. * Psa. 10. 4. * Jackson, *vol. book* 1. *c.* 14. *p.* 48. * Hos. 2. 8.

2. *In the greedy pursuit of the World.* * When we pursue worldly Wealth or worldly Reputation with more vehemency than the riches of Grace, or the favour of God. When we have a foolish imagination, that our happiness consists in them, we prefer Earth before Heaven, broken Cisterns which can hold no Water, before an ever Springing Fountain of Glory and Bliss. And, as tho' there were a defect in God, cannot be content with him as our portion, without an addition of something inferior to him: When we make it our hopes and say to the wedge, *thou art my Confidence*; and rejoyce more because it is great; and because *our hand hath gotten much*, than in the priviledge of Communion with God and the promise of an everlasting fruition of him. * This is so gross, that *Job* joyns it with the *Idolatry* of the *Sun* and *Moon*, which he purgeth himself of, *ver.* 26. And the *Apostle* when he mentions Covetousness or a Covetuous Man, passes it not over without the Title of *Idolatry* to the Vice, and *Idolater* to the Person: In that it is a preferring Clay and Dirt as an end more desirable than the original of all goodness, in regard of affection and dependence. * Quod quisq; præ cæteris petit, summum judicat bonum. *Boet. l.* 3. *p.* 24. * Job 31. 24, 25. * Col. 3. 5. Eph. 5. 5.

3. *In a strong addictedness to sensual Pleasures*, Phil. 3. 19. VVho make their *Belly their God*; subjecting the Truths of God to the maintenance of their Luxury. In debasing the higher Faculties to project for the satisfaction of the sensitive appetite as their chief happiness, whereby many render themselves no better than a rout of sublimated Brutes among Men, and gross Atheists to God. VVhen Mens thoughts run also upon inventing new Methods to satisfie their bestial Appetite, forsaking the Pleasures which are to be had in God, which are the delights of Angels for the satisfaction of Brutes: This is an open and unquestionable refusal of God for our end, when our rest is in them, as if they were the chief Good and not God.

4. *In paying a service upon any success in the World, to Instruments more than to God the Sovereign Author.* VVhen *they Sacrifice to their Net, and burn incense to their Drag.* * Not that the *Assyrian* did offer a Sacrifice to his Arms, but ascrib'd to them what was due only to God, and appropriated the * Hab. 1. 16.

the Victory to his Forces and Arms. The Prophet alludes to thoſe that worſhipped their Warlike Inſtruments, whereby they had attained great Victories; and thoſe Artificers who worſhipped the Tools by which they had purchaſed great Wealth, in the ſtead of God, preferring them as the cauſes of their happineſs before God who governs the World.

And are not our Affections, upon the receiving of good things, more cloſely fixed to the Inſtruments of Conveyance, than to the chief Benefactor, from whoſe Coffers they are taken? Do we not more delight in them, and hug them, with a greater indearedneſs, as if all our happineſs depended on them, and God were no more than a bare Spectator? Juſt as if when a Man were warmed by a beam, he ſhould adore that and not admire the Sun, that darts it out upon him.

5. *In paying a reſpect to Man more than God.* When in a publick Attendance on his Service, we will not laugh, or be gariſh, becauſe Men ſee us: But our hearts ſhall be in a ridiculous poſture, playing with feathers and trifling fancies, tho' God ſee us, as tho' our happineſs conſiſted in the pleaſing of Men, and our miſery in a reſpect to God. There is no Fool that ſaith *in his heart there is no God*, but he ſets up ſomething in his heart *as a God.*

This is,

1. *A debaſing of God.* 1. *In ſetting up a Creature.* It ſpeaks God leſs amiable than the Creature, ſhort of thoſe perfections, which ſome ſilly ſordid thing, which hath engroſſed their affections, is poſſeſſed with: As if the Cauſe of all Being could be tranſcended by his Creature, and a vile Luſt could equal, yea, ſurmount the Lovelineſs of God: 'Tis to ſay to God as the rich to the poor, *James* 2. 3. *Stand thou there, or ſit here under my footſtool*: 'Tis to ſink him below the mire of the World, to order him to come down from his glorious Throne, and take his place below a contemptible Creature, which in regard of its infinite diſtance, is not to be compared with him. It ſtrips God of the love that is due to him by the right of his nature, and the greatneſs of his dignity; and of the truſt that is due to him, as the firſt Cauſe and the chiefeſt Good, as tho' he were too feeble and mean to be our Bleſſedneſs. This is intolerable, to make that which is God's Footſtool, the Earth, to climb up into his Throne; to ſet that in our heart, which God hath made even below our ſelves, and put under our feet; to make that which we trample upon, to diſpoſe of the right God hath to our hearts: * 'Tis worſe than if a *Queen* ſhould fall in love with the little Image of the Prince in the Palace, and ſlight the beauty of his perſon; and as if people ſhould adore the footſteps of a King in the dirt, and turn their backs upon his preſence.

* Noremberg *de adorat.* p. 30.

2. *It doth more debaſe him to ſet up a ſin, a luſt, a carnal affection, as our chief end.* To ſteal away the honour due to God, and appropriate it to that which is no work of his hands, to that which is loathſome in his ſight, hath diſturbed his reſt, and wrung out his juſt breath to kindle a Hell for its eternal lodging, a God-diſhonouring, and a Soul-murdering Luſt, is worſe than to prefer *Barabbas* before Chriſt. The baſer the thing, the worſe is the injury to him with whom we would aſſociate it. If it were ſome generous principle, a thing uſeful to the World, that we place in an equality with, or a ſuperiority above him, tho' it were a vile uſage, yet it were not altogether ſo Criminal; but to gratifie ſome unworthy Appetite, with the diſpleaſure of the Creator, ſomething below the rational nature of Man, much more infinitely below the excellent Majeſty of God, is a more unworthy uſage of him. To advance one of the moſt vertuous Nobles in a Kingdom, as a mark of our ſervice and ſubjection, is not ſo diſhonourable to a deſpiſed Prince, as to take a ſcabby Begger, or a rotten Carcaſs, to place in his Throne. Creeping things, abominable Beaſts, the *Egyptian* Idols, Cats and Crocodiles, were greater abominations, and a greater deſpite done to God, than the *Image of Jealouſie at the gate of the Altar* *. * Ezek. 8. v. 5, 6, 10.

And let not any excuſe themſelves, that 'tis but one Luſt, or one Creature, which is preferred as the end: Is not he an Idolater that worſhips the Sun or Moon, one Idol, as well as he that worſhips the whole Hoſt of Heaven?

The inordinacy of the heart to one Luſt, may imply a ſtronger contempt of him, than if a Legion of Luſts did poſſeſs the heart. It argues a greater diſeſteem, when he ſhall be ſlighted for a ſingle vanity. The depth of *Eſau's prophaneſs* in contemning his *birth-right*, and God in it, is aggravated by his ſelling it for *one morſel of meat* *, and that none of the daintieſt, none of the coſtlieſt, *a meſs of Pottage*; implying, had he parted with it at a greater rate, it had been more tolerable, and his prophaneſs more excuſable. And it is reckoned as a high aggravation of the Corruption of the Iſraelite Judges, *Amos* 2. 6. *That they ſold the poor for a pair of ſhoes*: That is, that they would betray the Cauſe of the poor for a bribe of no greater value, than might purchaſe them a pair of Shoes. To place any one thing as our chief end, tho' never ſo light, doth not excuſe: He that will not ſtick to break with God for a trifle, a ſmall pleaſure, will leap the Hedge upon a greater temptation. * Heb. 12. v. 16.

Nay, and if Wealth, Riches, Friends, and the beſt thing in the World, our own Lives, be preferred before God, as our chief happineſs and end but one moment, 'tis an infinite wrong, becauſe the infinite goodneſs and excellency of God is denied: As tho' the Creature or Luſt we love, or our own Life, which we prefer in that ſhort moment before him, had a goodneſs in it ſelf, ſuperior to, and more deſirable than the bleſſedneſs in God: And tho' it ſhould be but one minute, and a Man in all the periods of his days, both before and after that failure, ſhould actually and intentionally prefer God before all other things, yet he doth him an infinite wrong, becauſe God in every moment is infinitely good, and abſolutely deſirable, and can never ceaſe to be good, and cannot have the leaſt ſhadow or change in him and his Perfections.

2. 'Tis a denying of God.

Job 31. 26, 27, 28. *If I beheld the Sun when it ſhined, and the Moon walking in its brightneſs, and my Heart hath been ſecretly enticed, or my Mouth hath kiſt my Hand; this alſo were Iniquity to be puniſhed by the Judge; for I ſhould have denied the Lord above.* This denial of God is not only the act of an open Idolater, but the conſequent of a ſecret confidence, and immoderate joy in worldly Goods: This denial of God is to be referred to, *ver.* 24, 25. When a Man ſaith *to Gold, thou art my confidence*, and rejoyces becauſe his Wealth is great; he denies that God, which is ſuperior to all thoſe, and the proper object of Truſt. Both Idolatries are coupled here together; that which hath Wealth, and that which hath thoſe glorious Creatures in Heaven for its Object: And tho' ſome may think it a light Sin, yet the Crime being of deeper guilt, a denial of God, deſerves a ſeverer puniſhment, and falls under the Sentence of the juſt Judge of all the Earth, under that Notion, which *Job* intimates in thoſe words, *This alſo were an Iniquity to be puniſhed by the Judge.*

The *kiſſing the hand*, to the *Sun*, *Moon*, or any Idol, was an external Sign of Religious Worſhip among thoſe and other Nations: This is far leſs than an inward hearty confidence, and an affectionate Truſt: If the motion of the hand be, much more the affection of the heart to an excrementitious Creature, or a

brutish pleasure is a denial of God, and a kind of an Abjuring of him, since the Supream Affection of the Soul is undoubtedly and solely the Right of the Soveraign Creator, and not to be given in common to others, as the outward gesture may in a way of civil respect. Nothing that is an Honour peculiar to God, can be given to a Creature, without a plain exclusion of God to be God, it being a disowning the rectitude and excellency of his Nature. If God should Command a Creature such a Love, and such a confidence in any thing inferior to him, he would deny himself his own glory; he would deny himself to be the most excellent Being. Can the *Romanists* be free from this, when they call the Cross *Spem unicam*, and say to the Virgin, *In te Domina speravi*, as *Bonaventure*, &c.

Good reason therefore have Worldlings and Sensualists, persons of immoderate fondness to any thing in the World, to reflect upon themselves; since tho' they own the Being of a God, they are guilty of so great disrespect to him, that cannot be excused from the Title of an unworthy Atheism: And those that are renewed by the Spirit of God, may here see ground of a daily Humiliation, for the frequent and too common Excursions of their Souls in Creature-confidences and Affections, whereby they fall under the charge of an act of Practical Atheism, tho' they may be free from an habit of it.

3. The third thing is, *Man would make himself the end of all Creatures.* Man would sit in the *Seat of God*, and set *his heart as the heart of God*, as the Lord saith of *Tyrus*, *Ezek.*28.2. What is the consequence of this, but to be esteemed the chief Good, and end of other Creatures? A thing, that the heart of God cannot but be set upon, it being an inseparable Right of the Deity; who must deny himself, if he deny this affection of the heart.

Since it is the Nature of Man deriv'd from this Root, to desire to be equal with God, it follows that he desires no Creature should be equal with him, but subservient to his ends and his glory. He that would make himself God, would have the Honour proper to God: He that thinks himself worthy of his own supream affection, thinks himself worthy to be the object of the supream affection of others: Whosoever counts himself the chiefest Good and last End, would have the same place in the thoughts of others. Nothing is more natural to Man, than a desire to have his own Judgment, the Rule and Measure of the Judgments and Opinions of the rest of Mankind. He that sets himself in the Place of the Prince, doth by that act challenge all the Prerogatives and Dues belonging to the Prince; and apprehending himself fit to be a King, apprehends himself also worthy of the Homage and Fealty of the Subjects. He that loves himself chiefly, and all other things and persons for himself, would make himself the end of all Creatures. It hath not been once or twice only in the World, that some vain Princes have assumed to themselves the Title of Gods, and caused Divine Adorations to be given to them, and Altars to smoke with Sacrifices for their Honour: What hath been practised by one, is by Nature seminally in all: We would have all pay an Obedience to us, and give to us the Esteem that is due to God.

This is evident,

1. *In Pride.* When we entertain an high Opinion of our selves, and act for our own Reputes, we dispossess God from our own hearts; and while we would have our Fame to be in every mans Mouth, and be admired in the hearts of Men, we would chase God out of the hearts of others, and deny his Glory a Residence any where else, that our Glory should reside more in their minds than the glory of God, that their thoughts should be filled with our Atchievements, more than the Works and Excellency of God, with our Image and not with the Divine. Pride would paramount God in the affections of others, and justle God out of their Souls; and by the same reason that Man doth thus in the place where he lives, he would do so in the whole World, and press the whole Creation from the Service of their true Lord, to his own Service. Every proud Man would be counted by others as he counts himself; the highest, chiefest piece of Goodness; and be adored by others, as much as he adores and admires himself. No proud Man in his Self-love, and Self-admiration, thinks himself in an Error; and if he be worthy of his own admiration, he thinks himself worthy of the highest esteem of others, that they should value him above themselves, and value themselves only for him. What did *Nebuchadnezzar* intend, by setting up a Golden Image, and commanding all his Subjects to worship it, upon the highest Penalty he could inflict, but that all should aim only at the pleasing his humour?

2. *In using the Creatures contrary to the End God has appointed.* God created the World, and all things in it, as steps whereby Men might ascend to a Prospect of him, and the acknowledgment of his Glory; and we would use them to dishonour God, and gratifie our selves: He appointed them to supply our necessities, and support our rational delights; and we use them to cherish our sinful lusts. We wring groans from the Creature, in diverting them from their true scope, to one of our own fixing, when we use them not in his service, but purely for our own, and turn those things he created for himself to be Instruments of Rebellion against him to serve our turns, and hereby endeavour to defeat the ends of God in them, to establish our own ends by them: This is a high dishonour to God, a Sacrilegious undermining of his Glory; * to reduce what God hath made to serve our own glory, and our own pleasure: It perverts the whole Order of the World, and directs it to another end than what God hath constituted; to another intention contrary to the intention of God; and thus Man makes himself a God by his own Authority. As all things were made by God, so they are for God; but while we aspire to the end of the Creation, we deny and envy God the honour of being Creator. We cannot make our selves the chief end of the Creatures against Gods Order, but we imply thereby, that we were their first Principle: For if we lived under a sence of the Creator of them, while we enjoy them for our use, we should return the glory to the right Owner.

* Sabunde *Tit.* 200. p. 352.

This is *Diabolical*; tho' the Devil for his first affecting an Authority in Heaven, has been hurled down from the State of an Angel of Light, into that of Darkness, Vileness and Misery, to be the most accursed Creature living; yet he still aspires to mate God, contrary to the knowledge of the impossibility of success in it: Neither the terrors he feels, nor the future torments he doth expect, do a jot abate his Ambition to be Competitor with his Creator. How often hath he since his first sin, arrogated to himself the Honour of a God from the blind World, and attempted to make the Son of God by a particular Worship, count him as the *chiefest Good and Benefactor of the World?* * Since all Men by Nature are the Devils Children, the Serpents Seed, they have something of this venom in their Natures, as well as others of his qualities. We see that there may be, and is a prodigious Atheism lurking under the Belief of a God. The Devil knows there is a God, but acts like an Atheist, and so do his Children.

* Matt.4.9.

4. *Man would make himself the End of God.* This necessarily follows upon the former: Whosoever makes himself his own Law, and his own End, in the place of God, would make God the Subject in making himself the Soveraign: He that steps into the Throne of

of a Prince, sets the Prince at his Foot-stool; and while he assumes the Princes Prerogative, demands a Subjection from him. The order of the Creation, has been inverted by the enterance of sin *. God implanted an affection in Man with a double aspect, the one to pitch upon God, the other to respect our selves; but with this proviso, that our affection to God should be infinite, in regard of the Object and Center in him, as the chiefest happiness and highest end; Our affections to our selves should be finite, and refer ultimately to God as the original of our Being: But sin hath turned Man's affections wholly to himself: Whereas he should love God first, and himself in order to God; he now loves himself first, and God in order to himself: Love to God is lost, and love to *Self* hath usurpt the Throne. As God by *Creation put all things under the Feet of Man* *, reserving the heart for himself: Man by *Corruption* hath dispossessed God of his heart, and put him under his own feet. We often intend our selves, when we pretend the Honour of God, and make God and Religion a Stale to some designs we have in hand; our Creator a Tool for our own ends.

* Pas. Pens. §30. p. 234.

* Ps. 8. 6.

This is evident,

1. *In our loving God, because of some self-pleasing benefits distributed by him.* There is in Men a kind of Natural love to God; but it is but a secondary one, because God gives them the good things of this world, spreads their Table, fills their Cup, stuffs their Coffers, and doth them some good turns by unexpected Providences: This is not an affection to God for the unbounded Excellency of his own Nature, but for his beneficence, as he opens his hand for them; an affection to themselves, and those Creatures, their Gold, their Honour, which their Hearts are most fixed upon; without a strong Spiritual Inclination that God should be glorified by them in the use of those Mercies. 'Tis rather a disowning of God, than any love to him; because it postpones God to those things they love him for. This would appear to be no love, if God should cease to be their Benefactor, and deal with them as a Judge; if he should change his outward smiles into afflicting frowns; and not only shut his hand, but strip them of what he sent them. The Motive of their love being expired, the affection raised by it, must cease for want of fewel to feed it: So that God is beholden to sordid Creatures, of no value (but as they are his Creatures) for most of the Love the Sons of Men pretend to him. The Devil spake truth of most Men, tho' not of *Job*, when he said (*Job* 1. 10.) *They love not God for nought*; but while he makes a hedge about them and their Families, whilst he blesseth the Works of their hands, and increaseth their honour in the Land. 'Tis like *Peter*'s sharp reproof of his Master, when he spake of the ill usage, even to death, he was to meet with at *Jerusalem*; *This shall not be unto thee*: It was as much out of love to himself, as zeal for his Masters Interest, knowing his Master could not be in such a storm without some drops lighting upon himself. All the Apostacies of Men in the World are Witnesses to this: They fawn whilst they may have a prosperous Profession, but will not bear one chip of the Cross for the Interest of God. They would partake of his Blessings, but not endure the prick of a Launce for him: As those that admired the Miracles of our Saviour, and shrunk at his Sufferings. A time of tryal discovers these Mercenary Souls to be more Lovers of themselves than their Maker. This is a pretended love of Friendship to God, but a real love to a Lust, only to gain by God: A good Mans temper is contrary: *Quench Hell, burn Heaven* (said a holy Man) *I will love and fear my God.*

2. 'Tis evident, *In abstinence from some sins; not because they offend God, but because they are against the Interest of some other beloved Corruption, or a bar to something Men hunt after in the World.* When temperance is cherished not to honour God, but preserve a crazy Carcass: Prodigality forsaken, out of a humor of Avarice: Uncleanness forsaken, not out of a hatred of Lust, but love to their Money: Declining a Denial of the Interest and Truth of God, not out of affection to them, but an ambitious Zeal for their own Reputation. There is a kind of Conversion from sin, when God is made the term of it, *Jer.* 4. 1. *If thou wilt return oh Israel, return unto me, saith the Lord* *. When we forbear Sin, as Dogs do the Meat they love, they forbear not out of a hatred of the Carrion, but fear of the Cudgel: These are as wicked in their abstaining from sin, as others are in their furious committing it. Nothing of the Honour of God and the End of his Appointments is indeed in all this, but the conveniences *Self* gathers from them. Again, many of the motives the generality of the World uses to their Friends and Relations to draw them from Vices, are drawn from *Self*, and used to prop up natural or sinful *Self* in them: Come, reform your selves, take other Courses, you will smut your Reputation and be despicable; you will destroy your Estate and commence a Beggar; your Family will be undone, and you may rot in a Prison: Not laying close to them the Duty they owe to God, the Dishonour which accrues to him by their unworthy Courses, and the ingratitude to the God of their Mercies: Not that the other Motives are to be laid aside and slighted. *Mint* and *Cummin* may be tithed, but the weightier concerns are not to be omitted: But this shews that *Self* is the Byas, not only of Men in their own Course, but in their Dealings with others. What should be subordinate to the Honour of God, and the Duty we owe to him, is made superior.

* Trap. on Gen. p. 148.

3. Tis evident, *In performing Duties meerly for a selfish interest*: Making our selves the end of religious Actions, paying a Homage to that, while we pretend to render it to God, *Zach.* 7. 5. *Did you at all fast unto me, even unto me?* Things ordained by God may fall in with carnal ends affected by our selves; and then Religion is not kept up by any interest of God in the Conscience, but the interest of *Self* in the Heart: We then sanctifie not the Name of God in the Duty, but gratifie our selves: God may be the Object, *Self* is the End; and a heavenly Object is made subservient to a Carnal design. Hypocrisie passes a complement on God, and is called Flattery, *Psal.* 78. 36. *They did flatter him with their Lips*, &c. They gave him a parcel of good Words for their own preservation. Flattery in the old Notion among the Heathens, is a vice more peculiar to serve our own turn, and purvey for the Belly: They knew they could not subsist without God, and therefore gave him a parcel of good Words, that he might spare them, and make Provision for them. *Israel is an empty Vine* *, a Vine say some, with large Branches and few Clusters, but *brings forth fruit to himself* while they *professed love God* with their Lips. It was that God should promote their covetuous designs, and preserve their wealth and grandeur *: In which respect, an hypocrite may be well termd a Religious Atheist, an Atheist maskt with Religion. The chief arguments which prevail with many Men to perform some Duties and appear Religious, are the same that *Hamour* & *Shechim* used to the people of their City to submit to Circumcision, *viz.* the ingrossing of more wealth, *Gen.* 34. 21, 22. *If every Male among us be Circumcised, as they are Circumcised, shall not their Cattle and their Substance, and every Beast of theirs be ours?*

* Hos. 10. 1.

* Ezek. 33. v. 31.

This is seen,

1. *In*

1. *In unweildineſs to Religious Duties, where* Self *is not concern'd.* With what lively Thoughts will many approach to God, when a Revenue may be brought in to ſupport their own ends? But when the concerns of God only are in it, the Duty is not the Delight, but the Clogg; ſuch feeble Devotions that warm not the Soul, unleſs there be ſomething of *Self* to give ſtrength and heat to them. *Jonah* was ſick of his Work, and run from God, becauſe he thought he ſhould get no honour by his Meſſage; *Jona. 4. 2. *God's Mercy will diſcredit his Prophecy**. Thoughts of diſadvantage, cut the very ſinews of Service. You may as well perſwade a Merchant to venture all his Eſtate upon the inconſtant Waves without hopes of gain, as prevail with a natural Man to be ſerious in Duty, without expectation of ſome warm Advantage. *What profit ſhould we have if we pray to him?* is the natural Queſtion, *Job* 21. 15. *What profit ſhall I have if I be cleanſed from my Sin?* Job 35. 3. I ſhall have more good by my ſin than by my ſervice. 'Tis for God that I dance before the Ark, ſaith *David*, therefore I *will be more vile*, 2 Sam. 6. 2. 'Tis for *Self* that I pray, ſaith a natural Man, therefore I will be more warm and quick. Ordinances of God are obſerved only as a point of Intereſt, and Prayer is often moſt fervent, when it is leaſt godly and moſt ſelfiſh: Carnal Ends and Affections will pour out lively Expreſſions. If there be no delight in the means that lead to God, there is no delight in God himſelf: Becauſe Love is *appetitus unionis*, a deſire of Union; and where the Object is deſirable, the means that brings us to it would be delightful too.

2. *In calling upon God only in a time of neceſſity.* How officious will Men be in affliction, to that God whom they neglect in their Proſperity? *When he ſlew them, then they ſought him, and they returned and inquired after God, and they remembred that God was their Rock*, Pſal. 78. 34. They remembred him under the Scourge, and forgat him under his Smiles: They viſit the Throne of Grace, knock loud at Heavens Gates, and give God no reſt for their early and importunate Devotions when under Diſtreſs: But when their deſires are anſwered, and the Rod removed; they ſtand aloff from him, and reſt upon their own bottom, as *Jer.* 2. 31. *We are Lords, we will come no more unto thee.* When we have need of him, he ſhall find us Clients at his Gate; and when we have ſerved our turn, he hears no more of us: Like *Noah*'s Dove ſent out of the Ark, that returned to him when ſhe found no reſt on the Earth, but came not back when ſhe found a footing elſewhere. How often do Men apply themſelves to God, when they have ſome buſineſs for him to do for them? And then too, they are loath to put it ſolely into his hand, to manage it for his own Honour; but they preſume to be his Directors, that he may manage it for their Glory. *Self* ſpurs Men on to the Throne of Grace; they deſire to be furniſh'd with ſome Mercy they want, or to have the Clouds of ſome Judgments which they fear, blown over: This is not affection to God, but to our ſelves: As the Romans worſhipped a *Quartane Ague* as a Goddeſs, and *Timorem & Pallorem*, Fear and Paleneſs, as Gods; not out of any affection they had to the Diſeaſe or the Paſſion, but for fear to receive any hurt by them.

Again, when we have gained the Mercy we need, how little do we warm our Souls with the conſideration of that God that gave it, or lay out the Mercy in his Service? We are importunate to have him our Friend in our Neceſſities, and are ungratefully careleſs of him, and his injuries, he ſuffers by us or others: When he hath diſcharged us from the Rock where we ſtuck, we leave him, as having no more need of him, and able to do well enough without him: As if we were petty Gods our ſelves, and only wanted a lift from him at firſt: This is not to glorifie God, as God, but as our Servant; not an honouring of God, but a ſelf-ſeeking: He would hardly beg at God's Door, if he could pleaſure himſelf without him.

5. *In begging his Aſſiſtance to our own Projects.* When we lay the Plot of our own Affairs, and then come to God, not for Counſel but Bleſſing; *Self* only ſhall give us Counſel how to act; but becauſe we believe there is a God that governs the World, we will deſire him to contribute Succeſs. God is not conſulted with, till the Counſel of *Self* be fixed; then God muſt be the Executor of our Will: *Self* muſt be the Principal, and God the Inſtrument to hatch what we have contrived. 'Tis worſe when we beg of God to favour ſome ſinful aim, the *Pſalmiſt* implies this, Pſal. 66. 18. *If I regard Iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.* Iniquity regarded as the aim in Prayer, renders the Prayer ſucceſleſs, and the Suppliant an Atheiſt, in debaſing God to back his Luſt by his holy Providence.

The Diſciples had determined Revenge; and becauſe they could not act it without their Maſter, they would have him be their ſecond in their vindictive paſſion, *Luke* 9. 55. *Call for fire from Heaven.*

We ſcarce ſeek God, till we have modell'd the whole Contrivance in our own Brains, and reſolved upon the Methods of Performance; as tho' there were not a fullneſs of Wiſdom in God to guide us in our Reſolves, as well as Power to breath Succeſs upon them.

4. *In impatience upon the refuſal of our deſires.* How often do Mens Spirits riſe againſt God, when he ſteps not in with the Aſſiſtance they want? If the glory of God ſwayed more with them than their private Intereſt, they would let God be Judge of his own Glory, and rather magnifie his Wiſdom, than complain of his want of Goodneſs: Selfiſh Hearts will charge God with neglect of them, if he be not as quick in their ſupplies as they are in their deſires; like thoſe in *Iſa.* 58. 3. *Wherefore have we faſted ſay they, and thou ſeeſt not? wherefore have we afflicted our Souls and thou takeſt no Knowledge?* When we aim at God's Glory in our Importunities, we ſhall fall down in humble Submiſſions when he denies us: Whereas *Self* riſeth up in bold Expoſtulations, as if God were our Servant, and had neglected the Service he owed us, not to come at our Call. We over-value the Satisfaction of ſelf above the Honour of God.

Beſides, if what we deſire be a ſin, our Impatience at a Refuſal is more Intolerable: 'Tis an anger, that God will not lay aſide his Holineſs to ſerve our Corruption.

5. *In the actual aims Men have in their Duties.* In Prayer for temporal things, when we deſire Health for our own Eaſe, Wealth for our own Senſuality, Strength for our Revenge, Children for the Increaſe of our Family, Gifts for our Applauſe, as *Simon Magus* did the Holy Ghoſt; or when ſome of thoſe ends are aimed at: This is to deſire God not to ſerve himſelf of us, but to be a Servant to our worldly Intereſt, our vain Glory, the greatning of our Names, *&c.* In Spiritual Mercies begged for; When pardon of ſin is deſired only for our own ſecurity from eternal Vengeance; Sanctification deſired only to make us fit for everlaſting Bleſſedneſs; Peace of Conſcience only that we may lead our lives more comfortably in the world; when we have not actual Intentions for the glory of God, or when our Thoughts of God's Honour are overtopt by the aims of Self-advantage: Not but that as God hath preſs'd us to thoſe things by Motives drawn from the Bleſſedneſs derived to

our ſelves by them, ſo we may deſire them with a reſpect to our ſelves; but this reſpect muſt be contained within the due banks, in ſubordination to the glory of God, not above it, nor in an equal ballance with it. * That which is nouriſhing or medicinal in the firſt or ſecond degree, is in the fourth or fifth degree meer deſtructive Poyſon.

** Gurnall, Part 3. P. 337.*

Let us conſider it ſeriouſly; tho' a Duty be heavenly, doth not ſome baſe end ſmut us in it?

[1.] *How is it with our Confeſſions of Sin?* Are they not more to procure our Pardon, than to ſhame our ſelves before God, or to be freed from the Chains that hinder us from bringing him the glory for which we were Created? or more to partake of his benefits, than to honour him in acknowledging the Rights of his Juſtice? Do we not bewail ſin as it hath ruined us, not as it oppoſed the Holineſs of God? Do we not ſhuffle with God, and confeſs one ſin while we reſerve another, as if we would allure God by declaring our diſlike of one, to give us liberty to commit wantonneſs with another; not to abhor our ſelves, but to daub with God?

2. Is it any better in our Private and Family Worſhip? Are not ſuch Aſſemblies frequented by ſome, where ſome upon whom they have a dependance may eye them, and have a better opinion of them, and affection to them? If God were the ſole end of our hearts, would they not be as glowing under the ſole eye of God, as our Tongues or Carriages are ſeemingly ſerious under the eye of Man? Are not Family Duties performed by ſome that their voices may be heard, and their reputation ſupported among Godly Neighbours?

[3.] *Is not the Charity of many Men tainted with this end* Self? * as the *Phariſees* were, while they ſet the miſerable object before them, but not the Lord; beſtowing Alms, not ſo much upon the neceſſities of the people, as the friendſhip we owe them for ſome particular reſpects: Or caſting our Bread upon thoſe waters which ſtream down in the ſight of the World, that our Doles may be viſible to them, and commended by them: Or when we think to oblige God to pardon our Tranſgreſſions; as if we merited it, and Heaven too, at his hands, by beſtowing a few pence upon indigent perſons. And,

** Matt. 6. 1.*

[4.] *Is it not the ſame with the Reproofs of Men?* Is not heat and anger carried out with full Sail, when our worldly Intereſt is prejudic'd, and becalm'd in the concerns of God? Do not many Maſters reprove their Servants with more vehemency, for the neglect of their Trade and Buſineſs, than the neglect of Divine Duties; and that upon Religious Arguments, pretending the honour of God, that they may mind their own intereſt? But when they are negligent in what they owe to God, no noiſe is made, they paſs without rebuke. Is not this to make God and Religion a Stale to their own ends? 'Tis a part of Atheiſm not to regard the injuries done to God, as *Tiberius*; * *Let Gods wrongs be looked to, or cared for by himſelf.*

** Dei injuria Deo cura.*

[5.] *Is it not thus in our ſeeming Zeal for Religion?* As *Demetrius*, and the Crafts-men at *Epheſus*, cried up aloud the greatneſs of *Diana of the Epheſians*, not out of any true zeal they had for her, but their gain, which was increaſed by the confluence of her Worſhippers, and the Sale of their own Shrines, *Acts* 19. 24, 28.

4. *In making uſe of the Name of God to countenance our Sin.* When we ſet up an Opinion that is a Friend to our Luſts, and then dig deep into the Scripture to find Crutches to ſupport it, and authorize our practices: When Men will thank God for what they have got by unlawful means, Fathering the fruit of their cheating Craft, and the ſimplicity of their Chapmen, upon God: Crediting their Couſenage by his Name, as Men do braſs Money, with a thin Plate of Silver, and the Stamp and Image of the Prince. The *Jews* urge the Law of God for the Crucifying his Son, *John* 19. 7. *We have a Law, and by that Law he is to die*; and would make him a Party in their private Revenge. * Thus often, when we have faulter'd in ſome actions, we wipe our Mouths, as if we ſought God more than our own Intereſt, proſtituting the Sacred Name and Honour of God, either to hatch or defend ſome unworthy Luſt againſt his Word.

** Sanderſon's S. Part 2. p. 158.*

Is not all this a high degree of Atheiſm?

1. *'Tis a vilifying God*, an abuſe of the higheſt good: Other ſins ſubject the Creature, and outward things to them; but acting in Religious Services for *Self*, ſubjects not only the higheſt concernments of Mens Souls, but the Creator himſelf to the Creature: Nay, to make God contribute to that which is the pleaſure of the Devil: A greater ſlight, than to caſt the gifts of a Prince to a Herd of Naſty Swine. It were more excuſable to ſerve our ſelves of God upon the higher accounts, ſuch that materially conduce to his glory; but it is an intolerable wrong, to make him and his Ordinances Caterers for our own Bellies, as they did: * They *Sacrificed* the נִיכוֹת of which the Offerer might eat, not out of any reference to God, but love to their Gluttony; not pleaſe him, but feaſt themſelves. The Belly was truly made the God, when God was ſerved only in order to the Belly: As tho' the bleſſed God had his Being, and his Ordinances were enjoyned to pleaſure their fooliſh and wanton Appetites; as tho' the work of God were only to Patronize unrighteous ends, and be as bad as themſelves, and become a Pander to their corrupt Affections.

** Hoſ. 8. 13 Vid. Cocc. in locum.*

2. Becauſe it is a vilifying of God, *It is an undeifying or dethroning God.* 'Tis an acting, as if we were the Lords, and God our Vaſſal: A ſetting up thoſe Secular ends in the place of God, who ought to be our ultimate end in every action; to whom a glory is as due, as his mercy to us is utterly unmerited by us. He that thinks to Cheat and put the Fool upon God by his pretences, doth not heartily believe there is ſuch a Being. He could not have the Notion of a God, without that of Omniſcience and Juſtice; an Eye to ſee the Cheat, and an Arm to puniſh it: The Notion of the one would direct him in the manner of his Services, and the Senſe of the other would ſcare him from the cheriſhing his unworthy ends. He that ſerves God with a ſole reſpect to himſelf, is prepared for any Idolatry; his Religion ſhall warp with the Times and his Intereſt; he ſhall deny the true God for an Idol, when his worldly Intereſt ſhall adviſe him to it; and pay the ſame Reverence to the baſeſt Image, which he pretends now to pay to God: As the *Iſraelites* were as real for Idolatry, under their baſeſt Princes, as they were Pretenders to the true Religion under thoſe that were Pious.

Before I come to the uſe of this, give me leave to evince this practical Atheiſm by two other Conſiderations.

1. *Unworthy Imaginations of God.*

The fool hath ſaid in his heart there is no God: That is, he is not ſuch a God as you report him to be. This is meant by their being *corrupt*, in the 2*d*. corrupt being taken for playing the Idolaters, *Exodus* 32. 7. We cannot comprehend God; if we could, we ſhould ceaſe to be finite; and becauſe we cannot comprehend him, we erect ſtrange Images of him in our fancies and affections. And ſince guilt came upon us, becauſe we cannot root out the Notions of God, we would debaſe the Majeſty and Nature of God, that we may have ſome eaſe in our Conſciences, and lie down with ſome comfort in the ſparks of our own kindling.

This is univerſal in Men by Nature. *God is not*

in

*Psal. 10. 4. *in all his thoughts* *: Not in any of his thoughts according to the excellency of his Nature, and greatneſs of his Majeſty. As the Heathen did not glorifie God as God, ſo neither do they conceive of God as God: They are all infected with ſome one or other ill opinion of him, thinking him not ſo holy, powerful, juſt, good, as he is, and as the natural force of a Humane Underſtanding might arrive to. We joyn a new Notion of God in our vain fancies, and repreſent him not as he is, but as we would have him to be, fit for our own uſe, and ſuited to our own pleaſure: We ſet that active power of imagination on work, and there comes out a God, (*a Calf*) whom we own for a Notion of God.

Adam caſt him into ſo narrow a mould, as to think that himſelf, who had newly ſprouted up by his Almighty Power, was fit to be his Corrival in knowledge, and had vain hopes to graſp as much as Infiniteneſs: If he in his firſt declining begun to have ſuch a conceit, 'tis no doubt but we have as bad under a maſs of Corruption. When holy *Agur* ſpeaks of God, he cries out that he had not *the underſtanding of a Man, nor the knowledge of the Holy* *: He did not think rationally of God, as Man might by his ſtrength at his firſt Creation. There are as many Carved Images of God, as there are Minds of Men, and as monſtrous ſhapes as thoſe Corruptions, into which they would transform him.

* Pro. 30. v. 2, 3.

Hence ſprang,

1. *Idolatry. Vain Imaginations* firſt ſet afloat and kept up this in the World. * Vain Imaginations of the God, *whoſe glory they changed into the Image of corruptible Man*: They had ſet up vain Images of him in their fancy, before they ſet up Idolatrous repreſentations of him in their Temples: The likening him to thoſe Idols of Wood and Stone, and various Metals, were the fruit of an Idea erected in their own Minds: This is a mighty debaſing the Divine Nature, and rendring him no better, than that baſe and ſtupid Matter they make the viſible Object of their Adoration, equalling him with thoſe baſe Creatures they think worthy to be the repreſentations of him. Yet how far did this Crime ſpread it ſelf in all Corners of the World, not only among the more barbarous and ignorant, but the more poliſh'd and civilized Nations? *Judea* only, where God had placed the Ark of his preſence, being free from it, in ſome intervals of time, only after ſome ſweeping Judgment. And tho' they vomited up their Idols, under ſome ſharp ſcourge, they licked them up again after the Heavens were cleared over their Heads: The whole Book of *Judges* makes mention of it: And tho' an Evangelical Light hath chaſed that Idolatry away from a great part of the World, yet the Principle remaining, Coins more Spiritual Idols in the heart, which are brought before God in acts of Worſhip.

* Rom. 1. v. 21, 23.

2. *Hence all Superſtition received its riſe and growth.* When we Mint a God according to our own Complexion, like to us in mutable and various paſſions, ſoon angry and ſoon appeaſed, 'tis no wonder that we invent ways of pleaſing him after we have offended him, and think to expiate the Sin of our Souls, by ſome Melancholy Devotions and Self-Chaſtiſements. Superſtition is nothing elſe but an unſcriptural and unrevealed *dread of God* *. When they imagined him a rigorous, and ſevere Maſter, they caſt about for ways to mitigate him whom they thought ſo hard to be pleaſed: A very mean thought of him, as if a ſlight and pompous Devotion could as eaſily bribe and flatter him out of his rigors, as a few good words or baubling rattles could pleaſe and quiet little Children; and whatſoever pleaſed us, could pleaſe a God infinitely above us. Such narrow conceipts had the *Philiſtins*, when they thought to ſtill the anger of the God of *Iſrael*, whom they thought they poſſeſs'd in the Ark, with the preſent of a few *Golden Mice* *. All the Superſtition this day living in the World is built upon this foundation: So natural it is to Man to pull God down to his own Imaginations, rather than raiſe his Imaginations up to God. Hence doth ariſe alſo the diffidence of his mercy, tho' they repent; meaſuring God by the contracted Models of their own Spirits, as tho' his Nature were as difficult to Pardon their offences againſt him, as they are to remit wrongs done to themſelves.

* Δεισιδαιμονία.

* 1 Sam. 6. v. 3, 4.

3. *Hence ſprings all Preſumption, the Common diſeaſe of the World.* All the wickedneſs in the World, which is nothing elſe but preſuming upon God, riſes from the ill interpretations of the goodneſs of God, breaking out upon them in the Works of Creation and Providence; the Corruption of Mans nature engendred by thoſe Notions of Goodneſs, a monſtrous birth of vain Imaginations. Not of themſelves primarily, but of God; whence aroſe all that folly and darkneſs in their minds and converſations, *Rom.* 1. 20, 21. They glorified him *not as God*, but according to themſelves, imagined him good, that themſelves might be bad; fancied him ſo indulgent, as to neglect his own honour for their ſenſuality. How doth the unclean perſon repreſent him to his own thoughts, but as a Goat; the Murderer as a Tyger; the ſenſual perſon as a *Swine*; while they fancy a God indulgent to their Crimes without their repentance? As the Image on the Seal is ſtampt upon the Wax, ſo the thoughts of the heart are printed upon the Actions. Gods patience is apprehended to be an approbation of their Vices, and from the conſideration of his forbearance, they faſhion a God that they believe will ſmile upon their Crimes: They imagine a God that plays with them; and tho' he threatens, doth it only to ſcare, but means not as he ſpeaks: A God they fancy like themſelves, that would do as they would do, not be angry for what they count a light offence, *Pſal.* 50. 21. *Thou thoughteſt I was ſuch a one as thy ſelf*: That God and they were exactly alike as two Tallies *. [Our wilful miſapprehenſions of God, are the cauſe of our misbehaviour in all his Worſhip: Our ſlovenly and lazy Services tell him to his face, what ſlight thoughts and apprehenſions we have of him.]

* Gurnal, *Part* 2. p. 245, 246.

Compare theſe two together.

Superſtition ariſeth from terrifying miſapprehenſions of God: Preſumption from Self-pleaſing thoughts. One repreſents him only rigorous, and the other careleſs: One makes us over officious in ſerving him by our own rules; and the other over bold in offending him, according to our humours. The want of a true Notion of Gods Juſtice makes ſome Men ſlight him: And the want of a true apprehenſion of his goodneſs, makes others too ſervile in their approaches to him: One makes us careleſs of Duties, and the other makes us look on them rather as Phyſick than Food; an unſupportable Penance, than a deſirable Priviledge. In this Caſe, Hell is the Principle of Duty perform'd to Heaven. The Superſtitious Man believes God hath ſcarce Mercy to Pardon; the Preſumptuous Man believes he hath no ſuch perfection as Juſtice to puniſh. The one makes him inſignificant to what he deſires, kindneſs and goodneſs; the other renders him inſignificant to what he fears, his vindictive Juſtice: What between the Idolater, the Superſtitious, the preſumptuous Perſon, God ſhould look like no God in the World.

Theſe unworthy Imaginations of God are likewiſe,

A vilifying of him: Debaſing the Creator, to be a Creature of their own fancies; putting their own ſtamp upon him, and faſhioning him not according to that beautiful Image he impreſt upon them by Creation, but the defaced Image they inherit by their fall;

fall; and which is worſe, the Image of the Devil, which ſpread it ſelf over them at their Revolt and Apoſtacy. Were it poſſible to ſee a Picture of God, according to the fancies of Men, it would be the moſt monſtrous Being, ſuch a God that never was, nor ever can be.

We honour God when we have worthy opinions of him ſuitable to his Nature; when we conceive of him as a Being of unbounded lovelineſs and perfection. We detract from him, when we aſcribe to him ſuch qualities as would be a horrible diſgrace to a wiſe and good Man; as Injuſtice and Impurity. Thus Men debaſe God when they invert his Order, and would Create him according to their Image, as he firſt Created them according to his own: And think him not worthy to be a God, unleſs he fully anſwer the Mould they would Caſt him into, and be what is unworthy of his Nature: Men do not conceive of God as he would have them, but he muſt be what they would have him, one of their own ſhaping.

1. *This is worſe than Idolatry.* The groſſeſt Idolater commits not a Crime ſo hainous, by changing his Glory into the Image of creeping things and ſenceleſs Creatures, as the imagining God to be as one of our ſinful ſelves, and likening him to thoſe filthy Images we erect in our fancies: One makes him an earthly God, like an earthly Creature; the other fancies him an unjuſt and impure God, like a wicked Creature: One ſets up an Image of him in the Earth, which is his Footſtool; the other ſets up an Image of him in the heart, which ought to be his Throne.

2. *'Tis worſe than abſolute Atheiſm, or a denial of God. Dignius credimus non eſſe, quodcunque non ita fuerit, ut eſſe deberet*, was the opinion of *Tertullian* *. 'Tis more commendable to think him not to be, than to think him ſuch a one as is inconſiſtent with his Nature. Better to deny his Exiſtence, than deny his Perfection. No wiſe Man but would rather have his Memory rot, than be accounted infamous; and would be more obliged to him that ſhould deny that ever he had a Being in the World, than to ſay he did indeed live, but he was a Sot, a debauch'd Perſon, and a Man not to be truſted. When we apprehend God deceitful in his Promiſes, unrighteous in his Threatnings, unwilling to pardon upon Repentance, or reſolved to pardon notwithſtanding impenitency, theſe are things either unworthy of the Nature of God, or contrary to that Revelation he hath given of himſelf. Better for a Man never to have been born, than be for ever miſerable; ſo better to be thought no God, than repreſented impotent or negligent, unjuſt or deceitful; which are more contrary to the Nature of God, than Hell can be to the greateſt Criminal. In this ſenſe perhaps the Apoſtle affirms the *Gentiles*, *Eph.* 2. 12. to be ſuch as are *without God in the World*; as being more Atheiſts in adoring God under ſuch Notions, as they commonly did, than if they had acknowledged no God at all.

* Tertul. *cont. Maxim. lib.* 1. *cap.* 2.

2. *This is evident by our natural deſire to be diſtant from him, and unwillingneſs to have any acquaintance with him.* Sin ſet us firſt at a diſtance from God; and every new act of groſs Sin eſtrangeth us more from him, and indiſpoſeth us more for him: It makes us both afraid and aſhamed to be near him. Senſual Men were of this frame that *Job* diſcourſeth of, *Job* 21. 7, 8, 9, & 14, & 15 *verſes*: Where grace reigns, the nearer to God, the more vigorous the motion: The nearer any thing approaches to us, that is the Object of our deſires, the more eagerly do we preſs forward to it: But our blood riſeth at the approaches of any thing to which we have an averſion: We have naturally a loathing of Gods coming to us, or our return to him: We ſeek not after him as our happineſs; and when he offers himſelf, we like it not, but put a diſgrace upon him, in chuſing other things before him. God and we are naturally at as great a diſtance, as Light and Darkneſs, Life and Death, Heaven and Hell: The ſtronger impreſſion of God any thing hath, the more we fly from it. The glory of God, in reflection upon *Moſes* his face, ſcar'd the *Iſraelites*; they who had deſired God to ſpeak to them by *Moſes*, when they ſaw a ſignal impreſſion of God upon his Countenance, were *afraid* to come near him, as they were before unwilling *to come near to God* *: Not that the bleſſed God is in his own nature a frightful object, but our own guilt renders him ſo to us, and our ſelves indiſpoſed to converſe with him. As the light of the Sun is as irkſome to a diſtemper'd eye, as it is in its own Nature deſirable to a ſound one. The Saints themſelves have had ſo much frailty, that they have cried out, that they were undone, if they had any more than ordinary diſcoveries of God made unto them; as if they wiſhed him more remote from them. Vileneſs cannot endure the ſplendor of Majeſty, nor guilt the glory of a Judge.

* Exod. 34. v. 30.

We have naturally, (1.) *No deſire of remembrance of him*, (2.) or *converſe with him*, (3.) or *thorough return to him*, (4.) or *cloſe imitation of him*: As if there were not any ſuch Being as God in the World; or as if we wiſhed there were none at all; ſo feeble and ſpiritleſs are our thoughts of the Being of a God.

(1.) *No deſire for the remembrance of him.* How delightful are other things in our minds? How burdenſome the Memorials of God, from whom we have our Being? With what pleaſure do we contemplate the Nature of Creatures, even of Flies and Toads, while our minds tire in the ſearch of him, who hath beſtowed upon us our knowing and meditating Faculties? Tho' God ſhews himſelf to us in every Creature, in the meaneſt Weed, as well as the higheſt Heavens, and is more apparent in them, to our reaſons, than themſelves can be to our ſence, yet tho' we ſee them, we will not behold God in them: We will view them to pleaſe our ſenſe, to improve our reaſon in their natural perfections, but paſs by the conſideration of Gods perfections ſo viſibly beaming from them. Thus we play the Beaſts and Atheiſts in the very exerciſe of reaſon, and neglect our Creator to gratifie our ſenſe; as tho' the pleaſure of that were more deſirable than the knowledge of God: The deſire of our Souls is not towards *his Name, and the Remembrance of him* *, when we ſet not our ſelves in a poſture to feaſt our Souls with deep and ſerious meditations of him; have a thought of him, only by the by and away, as if we were afraid of too intimate acquaintance with him.

* Iſa. 26. 8.

Are not the thoughts of God rather our Invaders, than our Gueſts, ſeldom invited to reſide and take up their home in our hearts? Have we not, when they have broke in upon us, bid them *depart from us* *, and warned them to come no more upon our ground, ſent them packing as ſoon as we could, and were glad when they were gone? And when they have departed, have we not often been afraid they ſhould return again upon us, and therefore look'd about for other inmates, things not good, or if good, infinitely below God, to poſſeſs the room of our hearts, before any thoughts of him ſhould appear again? Have we not often been glad of excuſes, to ſhake off preſent thoughts of him, and when we have wanted real ones, found out pretences to keep God and our Hearts at a diſtance? Is not this a part of Atheiſm, to be ſo unwilling to imploy our faculties about the giver of them, to refuſe to exerciſe them in a way of grateful remembrance of him, and tho' they were none of his gift, but our own acquiſition, as tho' the God that truly gave them had no right to them, and he that thinks on us every day in a way of Providence, were not worthy to be thought on by us in a way of ſpecial Remembrance?

* Job 22. 17

Do not the best, that love the remembrance of him, and abhor this natural averseness, find, that when they would think of God, many things tempt them and turn them to think elsewhere? Do they not find their Apprehensions too feeble, their Motives too dull, and the Impressions too slight? This natural Atheism is spread over humane Nature.

(2.) *No desire of converse with him.* The word [*remember*] in the Command for keeping holy the Sabbath-day, including all the Duties of the Day, and the choicest of our Lives; implies our natural unwillingness to them, and forgetfulness of them: God's pressing this Command with more Reasons than the rest, manifests that Man hath no heart for spiritual Duties. No Spiritual Duty, which sets us immediately Face to Face with God; but in the attempts of it, we find naturally a resistance, from some powerful Principle; so that every one may subscribe to the Speech of the *Apostle*, that *when we would do good, evil is present with us.* No reason of this can be rendred, but the natural temper of our Souls, and an affecting a distance from God under any consideration: For tho' our guilt first made the breach, yet this aversion to a converse with him steps up without any actual Reflections upon our Guilt, which may render God terrible to us as an offended Judge: Are we not often also in our attendance upon him, more pleased with the modes of Worship which gratifie our fancy, than to have our Souls inwardly delighted with the Object of Worship, Himself?

This is a part of our natural Atheism. To cast such Duties off by total neglect, or in part, by affecting a coldness in them; is to cast off the *Fear of* * Job 15.4. *the Lord* *. *Not to call upon God*, and not *to know him*, are one and the same thing, *Jer.* 10. 25. Either we think there is no such Being in the World, or that he is so slight a one, that he deserves not the respect he calls for; or so impotent and poor, that he cannot supply what our necessities require.

(3.) *No desire of a thorough return to him.* The first Man fled from him after his Defection, though he had no refuge to fly to, but the Grace of his Creator. *Cain* went from his presence, would be a Fugitive from God, rather than a Supplicant to him; when by Faith in, and application of the promised Redeemer, he might have escaped the Wrath to come for his Brothers Blood, and mitigated the sorrows he was justly sentenced to bear in the World. Nothing will separate prodigal Man from commoning with Swine, and make him return to his Father, but any Empty Trough: Have we but husks to feed on, we shall never think of a Father's Presence. It were well if our Sores and Indigence would drive us to him; but when our *strength is devoured, we will not return to the Lord our God, nor seek him for all* * Hos. 7. 10. *this* *. Not his drawn Sword as a God of Judgment, nor his mighty Power as a Lord, nor his open Arms as the Lord their God, could move them to turn their Eyes and their Hearts towards him. The more he invites us to partake of his Grace, the further we run from him to provoke his Wrath: The louder God called them by his Prophets, the closer * Hos. 11. 2. they stuck to their *Baal* *. We turn our backs when he stretches out his hand, stop our Ears when he lifts up his voice: We fly from him when he courts us, and shelter our selves in any Bush from his merciful hand, that would lay hold upon us; nor will we set our Faces towards him, till our way *be hedged up with Thorns*, and not a gap left to creep out any By-way *. Whosoever is brought to a return, puts * Hos. 2. v. 6, 7. the Holy-Ghost to the pain of striving; he is not easily brought to a spiritual Subjection to God, nor perswaded to a Surrender at a Sommons, but sweetly over-power'd by storm, and victoriously drawn into the Arms of God: God stands ready, but the heart stands off; Grace is full of Intreaties, and the Soul full of excuses. Divine Love offers, and Carnal Self-love rejects: Nothing so pleases us, as when we are furthest from him; as if any thing were more aimable, any thing more desirable than himself.

(4.) *No desire of any close imitation of him.* When our Saviour was to come *as a Refiners Fire* to purifie the Sons of *Levi*, the cry is, *Who shall abide the day of his coming*? Mal. 3. 2, 3. Since we are alienated from the Life of God, we desire no more naturally to live the life of God, than a Toad or any other Animal desires to live the life of a Man: No heart that knows God, but hath a holy ambition to imitate him: No Soul that refuseth him for a Copy, but is ignorant of his Excellency: Of this temper is all Mankind naturally. Man in Corruption is as loth to be like God in Holiness, as *Adam* after his Creation was desirous to be like God in Knowledge; his Posterity are like their Father, who soon turned his back upon his Original Copy.

What can be worse than this? Can the denial of his Being be a greater injury than this contempt of him; as if he had not goodness to deserve our remembrance, nor aimableness fit for our converse; as if he were not a Lord fit for our subjection, nor had a Holiness that deserved our imitation?

For the *Use* of this. It serves,

1. For *information.*

1. *It gives us occasion to admire the wonderful patience and mercy of God.* How many Millions of practical Atheists breath every day in his Air, and live upon his Bounty, who deserve to be Inhabitants in Hell, rather than Possessors of the Earth? An infinite Holiness is offended, an infinite Justice is provoked; yet an infinite Patience forbears the Punishment, and an infinite Goodness relieves our wants: The more we had merited his Justice and forfeited his Favour, the more is his affection inhanc'd, which makes his hand so liberal to us.

At the first invasion of his Rights, he mitigates the terror of the threatning, which was set to defend his Law, with the grace of a *Promise* to relieve and recover his Rebellious Creature *. Who would * Gen. 3. 15 have looked for any thing but tearing Thunders, sweeping Judgments, to raise up the Foundations of the Apostate World? But oh, how great are his Bowels to his aspiring Competitors? Have we not experimented his Contrivances for our good, tho' we have refused him for our Happiness? Has he not opened his Arms, when we spurned with our Feet; held out his alluring Mercy, when we have brandisht against him a rebellious Sword? Has he not entreated us while we have invaded him, as if he were unwilling to lose us, who are ambitious to destroy our selves? Has he yet denyed us the care of his Providence, while we have denyed him the Rights of his Honour, and would appropriate them to our selves? Has the Sun forborn shining upon us, tho' we have shot our Arrows against him? Have not our Beings been supported by his Goodness, while we have endeavoured to climb up to his Throne; and his mercies continued to charm us, while we have used them as Weapons to injure him? Our own necessities might excite us to own him as our happiness, but he adds his invitations to the voice of our wants. Has he not promised a Kingdom to those that would strip him of his Crown, and proclaimed Pardon upon Repentance to those that would take away his Glory? And hath so twisted together his own end, which is his Honour, and Man's true end, which is his Salvation, that a Man cannot truly mind himself and his own Salvation, but he must mind God's Glory; and cannot be intent upon God's Honour, but by the same act he promotes himself

and

and his own Happineſs; So loth is God to give any juſt occaſion of diſſatisfaction to his Creature, as well as diſhonour himſelf. All thoſe wonders of his Mercy are inhanc'd by the hainouſneſs of our Atheiſm; a multitude of gracious Thoughts from him above the multitude of Contempts from us *. What Rebels in actual Arms againſt their Prince aiming at his Life, ever found that favour from him, to have all their neceſſaries richly afforded them, without which they would ſtarve, and without which they would be unable to manage their attempts, as we have received from God? Had not God had *riches of goodneſs, forbearance and long-ſuffering*, and infinite riches too; the deſpight the World hath done him in refuſing him as their *Rule, Happineſs* and *End*, would have emptied him long ago *.

* Pſ. 105. 7.

* Rom. 2. 4.

2. *It brings in a Juſtification of the exerciſe of his Juſtice.* If it gives us occaſion loudly to praiſe his Patience; it alſo ſtops our Mouths from accuſing any Acts of his Vengeance. What can be too ſharp a recompence for the deſpiſing and diſgracing ſo great a Being? The higheſt Contempt merits the greateſt Anger; and when we will not own him for our happineſs, 'tis equal we ſhould feel the Miſery of ſeparation from him. If he that is guilty of Treaſon deſerves to loſe his Life; what Puniſhment can be thought great enough for him that is ſo diſingenious as to prefer himſelf before a God ſo infinitely good, and ſo fooliſh as to invade the Rights of one infinitely powerful? 'Tis no injuſtice for a Creature, to be for ever left to himſelf, to ſee what advantage he can make of that *Self* he was ſo buſily imployed to ſet up in the place of his Creator. The Soul of Man deſerves an infinite Puniſhment for deſpiſing an infinite Good: And it is not unequitable, that that *Self*, which Man makes his Rule and Happineſs above God, ſhould become his Torment and Miſery, by the Righteouſneſs of that God whom he deſpiſed.

3. *Hence ariſeth a neceſſity of a new ſtate and frame of Soul, to alter an Atheiſtical Nature.* We forget God: Think of him with reluctancy: Have no reſpect to God in our courſe and acts: This cannot be our original State. God being infinitely good, never let Man come out of his hands with this actual unwillingneſs to acknowledge and ſerve him: He never intended to dethrone himſelf for the Work of his hands, or that the Creature ſhould have any other end than that of his Creator: As the Apoſtle ſaith in the Caſe of the Galatians Error, *Gal.* 5. 8. *This Perſwaſion came not of him that called you*; ſo this frame comes not from him that created you: How much therefore do we need a reſtoring Principle in us? Inſtead of ordering our ſelves according to the Will of God, we are deſirous to *fulfil the Wills of the Fleſh* *. There is a neceſſity of ſome other principle in us to make us fulfil the Will of God, ſince we were created for God, not for the Fleſh.

* Eph. 2. 3.

We can no more be voluntarily ſerviceable to God, while our Serpentine Nature, and Deviliſh Habits remain in us, than we can ſuppoſe the Devil can be willing to glorifie God, while the Nature he contracted by his fall abides powerfully in him. Our Nature and Will muſt be changed, that our actions may ragard God as our End, that we may delightfully meditate on him, and draw the Motives of our Obedience from him. Since this Atheiſm is ſeated in Nature, the change muſt be in our Nature: Since our firſt aſpirings to the Rights of God, were the Fruits of the Serpents Breath, which tainted our Nature; there muſt be a removal of this taint, whereby our Natures may be on the ſide of God againſt Satan, as they were before on the ſide of Satan againſt God. There muſt be a ſupernatural Principle before we can live a ſupernatural Life, *i.e.* live to God, ſince we are naturally alienated from the Life of God: The averſion of our Natures from God, is as ſtrong as our inclinations to evil; we are diſguſted with one, and preſſed with the other; we have no will, no heart, to come to God in any ſervice. This Nature muſt be broken in pieces and new moulded, before we can make God our Rule and End: While Mens *deeds are evil*, they cann't comply with God *; much leſs while their *natures* are evil: Till this be done, all the ſervice a Man performs riſeth from ſome *evil imagination of the heart, which is evil, only evil, & that continually* *, from *wrong* Notions of God, *wrong* Notions of Duty, or *corrupt* Motives. All the pretences of Devotion to God, are but the adoration of ſome golden Image. Prayers to God for the ends of *ſelf*, are like thoſe of the Devil to our Saviour, when he askt leave to go into the herd of Swine: The Object was right, Chriſt; the end was the deſtruction of the Swine, and the ſatisfaction of their Malice to the Owners: There is a neceſſity then that depraved ends ſhould be removed, that that which was God's end in our framing, may be our end in our acting, *viz. his glory*, which cann't be without a change of Nature. We can never honour him ſupreamly whom we do not ſupreamly love: Till this be, we cannot glorifie God as God, tho' we do things by his command and order; no more, than when God imployed the Devil in afflicting *Job* *: His performance cannot be ſaid to be good, becauſe his end was not the ſame with Gods, he acted out of Malice, what God commanded out of Sovereignty, and for gracious deſigns: Had God employed an Holy Angel in his deſign upon *Job*, the action had been good in the Affliction; becauſe his Nature was holy, and therefore his ends holy; but bad in the Devil, becauſe his ends were baſe and unworthy.

* John 3. 19, 20.

* Gen. 6. 5.

* Job 1.

4. We may gather from hence, *the difficulty of Converſion, and Mortification to follow thereupon.* What is the reaſon Men receive no more impreſſion from the voice of God and the light of his truth, than a dead Man in the Grave doth from the roaring Thunder, or a blind Mole from the light of the Sun? 'Tis becauſe our Atheiſm is as great as the deadneſs of the one, or the blindneſs of the other. The Principle in the heart is ſtrong to ſhut the door both of the thoughts and affections againſt God. If a Friend oblige us, we ſhall act for him as for our ſelves: We are won by intreaties, ſoft words overcome us, but our hearts are as deaf as the hardeſt Rock at the call of God: Neither the joys of Heaven propoſed by him can allure us, nor the flaſht terrors of Hell affright us to him; as if we conceived God unable to beſtow the one, or execute the other: The true reaſon is, God and *ſelf* conteſt for the Deity: The Law of ſin is, *God muſt be at the foot-ſtool*; the Law of God is, *Sin muſt be utterly depoſed*: Now 'tis difficult to leave a Law beloved, for a Law long ago diſcarded. The mind of Man will hunt after any thing; the will of Man embrace any thing; upon the propoſal of mean objects the Spirit of man ſpreads its wings, flyes to catch 'em, becomes one with 'em: But attempt to bring it under the power of God, the wings flag, the Creature looks liveleſs, as tho' there were no ſpring of Motion in it: 'Tis as much crucified to God, as the *Apoſtle* was to the World: The *ſin* of the heart diſcovers its *ſtrength*, the more God diſcovers the *holineſs of his will* *. The love of Sin hath been predominant in our Nature, has quaſh'd a love to God, if not extinguiſht it.

* Rom. 7. 9, 10, 11, 12.

Hence alſo is the difficulty of Mortification. This is a Work tending to the Honour of God: The abaſing of that inordinately aſpiring Humour in our ſelves. If the Nature of Man be inclin'd to Sin, as it is, it muſt needs be bent againſt any thing that oppoſes it. 'Tis impoſſible to ſtrike any true Blow at any Luſt, till the true Senſe of God be re-entertained in the Soil where it ought to grow.

Who

Who can be naturally willing to crucifie what is incorporated with him, *his flesh?* What is dearest to him, *himself?* Is it an easie thing for Man, the Competitor with God, to turn his Arms against himself? that *Self* should overthrow its own Empire? lay aside all its pretensions to, and designs for a Godhead? to hew off its own Members, and subdue its own Affections? 'Tis the nature of Man to *cover his sin*, to hide it in his bosom *; not to destroy it; and as unwillingly part with his carnal affections, as the Legion of Devils were with the Man that had been long possessed: And when he is forced and fired from one, he will endeavour to espouse some other Lust, as those Devils desired to possess Swine, when they were chased from their possession of that Man.

* Job 13. v. 33. *If I cover my Transgression as* Adam.

5. Here we see the reason of unbelief. That which hath most of God in it, meets with most aversion from us: That which hath least of God, finds better and stronger inclinations in us. What is the reason that the heart of Man is more unwilling to embrace the Gospel, than acknowledge the equity of the Law? Because there is more of Gods Nature and Perfection evident in the Gospel than in the Law: Besides there is more reliance on God, and distance from *Self*, commanded in the Gospel. The *Law* puts a Man upon his own strength, the *Gospel* takes him off from his own bottom: The Law acknowledges him to have a power in himself, and to act for his own reward; the Gospel strips him of all his proud and *towring thoughts* *, brings him to his due place, the foot of God; orders him to deny himself as his own Rule, Righteousness and End; *and henceforth not to live to himself* *. This is the true reason why Men are more against the Gospel than against the Law; because it doth more deifie God, and debase Man. Hence it is easier to reduce Men to some Moral Vertue, than to Faith; to make Men blush at their outward Vices, but not at the inward impurity of their Natures. Hence it is observed; that those that asserted, that all happiness did arise from something in a Mans self, as the Stoicks and Epicureans did; and that a wise Man was equal with God, were greater Enemies to the Truths of the Gospel than others, *Acts* 17. 18. because it lays the Ax to the root of their principal Opinion; takes the one from their Self-sufficiency, and the other from their Self-gratification: It opposeth the brutish principle of the one, which placed happiness in the pleasures of the Body, and the more noble principle of the other, which placed happiness in the vertue of the mind: The one was for a Sensual, the other for a Moral *Self*; both disowned by the Doctrine of the Gospel.

*2Cor.10.5

*2Cor.5.15

6. *It informs us consequently, who can be the Author of Grace and Conversion, and every other good Work.* No practical Atheist ever yet turned to God, but was turned by God; and not to acknowledge it to God, is a part of this Atheism, since it is a robbing God of the honour of one of his most glorious Works. If this practical Atheism be natural to Man ever since the first taint of Nature in Paradice, what can be expected from it but a resisting of the Work of God, and setting up all the forces of Nature against the operations of Grace, till a day of Power dawn and clear up upon the Soul *? Not all the Angels in Heaven, or Men upon Earth, can be imagined to be able to perswade a Man to fall out with himself. Nothing can turn the Tide of Nature, but a Power above Nature. God took away the sanctifying Spirit from Man, as a penalty for the first sin; who can regain it but by his Will and Pleasure? Who can restore it but he that remov'd it? Since every Man hath the same fundamental Atheism in him by Nature, and would be a Rule to himself, and his own End, he is so far from dethroning himself, that all the strength of his corrupted Nature is alarmed up to stand to their Arms, upon any attempt God makes to regain the Fort. The Will is so strong against God, that 'tis like many Wills twisted together, *Eph.* 2. 3. *Wills of the Flesh*; we translate it the *desires of the Flesh*: Like many Threds twisted in a Cable, never to be snapt asunder by a Humane Arm; a Power and Will above ours, can only untwist so many Wills in a knot. Man cannot rise to an acknowledgment of God without God: Hell may as well become Heaven, the Devil be changed into an Angel of Light. The Devil cannot but desire happiness; he knows the misery into which he is fallen; he cannot be desirous of that punishment he knows is reserved for him. Why doth he not sanctifie God and glorifie his Creator, wherein there is abundantly more pleasure than in his malicious course? Why doth he not petition to recover his ancient standing? He will not; there are *Chains of Darkness* upon his faculties; he will not be otherwise than he is: His desire to be God of the World, sways him against his own interest; and out of love to his malice, he will not sin at a less rate to make a diminution of his punishment. Man, if God utterly refuseth to work upon him, is no better; and to maintain his Atheism, would venture a Hell. How is it possible for a Man to turn himself to that God, against whom he hath a quarrel in his Nature, the most rooted and settled habit in him being to set himself in the place of God? An Atheist by Nature, can no more alter his own temper, and engrave in himself the Divine Nature, than a Rock can carve it self into the Statue of a Man, or a Serpent, that is an Enemy to Man, could or would raise it self to the Nobility of the humane Nature. That Soul that by Nature would strip God of his Rights, cannot without a Divine Power be made conformable to him, and acknowledge sincerely and cordially the Rights and Glory of God.

* Psal. 110. v. 3.

7. *We may here see the reason why there can be no justification by the best and strongest works of Nature.* Can that which hath Atheism at the root, justifie either the action or person? What strength can those Works have, which have neither Gods Law for their Rule, nor his Glory for their End; that are not wrought by any spiritual strength from him, nor tend with any spiritual affection to him? Can these be a foundation for the most holy God to pronounce a Creature righteous? They will justifie his Justice in Condemning, but cannot sway his Justice to an Absolution. Every natural Man in his Works picks and chuses; he owns the Will of God no further than he can wring it to suit the Law of his Members; and minds not the honour of God, but as it justles not with his own glory and secular ends. Can he be righteous that prefers his own Will and his own Honour, before the Will and Honour of the Creator? However Mens actions may be beneficial to others, what reason hath God to esteem them, wherein there is no respect to him but themselves, whereby they dethrone him in their thoughts, while they seem to own him in their religious Works? Every day reproves us with something differenr from the Rule: Thousands of wandrings offer themselves to our eyes. Can Justification be expected from that which in it self is matter of despair?

8. *See here the cause of all the Apostacy in the World.* Practical Atheism was never conquered in such: They are still *alienated from the Life of God*; and will not live to God, as he lives to himself and his own honour *. They loath his Rule, and distaste his Glory; are loth to step out of themselves, to promote the ends of another; find not the satisfaction in him as they do in themselves: They will be Judges of what is good for them and righteous in it self, rather than admit of God to judge for them. When Men draw back from Truth to Error, 'tis to such

* Eph. 4. v. 17, 18.

ſuch opinions which may ſerve more to foment and cheriſh their Ambition, Covetouſneſs, or ſome beloved Luſt that diſputes with God for precedency, and is deſigned to be ſerved before him, *John* 12. 42, 43. *They love the praiſe of Men more than the praiſe of God.* A preferring Man before God, was the reaſon they would not confeſs Chriſt, and God in him.

9. *This ſhews us the excellency of the Goſpel and Chriſtian Religion.* It ſets Man in his due place, and gives to God what the Excellency of his Nature requires. It lays Man in the duſt from whence he was taken, and ſets God upon that Throne where he ought to ſit. Man by Nature would annihilate God, and deifie himſelf; the Goſpel glorifies God and annihilates Man. In our firſt Revolt, we would be like him in knowledge; in the means he hath provided for our recovery, he deſigns to make us like him in grace: The Goſpel ſhews our ſelves to be an Object of Humiliation, and God to be a glorious Object for our Imitation. The Light of Nature tells us there is a God; the Goſpel gives us a more magnificent report of him: The Light of Nature condemns groſs Atheiſm, and that of the Goſpel condemns and conquers Spiritual Atheiſm in the hearts of Men.

Uſe 2. Of *Exhortation.*

1. *Let us labour to be ſenſible of this Atheiſm in our Nature, and be humbled for it.* How ſhould we lie in the duſt, and go bowing under the humbling thoughts of it all our days? Shall we not be ſenſible of that whereby we ſpill the blood of our Souls, and give a ſtab to the heart of our own Salvation? Shall we be worſe than any Creature, not to bewail that which tends to our deſtruction? He that doth not lament it, cannot challenge the Character of a Chriſtian, hath nothing of the divine Life and Love planted in his Soul. Not a Man, but ſhall one day be ſenſible, when the Eternal God ſhall call him out to Examination, and charge his Conſcience to diſcover every Crime, which will then own the Authority whereby it acted; when the heart ſhall be torn open, and the ſecrets of it brought to publick view; and the World and Man himſelf, ſhall ſee what a viperous Brood of corrupt Principles and Ends neſted in his heart. Let us therefore be truly ſenſible of it, till the conſideration draw tears from our Eyes, and ſorrow from our Souls: Let us urge the thoughts of it upon our hearts, till the Core of that Pride be eaten out, and our Stubbornneſs changed into Humility: Till our heads become Waters, and our eyes Fountains of Tears, and be a Spring of Prayer to God to change the Heart, and mortifie the Atheiſm in it; and conſider what a ſad thing it is to be a practical Atheiſt: And who is not ſo by Nature?

1. *Let us be ſenſible of it in our ſelves.* Have any of our hearts been a Soyl wherein the Fear and Reverence of God hath naturally grown? Have we a deſire to know him, or a will to embrace him? Do we delight in his will, and love the remembrance of his Name? Are our reſpects to him as God, equal to the ſpeculative knowledge we have of his Nature? Is the heart, wherein he hath ſtampt his Image, reſerved for his Reſidence? Is not the World more affected than the Creator of the World, as tho' that could contribute to us a greater happineſs than the Author of it? Have not Creatures as much of our love, fear, truſt; nay, more than God that framed both them and us? Have we not too often relied upon our own ſtrength, and made a Calf of our own Wiſdom, and ſaid of God as the Iſraelites of *Moſes*, *As for this* Moſes *we wot not what is become of him*, Exod. 32. 1. and given oftner the glory of our good ſucceſs to our Drag and our Net, to our Craft and our Induſtry, than to the Wiſdom and Bleſſing of God? Are we then free from this ſort of Atheiſm *? 'Tis as impoſſible to have two Gods at one time in one heart, as to have two Kings at one time in full power in one Kingdom. Have there not been frequent neglects of God? Have we not been deaf whilſt he hath knocked at our doors? ſlept when he hath ſounded in our ears, as if there had been no ſuch Being as a God in the World? How many ſtrugglings have been againſt our approaches to him? Hath not folly often been committed with vain imaginations, ſtarting up in the time of Religious Service, which we would ſcarce vouchſafe a look to at another time, and in another buſineſs, but would have thruſt them away with indignation? Had they ſtept in to interrupt our worldly affairs, they would have been troubleſome Intruders, but while we are with God they are acceptable Gueſts. How unwilling have our hearts been to fortifie themſelves with ſtrong and influencing conſiderations of God, before we addreſt to him? Is it not too often that our lifleſneſs in Prayer proceeds from this Atheiſm? a neglect of ſeeing what arguments and pleas may be drawn from the divine perfections, to ſecond our ſuit in hand, and quicken our hearts in the ſervice? Whence are thoſe indiſpoſitions to any ſpiritual duty, but becauſe we have not due thoughts of the Majeſty, Holineſs, Goodneſs and Excellency of God? Is there any duty which leads to a more particular inquiry after him, or a more clear viſion of him, but our hearts have been ready to riſe up and call it curſed rather than bleſſed? Are not our Minds bemiſted with an ignorance of him, our Wills drawn by averſion from him, our Affections riſing in diſtaſte of him? More willing to know any thing than his Nature, and more induſtrious to do any thing than his Will? Do we not all fall under ſome one or other of theſe conſiderations? Is it not fit then that we ſhould have a ſenſe of them? 'Tis to be bewail'd by us, that ſo little of God is in our hearts, when ſo many evidences of the love of God are in the Creatures; that God ſhould be ſo little our End, who hath been ſo much our Benefactor; that he ſhould be ſo little in our thoughts, who ſparkles in every thing which preſents it ſelf to our eyes.

2. *Let us be ſenſible of it in others.* We ought to have a juſt execration of the too open iniquity in the midſt of us; and imitate holy *David*, whoſe tears plentifully guſht out, *becauſe Men kept not Gods Law* *. And is it not a time to exerciſe this pious lamentation? Hath the wicked Atheiſm of any Age been greater, or can you find worſe in Hell, than we may hear of, and behold on Earth? How is the excellent Majeſty of God, adored by the Angels in Heaven, deſpiſed and reproached by Men on Earth, as if his Name were publiſh'd to be matter of their ſport? What a gaſping thing is a natural ſenſe of God among Men in the World? Is not the Law of God, accompanied with ſuch dreadful threatnings and curſes, made light of, as if Men would place their honour in being above or beyond any ſenſe of that glorious Majeſty? How many wallow in pleaſures, as if they had been made Men only to turn Brutes, and their Souls given them only for Salt to keep their Bodies from putrifying? 'Tis as well a part of Atheiſm not to be ſenſible of the abuſes of Gods Name and Laws by others, as to violate them our ſelves: What is the language of a ſtupid ſenſleſneſs of them, but that there is no God in the World, whoſe glory is worth a vindication, and deſerves our regards?

* Pſal. 119. v. 136.

That we may be ſenſible of the unworthineſs of neglecting God as our Rule and End; conſider,

1. *The Unreaſonableneſs of it as it concerns God.*

1. Firſt, *'Tis a high contempt of God.* 'Tis an inverting the order of things; a making God the higheſt, to become the loweſt; and *Self* the loweſt, to become the higheſt: To be guided by every baſe Companion, ſome idle vanity, ſome carnal intereſt,

is

* Lawſon *Body of Divinity*, p. 153, 154.

is to acknowledge an excellency abounding in them, which is wanting in God: An equity in their Orders, and none in Gods Precepts: A goodneſs in their Promiſes, and a falſity in Gods; as if infinite excellency were a meer vanity, and to act for God were the debaſement of our Reaſon: To act for *Self*, or ſome pitiful Creature, or ſordid Luſt, were the glory and advancement of it. To prefer any one ſin before the honour of God, is as if that ſin had been our Creator and Benefactor, as if it were the original Cauſe of our Being and Support. Do not Men pay as great a homage to that as they do to God? Do not their Minds eagerly purſue it? Are not the revolvings of it in their fancies as delightful to them, as the remembrance of God to a holy Soul? Do any obey the Commands of God with more readineſs, than they do the orders of their baſe Affections? Did *Peter* leap more readily into the Sea to meet his Maſter, than many into the jaws of Hell to meet their *Delilahs*? How cheerfully did the *Iſraelites* part with their ornaments for the ſake of an Idol, who would not have ſpared a moiety for the honour of their Deliverer *? If to make God our End is the principal Duty in Nature, then to make our ſelves, or any thing elſe our End, is the greateſt Vice in the rank of Evils.

*Exod. 32. v. 3. *All the people brake off the golden ear-rings.*

Secondly, *'Tis a contempt of God, as the moſt amiable object.* God is infinitely excellent and deſirable, *Zach. 9. 17. How great is his goodneſs, and how great is his beauty?* There is nothing in him but what may raviſh our affections; none that knows him but finds attractives to keep them with him: He hath nothing in him which can be a proper object of contempt, no defects or ſhadow of evil; there is infinite excellency to charm us, and infinite goodneſs to allure us; the Author of our Beings, the Benefactor of our Lives: Why then ſhould Man, which is his Image, be ſo baſe as to ſlight the beautiful original which ſtampt it on him? He is the moſt lovely object, therefore to be ſtudied, therefore to be honoured, therefore to be followed; in regard of his perfection, he hath the higheſt right to our thoughts. All other Beings were eminently contained in his eſſence, and were produced by his infinite power: The Creature hath nothing but what it hath from God; and is it not unworthy to prefer the Copy before the Original, to fall in love with a Picture inſtead of the beauty it repreſents? The Creature, which we advance to be our Rule and End, can no more report to us the true amiableneſs of God, than a few Colours mixed and ſuited together upon a piece of Cloth, can the Moral and Intellectual lovelineſs of the Soul of Man. To contemn God one moment is more baſe, than if all Creatures were contemned by us for ever, becauſe the excellency of Creatures is to God, like that of a drop to the Sea, or a ſpark to the glory of unconceiveable millions of Suns. As much as the excellency of God is above our conceptions, ſo much doth the debaſing of him admit of unexpreſſible aggravations.

2. Conſider *the ingratitude in it.* That we ſhould reſiſt that God with our hearts, who made us the work of his hands, and count him as nothing, from whom we derive all the good that we are or have: There is no contempt of Man but ſteps in here to aggravate our ſlighting of God, becauſe there is no relation one Man can ſtand in to another, wherein God doth not more highly appear to Man. If we abhor the unworthy carriage of a Child to a tender Father, a Servant to an indulgent Maſter, a Man to his obliging Friend, why do Men daily act that towards God, which they cannot ſpeak of without abhorrency, if acted by another againſt Man? Is God a Being leſs to be regarded than Man, and more worthy of contempt than a Creature? [* It would be ſtrange if a Benefactor ſhould live in the ſame Town, in the ſame Houſe with us, and we never exchange a word with him; yet this is our caſe, who have the Works of God in our Eyes, the goodneſs of God in our Being, the mercy of God in our daily Food] yet think ſo little of him, converſe ſo little with him, ſerve every thing before him, and prefer every thing above him? Whence have we our mercies but from his hand? Who, beſides him, maintains our breath this moment? Would he call for our Spirits this moment, they muſt depart from us to attend his Command. There is not a moment wherein our unworthy carriage is not aggravated, becauſe there is not a moment wherein he is not our Guardian, and gives us not taſtes of a freſh Bounty. And it is no light aggravation of our crime, that we injure him, without whoſe bounty in giving us our Being, we had not been capable of caſting contempt upon him: That he that hath the greateſt ſtamp of his Image, Man, ſhould deſerve the Character of the worſt of his Rebels: That he, who hath only reaſon by the gift of God to judge of the equity of the Laws of God, ſhould ſwell againſt them as grievous, and the Government of the Law-giver as burdenſome. Can it leſſen the crime to uſe the principle, wherein we excel the Beaſts, to the diſadvantage of God, who endowed us with that principle above the Beaſts?

*Reynolds.

1. *'Tis a debaſing of God beyond what the Devil doth at preſent.* He is more excuſable in his preſent ſtate of acting, than Man is in his preſent refuſing God for his Rule and End. He ſtrives againſt a God that exerciſeth upon him a vindictive Juſtice: We debaſe a God that loads us with his daily mercies. The deſpairing Devils are excluded from any mercy or divine patience: But we are not only under the long ſuffering of his patience, but the large expreſſions of his bounty. He would not be governed by him when he was only his bountiful Creator. We refuſe to be guided by him, after he hath given us the bleſſing of Creation from his own hand, and the more obliging bleſſings of Redemption by the hand and blood of his Son.

It cannot be imagined that the Devils and the Damned ſhould ever make God their end, ſince he hath aſſured them he will not be their happineſs; and ſhut up all his perfections from their experimental notice, but thoſe of his power, to preſerve them, and his Juſtice, to puniſh them: They have no grant from God of ever having a heart to comply with his Will, or ever having the honour to be actively employed for his glory. They have ſome plea for their preſent contempt of God; not in regard of his nature, for he is infinitely amiable, excellent, and lovely, but in regard of his adminiſtration towards them. But what plea can Man have for his Practical Atheiſm, who lives by his power, is ſuſtained by his bounty, and ſolicited by his Spirit? What an ungrateful thing is it, to put off the Nature of Man for that of Devils; and diſhonour God, under mercy, as the Devils do under his wrathful anger?

2. *'Tis an ungrateful contempt of God, who cannot be injurious to us.* He cannot do us wrong, becauſe he cannot be unjuſt, *Gen. 18. 25. Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?* His nature doth as much abhor unrighteouſneſs, as love a communicative goodneſs: He never commanded any thing, but what was highly conducible to the happineſs of Man. Infinite goodneſs can no more injure Man, than it can diſhonour it ſelf: It lays out it ſelf in additions of kindneſs, and whiles we debaſe him, he continues to benefit us: And is it not an unparallel'd ingratitude to turn our backs upon an object ſo lovely, an object ſo loving in the midſt of varieties of allurements from him? God did create intellectual Creatures, Angels and Men, that he might communicate more of himſelf, and his own goodneſs, and holineſs to Man, than Creatures of a lower rank were

capable of. What do we do by rejecting him as our Rule and End, but croſs, as much as in us lies, Gods end in our Creation, and ſhut our Souls againſt the Communications of thoſe perfections he was ſo willing to beſtow? We uſe him as if he intended us the greateſt wrong, when 'tis impoſſible for him to do any to any of his Creatures.

3. *Conſider the miſery which will attend ſuch a temper if it continue predominant.* Thoſe that thruſt God away as their happineſs and end, can expect no other, but to be thruſt away by him as to any relief and compaſſion. A diſtance from God here can look for nothing, but a remoteneſs from God hereafter. When the Devil, a Creature of vaſt Endowments, would advance himſelf above God, and inſtruct Man to commit the ſame ſin, he is *Curſed above all Crea-*
*Gen.3.14. *tures* *. When we will not acknowledge him a God of all glory, we ſhall be ſeparated from him as a God of all comfort: *All they that are afar off ſhall periſh*, Pſal.73.27. This is the ſpring of all Woe. What the Prodigal ſuffered, was becauſe he would leave his Father and live of himſelf. Whoſoever is ambitious to be his own Heaven, will at laſt find his Soul to become his own Hell. As it loved all things for it ſelf, ſo it ſhall be grieved with all things for it ſelf. As it would be its own God againſt the right of God, it ſhall then be its own tormentor by the Juſtice of God.

2. Duty; *Watch againſt this Atheiſm, and be daily employed in the Mortification of it.* In every action we ſhould make the inquiry, what is the Rule I obſerve? Is it Gods Will or my own? Whether do my intentions tend, to ſet up God or *Self*? As much as we deſtroy this, we abate the power of ſin: Theſe two things are the head of the Serpent in us, which we muſt be bruiſing by the power of the Croſs. Sin is nothing elſe but a turning from God and centring in *Self*, and moſt in the inferior part of *Self*: If we bend our force againſt thoſe two, *Self-Will* and *Self-Ends*, we ſhall intercept Atheiſm at the Spring head, take away that which doth conſtitute and animate all ſin: The ſparks muſt vaniſh, if the fire be quench'd which affords them fuel. They are but two ſhort things to ask in every undertaking: Is God my *Rule* in regard of his Will? Is God my *End* in regard of his glory? All ſin lies in the neglect of theſe; all grace lies in the practice of them.

Without ſome degree of the mortification of theſe, we cannot make profitable and comfortable approaches to God. When we come with *Idols* in our hearts, we ſhall be anſwered according to the *multitude* and the
*Ezek.14. baſeneſs of them too *. What expectation of a good
v.4. look from him can we have, when we come before him with undeifying thoughts of him; a Petition in our mouths, and a Sword in our hearts, to ſtab his honour?

To this purpoſe,

1. *Be often in the views of the excellencies of God.* When we have no intercourſe with God by delightful Meditations, we begin to be eſtranged from him, and prepare our ſelves to live without God in the World. Strangeneſs is the Mother and Nurſe of diſaffection; we ſlight Men ſometimes becauſe we know them not. The very Beaſts delight in the Company of Men, when being tamed and familiar, they become acquainted with their diſpoſition. A daily converſe with God would diſcover ſo much of lovelineſs in his nature, ſo much of ſweetneſs in his ways, that our injurious thoughts of God would wear off, and we ſhould count it our honour to contemn our ſelves and magnifie him. By this means *a ſlaviſh fear*, which is both
*1 Joh.4.18 a diſhonour to God and a torment to the Soul, * and the root of Atheiſm, will be caſt out, and an ingenious fear of him wrought in the heart. Exerciſed thoughts on him would iſſue out in affections to him, which would engage our hearts to make him both our Rule and our End. This courſe would ſtifle any temptations to groſs Atheiſm, wherewith good Souls are ſometimes haunted, by confirming us more in the belief of a God; and diſcourage any attempts, to a deliberate practical Atheiſm: We are not like to eſpouſe any principle, which is confuted by the delightful converſe we daily have with him. The more we thus enter into the Preſence-Chamber of God, the more we cling about him with our affections; the more vigorous and lively will the true Notion of God grow up in us, and be able to prevent any thing which may diſhonour him and debaſe our Souls.

Let us therefore conſider him as the only happineſs: Set up the true God in our Underſtandings; poſſeſs our hearts with a deep ſenſe of his deſirable excellency above all other things. This is the main thing we are to do in order to our great buſineſs: All the directions in the World with the neglect of this, will be inſignificant Ciphers. The neglect of this is common, and is the baſis of all the miſchiefs which happen to the Souls of Men.

2. To this purpoſe, *Prize and ſtudy the Scripture.* We can have no delight in Meditation on him, unleſs we know him; and we cannot know him, but by the means of his own Revelation. When the Revelation is deſpiſed, the Revealer will be of little eſteem. Men do not throw off God from being their Rule, till they throw off Scripture from being their Guide; and God muſt needs be caſt off from being an End, when the Scripture is rejected from being a Rule. Thoſe that do not care to know his Will, that love to be ignorant of his Nature, can never be affected to his honour. Let therefore the ſubtilties of Reaſon vail to the Doctrine of Faith, and the humour of the Will to the command of the Word.

3. *Take heed of Senſual Pleaſures*; and be very watchful and cautious in the uſe of thoſe comforts God allows us. *Job* was afraid when his *Sons feaſted, that they ſhould curſe God in their hearts* *. It * Job 1.4.
was not without cauſe that the Apoſtle *Peter* joyned Sobriety with Watchfulneſs and Prayer, 1 *Pet.* 4.7. *The end of all things is at hand, be ye therefore ſober, and watch unto Prayer.* A moderate uſe of worldly comforts. Prayer is the great acknowledgment of God, and too much ſenſuality is a hindrance of this, and a ſtep to Atheiſm. *Belſhazzars lifting himſelf up againſt the Lord*, and not glorifying of God, is charged upon his Senſuality, *Dan.*5.23. Nothing is more apt to quench the Notions of God, and root out the Conſcience of him, than an addictedneſs to Senſual Pleaſures: Therefore take heed of that Snare.

4. *Take heed of Sins againſt knowledge.* The more ſins againſt knowledge are committed, the more careleſs we are, and the more careleſs we ſhall be of God and his honour. We ſhall more fear his Judicial Power; and the more we fear that, the more we ſhall diſaffect that God in whoſe hand Vengeance is, and to whom it doth belong. Atheiſm in Converſation, proceeds to Atheiſm in Affection, and that will endeavour to ſink into Atheiſm in Opinion and Judgment.

The Sum of the Whole.

And now conſider in the whole what has been ſpoken.

1. *Man would ſet himſelf up as his own Rule.* He diſowns the Rule of God, is unwilling to have any acquaintance with the Rule God ſets him, negligent in uſing the means for the knowledge of his Will, and endeavours to ſhake it off when any notices of it breaks in upon him. When he cannot expel it, he hath no pleaſure in the Conſideration of it, and the heart ſwells againſt it. When the Notions of the Will of God are entertained, it is on ſome other Conſideration, or with wavering and unſettled Affections. Many times Men deſign to improve ſome Luſt by his

his truth. This unwillingneſs reſpects Truth as 'tis moſt Spiritual and Holy; as it moſt relates and leads to God; as it is moſt contrary to *Self*. He is guilty of Contempt of the Will of God, which is ſeen in every preſumptuous breach of his Law. In the natural averſions to the Declaration of his Will and Mind which way ſoever he turns. In ſlighting that part of his Will which is moſt for his Honour. In the awkwardneſs of the Heart, when it is to pay God a ſervice. A conſtraint in the firſt engagement; ſlightneſs in the Service in regard of the matter; in regard of the frame, without a natural vigour. Many Diſtractions, much Wearineſs; in deſerting the Rule of God, when our Expectations are not anſwered upon our Service; in breaking promiſes with God.

Man naturally owns any other Rule, rather than that of God's preſcribing. The Rule of Satan, the Will of Man: In complying more with the dictates of Men than the Will of God: In obſerving that which is materially ſo, not becauſe it is his Will, but the injunctions of Men. In obeying the Will of Man, when it is contrary to the Will of God. This Man doth in order to the ſetting up himſelf. This is natural to Man as he is corrupted. Men are diſſatisfied with their own Conſciences when they contradict the deſires of *Self*. Moſt actions in the World are done, more becauſe they are agreeable to Self, than as they are honourable to God: As they are agreeable to natural and moral *Self*, or ſinful *Self*. 'Tis evident in neglects of taking God's Directions upon emergent Occaſions. In counting the Actions of others to be good or bad, as they ſuit with, or ſpurn againſt our Fancies and Humours. Man would make himſelf the Rule of God, and give Laws to his Creator: In ſtriving againſt his Law: Diſapproving of his Methods of Government in the World: In impatience in our particular concerns; envying the Gifts and Proſperity of others: Corrupt Matter or Ends of Prayer or Praiſe: Bold interpretations of the Judgments of God in the World. Mixing Rules in the Worſhip of God with thoſe which have been ordained by him. Suiting interpretations of Scripture with our own Minds and Humours. Falling off from God after ſome fair Compliances, when his Will grates upon us and croſſeth ours.

2. *Man would be his own end.* This is natural and univerſal. This is ſeen in frequent *Self* applauſes, and inward overweening Reflections. In aſcribing the glory of what we do or have to our ſelves. In deſire of ſelf-pleaſing Doctrines. In being highly concerned in injuries done to our ſelves, and little or not at all concerned for injuries done to God. In truſting in our ſelves. In working for carnal *Self* againſt the light of our own Conſciences, this is an uſurping God's Prerogative, vilifying God, deſtroying God. Man would make any thing his End or Happineſs rather than God. This appears in the fewer Thoughts we have of him than of any thing elſe. In the greedy purſuit of the World. In the ſtrong addictedneſs to ſenſual Pleaſures. In paying a ſervice upon any ſucceſs in the World to inſtruments more than to God. This is a debaſing God in ſetting up a Creature; but more in ſetting up a baſe Luſt: 'Tis a denying of God. Man would make himſelf the end of all Creatures. In Pride, uſing the Creatures contrary to the End God had appointed. This is to diſhonour God: And it is Diabolical. Man would make himſelf the end of God. In loving God, becauſe of ſome *ſelf-pleaſing* Benefits diſtributed by him. In abſtinence from ſome ſins, becauſe they are againſt the Intereſt of ſome other beloved Corruption. In performing Duties meerly for a ſelfiſh Intereſt which is evident in unwealdineſs in religious Duties where *Self* it not concern'd. In calling upon God only in a time of neceſſity. In begging his aſſiſtance to our own Projects, after we have by our own Craft laid the Plot. In impatience upon a Refuſal of our Deſires. In ſelfiſh aims we have in our Duties. This is a vilifying God, a dethroning him. In unworthy imaginations of God, univerſal in Man by Nature. Hence ſprings Idolatry, Superſtition, Preſumption, the common Diſeaſe of the World. This is a vilifying God; worſe than Idolatry, worſe than abſolute Atheiſm. Natural deſires to be diſtant from him. No deſires for the remembrance of him. No deſires of converſe with him. No deſires of a through return to him. No deſire of any cloſe imitation of him.

A DISCOURSE UPON God's being a Spirit.

John IV. 24.

God is a Spirit and they that Worſhip him, muſt Worſhip him in Spirit and in Truth.

THE Words are part of the Dialogue between our *Saviour*, and the *Samaritan* Woman. Chriſt intending to return from *Judea* to *Galilee*, paſſed thro' the Country of *Samaria*, a place inhabited not by *Jews*, but a mixt Company of ſeveral Nations, and ſome remainders of the Poſterity of *Iſrael*, who eſcaped the Captivity, and were returned from *Aſſyria*; and being weary with his Journey, arrived about the ſixth Hour or Noon (according to the *Jews* reckoning the time of the day) at a Well that *Jacob* had digged, which was of great account among the Inhabitants, for the Antiquity of it, as well as the Uſefulneſs of it, in ſupplying their Neceſſities. He being thirſty, and having none to furniſh him wherewith to draw Water, at laſt comes a Woman from the City, whom he deſires to give him *ſome Water* to drink. The *Woman* perceiving him by his Language or Habit to be a *Jew*, wonders at the queſtion ſince the hatred the *Jews* bore the *Samaritans* was ſo great, that they would not vouchſafe to have any Commerce with them, not only in Religious, but Civil Affairs and Common Offices belonging to Mankind. Hence our Saviour takes occaſion to publiſh to her the Doctrine of the Goſpel; and excuſeth her rude Anſwer by her ignorance of

Amirant. *Paraph. ſur. Jean.*

him; and tells her, that if ſhe had askt him a greater matter, even that which concerned her eternal Salvation, he would readily have granted it, notwithſtanding the rooted hatred between the *Jews* and *Samaritans*; and beſtowed a Water of a greater Vertue, *the Water of Life* *: The Woman is no leſs aſtoniſhed at his Reply, than ſhe was at his firſt demand. It was ſtrange to hear a Man ſpeak of giving living Water, to one of whom he had begg'd the Water of that Spring, and had no Veſſel to draw any to quench his own Thirſt. She therefore demands, whence he could have this Water that he ſpeaks of *, ſince ſhe conceived him not greater than *Jacob*, who had digged that Well and drunk of it. Our *Saviour* deſirous to make a progreſs in that Work he had begun, extolls the Water he ſpake of above this of the Well, from its particular verture, fully to refreſh thoſe that drank of it, and be as a cooling and comforting Fountain *within* them, of more efficacy than that *without* *. The *VWoman* conceiving a good opinion of our *Saviour*, deſires to partake of this Water, to ſave her pains in coming daily to the Well, not apprehending the Spirituality of Chriſt's Diſcourſe to her *: Chriſt finding her to take ſome pleaſure in his Diſcourſe, partly to bring her to a ſenſe of *her ſin*, before he did Communicate the excellency of *his Grace*, bids her return back to the City and bring her *Husband* with her to him *: She freely acknowledges that ſhe had *no Husband*, whether having ſome check of Conſcience at preſent for the unclean Life ſhe led, or loath to loſe ſo much time in the gaining this Water ſo much deſired by her: Our *Saviour* takes an occaſion from this to lay open her ſin before her, and to make her ſenſible of her own wicked Life, and the prophetick Excellency of himſelf; and tells her, ſhe had *had five Husbands* * to whom ſhe had been falſe, and by whom ſhe was divorced, and the Perſon ſhe now dwelt with was not her lawful Husband, and in living with him ſhe violated the Rights of Marriage, and increaſed guilt upon her Conſcience *. The *Woman* being affected with this Diſcourſe, and knowing him to be a ſtranger, that could not be certified of thoſe things, but in an extraordinary way, begins to have a high eſteem of him as a *Prophet* *. And upon this opinion ſhe eſteems him able to decide a Queſtion which had been canvaſt between them and the *Jews* about the place of Worſhip *. Their *Fathers worſhipping in that Mountain*, and the *Jews* affirming *Jeruſalem* to be a place of Worſhip: She pleads the Antiquity of the Worſhip in this place: *Abraham* having built an Altar there, *Gen.* 12. 7. And *Jacob* upon his return from *Syria*. And ſurely had the place been capable of an exception, ſuch Perſons as they, and ſo well acquainted with the Will of God, would not have pitched upon that place to celebrate their Worſhip.

Antiquity hath too too often bewitched the minds of Men, and drawn them from the revealed Will of God. Men are more willing to imitate the outward Actions of their famous Anceſtors, than conform themſelves to the revealed Will of their Creator. The *Samaritans* would imitate the *Patriarchs* in the place of Worſhip, but not in the Faith of the Worſhippers.

Chriſt anſwers her, that this Queſtion would quickly be reſolved by a new ſtate of the Church which was near at hand, and neither *Jeruſalem* which had not the precedency, nor that Mountain ſhould be of any more value in that concern than any other place in the World *: But yet to make her ſenſible of her ſin, and that of her Country-men, tells her, that their Worſhip in that Mountain was *not according to the Will of God*, he having long after the Altars built in this place, fixed *Jeruſalem* as the place of Sacrifices; beſides, they had not the knowledge of that God which ought to be worſhipped by them, but the *Jews* had the *true object of Worſhip*, and the *true manner of Worſhip, according to the declaration God had made of himſelf to them* *. But all that ſervice ſhall vaniſh, the vail of the Temple ſhall be rent in twain, and that carnal Worſhip give place to one more Spiritual; ſhadows ſhall fly before ſubſtance, and truth advance it ſelf above figures, and the worſhip of God ſhall be with the ſtrength of the Spirit; ſuch a Worſhip and ſuch Worſhippers doth the *Father ſeek* *: For *God is a Spirit, and* thoſe *that worſhip him, muſt worſhip him in Spirit and in Truth*. The deſign of our *Saviour* is to declare, that God is not taken with external Worſhip invented by Men, no nor commanded by himſelf; and that upon this reaſon, becauſe he is a *Spiritual Eſſence*, infinitely above Groſs and Corporeal Matter, and is not taken with that pomp which is a pleaſure to our earthly Imaginations.

Πνεῦμα ὁ Θεός. Some tranſlate it juſt as the Words lie: *Spirit is God* *: But it is not unuſual both in the old and new Teſtament Languages, to put the predicate before the ſubject, as Pſal. 5. 9. *Their Throat is an open Sepulchre*, in the Hebrew, *a Sepulchre open their Throat*. So Pſa. 111. 3. *His work is honourable and glorious*. Hebr. *Honour and Glory his work*. And there wants not one example in the ſame Evangeliſt, *Joh.* 1. 1. *And the Word was God*. Gr. *And God was the Word*. In all, the predicate or what is aſcribed, is put before the Subject to which it is aſcribed.

One tells us, (and he an head of a Party, that hath made a diſturbance in the Church of God) * That this place is not aptly brought to prove God to be a Spirit: And the Reaſon of Chriſt runs not thus, God is of a Spiritual Eſſence, and therefore muſt be worſhipped with a Spiritual Worſhip; for the Eſſence of God is not the Foundation of his Worſhip, but his Will; for then we were not to worſhip him with a Corporeal Worſhip, becauſe he is not a Body; but with an inviſible and eternal worſhip, becauſe he is inviſible and eternal.

But the *nature* of God is the *foundation* of worſhip, the Will of God is the Rule of worſhip; the matter and manner is to be performed according to the VVill of God. But is the nature of the object of worſhip to be excluded? No, as the object is, ſo ought our Devotion to be, Spiritual as he is Spiritual. God in his Commands for worſhip reſpected the diſcovery of his own Nature; in the Law he reſpected the diſcovery of his Mercy and Juſtice, and therefore commanded to worſhip by Sacrifices; a Spiritual Worſhip without thoſe inſtitutions would not have declared thoſe Attributes, which was God's end to diſplay to the World in Chriſt: And tho' the Nature of God is to be reſpected in worſhip, yet the obligations of the Creature are to be conſidered. God is a Spirit, therefore muſt have a ſpiritual worſhip: The Creature hath a Body as well as a Soul, and both from God; and therefore ought to worſhip God with the one as well as the other, ſince one as well as the other is freely beſtowed upon him.

The ſpirituality of God was the Foundation of the change from the Judaical Carnal Worſhip to a more Spiritual and Evangelical.

[*God is a Spirit.*]

That is, he hath noting Corporeal, no mixture of Matter, not a viſible ſubſtance, a bodily form *. He is a Spirit, not a bare Spiritual Subſtance: But an underſtanding willing Spirit, Holy, VViſe, Good and Juſt. Before Chriſt ſpake of the Father *, the firſt Perſon in the Trinity: Now he ſpeaks of God Eſſentially: The word [*Father*] is Perſonal, the word [*God*] Eſſential. So that our Saviour would render a reaſon, not from any one Perſon in the bleſſed Trinity, but from the Divine Nature, why we ſhould worſhip

* ver. 10. Or, *living water.* * ver. 11. *ver. 13, 14 * ver. 15. * ver. 16. * ver. 17. * ver. 18. * ver. 19. * ver. 20. * ver. 21. * ver. 22. * ver. 23. * *Vulgar lat. Illyrc. Clav.* * *Epiſcop. Inſtitut. l. 4. c. 3.* * *Melanct.* * ver. 23.

worſhip in Spirit, and therefore makes uſe of the word God, the being a Spirit being common to the other Perſons with the Father.

This is the reaſon of the Propoſition, *ver.*23. *Of a Spiritual Worſhip.* Every nature delights in that which is like it, and diſtaſtes that which is moſt different from it. If God were Corporeal, he might be pleaſed with the Victims of Beaſts, and the beautiful magnificence of Temples, and the noiſe of Muſick: But being a Spirit, he cannot be gratified with carnal things: He demands ſomething better and greater than all thoſe, that Soul which he made, that Soul which he hath endowed, a Spirit of a frame ſuitable to his Nature. He indeed appointed Sacrifices and a Temple, as ſhadows of thoſe things which were to be moſt acceptable to him in the *Meſſiah*, but they were impoſed only *till the time of Reformation* *. *Heb.9.10.

[*Muſt Worſhip him.*]

Not they may, or it would be more agreeable to God to have ſuch a manner of Worſhip; but they *muſt*. 'Tis not exclusive of bodily Worſhip, for this were to exclude all Publick Worſhip in Societies, which cannot be performed without reverential poſtures of the Body *. The geſtures of the Body are helps to Worſhip, and declarations of Spiritual acts. We can ſcarcely Worſhip God with our Spirits, without ſome tincture upon the outward-man. But he excludes all acts meerly Corporeal, all reſting upon an external Service and Devotion, which was the Crime of the *Phariſees*, and the general Perſwaſion of the *Jews* as well as *Heathens*, who uſed the outward Ceremonies, not as Signs of better things, but as if they did of themſelves pleaſe God, and render the Worſhippers accepted with him, without any ſuitable frame of the inward-man: * It is as if he had ſaid, now you muſt ſeparate your ſelves from all carnal modes to which the Service of God is now tied, and render a Worſhip chiefly conſiſting in the affectionate motions of the heart, and accommodated more exactly to the condition of the object, who is a Spirit. * Terniti. * Amirald. *in loc.*

[*In Spirit and Truth.*]

* The Evangelical Service now required, has the advantage of the former; that was a Shadow and Figure, this the Body and Truth *. Spirit, ſay ſome, is here oppoſed to the legal Ceremonies: Truth, to hypocritical Services; or * rather Truth is oppoſed to ſhadows, and an Opinion of worth in the outward action; 'tis principally oppoſed to external Rites, becauſe our Saviour ſaith, *v.* 23. *The hour comes, and now is*, &c. Had it been oppoſed to Hypocriſie, Chriſt had ſaid no new thing; for God always required Truth in the inward parts, and all true Worſhippers had ſerved him with a ſincere Conſcience and ſingle Heart. The old Patriarchs did worſhip God in Spirit and Truth, as taken for ſincerity: Such a Worſhip was always, and is perpetually due to God, becauſe he always was, and eternally will be a Spirit. * And it is ſaid, *the Father ſeeks ſuch to Worſhip him*; not ſhall ſeek. He always ſought it; it always was performed to him by one or other in the World: And the Prophets had always rebuked them, for reſting upon their outward Solemnities, *Iſa.* 58. 7. and *Micah* 6. 8. But a Worſhip without legal Rites was proper to an Evangelical State, and the times of the Goſpel; God having then exhibited Chriſt, and brought into the World the ſubſtance of thoſe ſhadows, and the End of thoſe Inſtitutions: There was no more need to continue them, when the true reaſon of them was ceaſed. All Laws do naturally expire, when the true reaſon, upon which they were firſt framed, is changed. * Amirald. *in loc.* * Muſcul. * Chemnit. * Muſcal.

Or by *Spirit* may be meant, ſuch a Worſhip as is kindled in the heart by the breath of the Holy Ghoſt. Since we are dead in ſin, a ſpiritual light and flame in the heart, ſuitable to the nature of the object of our Worſhip, cannot be raiſed in us without the operation of a Supernatural Grace: And tho' the Fathers could not Worſhip God without the Spirit, yet in the Goſpel-times, there being a fuller effuſion of the Spirit, the Evangelical State is called *the adminiſtration of the Spirit*, and the *newneſs of the Spirit*, in oppoſition to the legal Oeconomy, entitled the *oldneſs of the Letter* *. The Evangelical State is more ſuited to the Nature of God than any other: Such a Worſhip God muſt have, whereby he is acknowledged to be the true Sanctifier and Quickner of the Soul. The nearer God doth approach to us, and the more full his manifeſtations are, the more Spiritual is the worſhip we return to God. The Goſpel pares off the rugged parts of the Law, and Heaven ſhall remove what is material in the Goſpel, and change the Ordinances of Worſhip into that of a Spiritual Praiſe. *2 Cor.3.8. Rom.7.6.

In the words there is,

1. *A Propoſition* [*God is a Spirit.*] The Foundation of all Religion.

2. *An Inference* [*They that worſhip him*, &c.]

As God, a Worſhip belongs to him; as a Spirit, a Spiritual Worſhip is due to him: In the Inference we have,

1. *The manner of Worſhip* [*in Spirit and in Truth.*]

2. *The neceſſity of ſuch a Worſhip* [*muſt.*]

The Propoſition declares the Nature of God; the Inference, the Duty of Man.

The *Obſervations* lie plain.

Ob. 1. *God is a pure Spiritual Being.* [He is a Spirit.]

2. *The Worſhip due from the Creature to God, muſt be agreeable to the Nature of God, and purely Spiritual.*

3. *The Evangelical State is ſuited to the Nature of God.*

For the firſt,

D. *God is a pure Spiritual Being.*

'Tis the obſervation of one *, that the plain aſſertion of Gods being a Spirit is found but once in the whole Bible, and that is in this place; which may well be wondred at, becauſe God is ſo often deſcribed with hands, feet, eyes and ears, in the form and figure of a Man. The Spiritual Nature of God is deducible from many places, but not any where, as I remember, aſſerted *totidem verbis*, but in this Text. Some alledge that place, 2 *Cor.*3.17. *the Lord is that Spirit*, for the proof of it; but that ſeems to have a different ſenſe. In the Text the Nature of God is deſcribed; in that place, the operations of God in the Goſpel. [* 'Tis not the Miniſtry of *Moſes*, or that old Covenant, which communicates to you that Spirit it ſpeaks of; but it is the Lord Jeſus, and the Doctrine of the Goſpel delivered by him, whereby this Spirit and Liberty is diſpenſed to you. He oppoſes here the Liberty of the Goſpel to the Servitude of the Law]. 'Tis from Chriſt, that a Divine Vertue diffuſeth it ſelf by the Goſpel; 'tis by him, not by the Law, that we partake of that Spirit. * *Epiſcop. inſtitut.* l.4. c.3. * *Amyrald. in loc.*

* The Spirituality of God, is as evident as his Being. If we grant that God is, we muſt neceſſarily grant that he cannot be Corporeal, becauſe a Body is of an imperfect Nature. It will appear incredible to any that acknowledge God the firſt Being and Creator of all things, that he ſhould be a Maſſie heavy Body, and have Eyes and Ears, Feet and Hands, as we have. * *Suarez.* de Deo vol. 1. p.9. col.1

For the explication of it:

1. *Spirit is taken various ways in Scripture.* It ſignifies ſometimes an aerial ſubſtance, as *Pſal.*11.6. *A horrible Tempeſt*: Hebr. A *Spirit* of Tempeſt: Sometimes the breath, which is a thin ſubſtance, *Gen.* 6.17. *All Fleſh wherein is the breath of Life*: Hebr. *Spirit* of Life. A thin ſubſtance, tho' it be material and corporeal, is called *Spirit*: And in the Bodies of living Creatures, that which is the principle of their

their actions is called Spirits; the animal and vital Spirits: And the finer parts, extracted from Plants and Minerals, we call Spirits. Thoſe volatile parts ſeparated from that groſs matter wherein they were immerſt, becauſe they come neareſt to the nature of an incorporeal ſubſtance: And from this notion of the word, 'tis tranſlated to ſignifie thoſe ſubſtances that are purely immaterial, as Angels, and the Souls of Men. *Angels* are called *Spirits*, Pſal. 104.4. *Who* * Heb. 1.14. *makes his Angels Spirits* *: And not only good Angels are ſo called, but *evil Angels*, Mark 1.27. Souls of Men are called Spirits, *Eccl.* 12. And the Soul of Chriſt is called ſo, *John* 19. 30. Whence God is called *the God of the Spirits of all Fleſh*, Numb. 22.16. and Spirit is oppoſed to Fleſh, *Iſa.* 31. 3. *The Egyptians are Fleſh and not Spirit.* And our Saviour gives us the notion of a Spirit to be *ſomething above the nature of a Body*, Luke 24.39. *Not having fleſh and bones*, extended parts, loads of groſs matter. 'Tis alſo taken for thoſe things which are active and efficacious; becauſe activity is of the nature of a Spirit. *Caleb* had another *Spirit*, *Numb.* 14. 24. an active affection. The vehement motions of ſin are called *Spirit*, *Hoſ.* 4. 12. *The Spirit of Whoredoms*, in that ſenſe that *Prov.* 29.11. *A fool utters all his mind*, all his *ſpirit*, he knows not how to reſtrain the vehement motions of his mind. So that the Notion of a Spirit is, that it is a fine immaterial Subſtance, and active Being, that acts it ſelf and other things. A meer Body cannot act it ſelf; as the Body of Man cannot move without the Soul, no more than a Ship can move it ſelf without Wind and Waves.

So God is called a Spirit, as being not a Body, not having the greatneſs, figure, thickneſs or length of a Body, wholly ſeparate from any thing of fleſh and matter. We find a Principle within us, nobler than that of our Bodies; and therefore we conceive the Nature of God, according to that which is more worthy in us, and not according to that which is the vileſt part of our Natures. God is a moſt *Spiritual* * Gerhard. μονοτερῶς *Spirit*, more Spiritual than all Angels, all Souls *: As he exceeds all in the Nature of Being, ſo he exceeds all in the Nature of Spirit: He hath nothing groſs, heavy, material in his Eſſence.

2. *When we ſay God is a Spirit, 'tis to be underſtood by way of Negation.* There are *two ways* of knowing or deſcribing God: By way of *affirmation*, affirming that of him in a way of eminency, which is excellent in the Creature; as when we ſay God is wiſe, good: The other, by way of *negation*, when we remove from God in our conceptions, what is tainted with imperfection in the Creature. * The *firſt aſcribes* * *Gamacheus*, Tom. 1. q. 3. Cap. 1. p. 42. *to him whatſoever is excellent*; the *other* ſeparates from him whatſoever is *imperfect*. The firſt is like a Limning, which adds one Colour to another to make a comely Picture; the other is like a Carving, which pares and cuts away whatſoever is ſuperfluous, to make a compleat Statue. This way of *negation* is more eaſie; we better underſtand *what God is not*, than *what he is*; and moſt of our knowledge of God is by this way: As when we ſay God is infinite, immenſe, immutable, they are negatives: He hath no limits, is confined to no place, admits of no change *. * *Coccei. ſum. Theol. cap.* 8. When we remove from him what is inconſiſtent with his Being, we do more ſtrongly aſſert his Being, and know more of him when we elevate him above all, and above our own capacity. And when we ſay God is a Spirit, 'tis a negation, he is not a Body; he conſiſts not of various parts, extended one without and beyond another: He is not a Spirit ſo as our Souls are, to be the form of any Body: A *Spirit*, *not as Angels and Souls are*, but infinitely higher; we call him ſo, becauſe in regard of our weakneſs, we have not any other term of excellency to expreſs or conceive of him by: We transfer it to God in honour, becauſe *Spirit* is the higheſt excellency in our nature: Yet we muſt apprehend God above any Spirit, ſince his Nature is ſo great, that he cannot be declared by Humane Speech, perceived by Humane Senſe, or conceived by Humane Underſtanding.

The ſecond thing, *That God is a Spirit.*

* Some among the *Heathens* imagined God to have a Body; ſome thought him to have a Body of Air, ſome a Heavenly Body, ſome a Humane Body: * And many of them aſcribed Bodies to their Gods, but Bodies without blood, without corruption; Bodies made up of the fineſt and thinneſt Atomes; ſuch Bodies, which if compared with ours, were as no Bodies. The *Sadduces* alſo, who denied all Spirits, and yet acknowledged a God, muſt conclude him to be a Body and no Spirit. Some among Chriſtians have been of that opinion. *Tertullian* is charged by ſome, and excuſed by others: And ſome Monks of *Egypt* were ſo fierce for this Error, that they attempted to kill one *Theophilus* a Biſhop, for not being of that Judgment.

* Theſ. Sedan. *part* 2. *p.* 1000. * *Voſſius* Idolol. *lib.* 2. *cap.* 1. *Forbes* Inſtrument, *l.* 1. *c.* 36.

But the *wiſer Heathens* were of another mind, and eſteemed it an *unholy thing* to have ſuch imaginations of God. And ſome Chriſtians have thought God only to be free from any thing of Body, becauſe he is omnipreſent, immutable, he is only incorporeal and ſpiritual; all things elſe, even the *Angels* are clothed with Bodies, tho' of a neater matter, and a more active frame than ours; a pure Spiritual Nature they allowed to no Being but God. Scripture and Reaſon meet together to aſſert the Spirituality of God. Had God had the Lineaments of a Body, the *Gentiles* had not fallen under that accuſation of *changing his Glory into that of a Corruptible Man* *.

'Ουκ ὄγκον. *Plutarch* incorporalis ratio divinus ſpiritus *Seneca*

* Rom. 1.23

This is ſignified by the Name God gives himſelf, *Exod.* 3. 14. *I am that I am*, a ſimple, pure, uncompounded Being, without any created mixture; as infinitely above the being of Creatures, as above the conceptions of Creatures, *Job* 37. 23. *Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out.* He is ſo much a *Spirit*, that he is the *Father of Spirits*, Heb. 12. 9. The Almighty Father is not of a Nature inferior to his Children: The Soul is a Spirit, it could not elſe exert actions without the aſſiſtance of the Body, as the act of Underſtanding it ſelf, and its own nature, the act of willing, and willing things againſt the incitements and intereſt of the Body: It could not elſe conceive of God, Angels and immaterial Subſtances. It could not elſe be ſo active, as with one glance to fetch a compaſs from Earth to Heaven, and by a ſudden motion, to elevate the Underſtanding from an earthly thought, to the thinking of things as high as the higheſt Heavens. If we have this opinion of our Souls, which in the nobleneſs of their acts ſurmount the Body, without which the Body is but a dull unactive piece of clay, we muſt needs have a higher conception of God, than to clog him with any matter, though of a finer temper than ours: We muſt conceive of him by the perfections of our Souls, without the vileneſs of our Bodies. If God made Man according to his Image, we muſt raiſe our thoughts of God according to the nobleſt part of that Image, and imagine the Exemplar or Copy, not to come ſhort, but to exceed the thing copied by it. God were not the moſt excellent Subſtance, if he were not a Spirit: Spiritual Subſtances are more excellent than Bodily; the Soul of Man more excellent than other Animals; Angels more excellent than Men: They contain in their own nature, whatſoever dignity there is in the inferior Creatures. God muſt have therefore an excellency above all thoſe, and therefore is intirely remote from the conditions of a Body.

* 'Tis a groſs conceit therefore to think that God is ſuch a Spirit as the Air is; for that is to be a

* *Calov.* Socin. Proſlig. p. 129, 130.

a Body as the Air is, tho' it be a thin one; and if God were no more a Spirit than that, or than Angels, he would not be the moſt ſimple Being *: Yet ſome think that the ſpiritual Deity was repreſented by the Air in the Ark of the Teſtament. It was unlawful to repreſent him by any Image, that God had prohibited: Every thing about the Ark had a particular ſignification: The Gold and other Ornaments about it ſignified ſomething of Chriſt, but were unfit to repreſent the Nature of God: A thing purely inviſible and falling under nothing of ſenſe, could not repreſent him to the mind of Man: The Air in the Ark was the fitteſt, it repreſented the inviſibility of God, Air being imperceptible to our Eyes. Air diffuſeth it ſelf through all parts of the World, it glides through ſecret paſſages into all Creatures, it fills the ſpace between Heaven and Earth; there is no place wherein God is not preſent.

* *Amyrald.* Sup. Heb. 9. p. 146, &c.

To evidence this,

1. *If God were not a Spirit, he could not be Creator.* All multitude begins in, and is reduced to unity. As above multitude, there is an abſolute unity; ſo above mixt Creatures, there is an abſolute ſimplicity: You cannot conceive number without conceiving the beginning of it in that which was not numbred, *viz.* a unite: You cannot conceive any mixture, but you muſt conceive ſome ſimple thing to be the Original and Baſis of it. The Works of Art, done by rational Creatures, have their Foundation in ſomething Spiritual. Every *Artificer*, Watch-maker, Carpenter hath a model in his own Mind of the work he deſigns to frame: The material and outward Fabrick is ſquared according to an inward and *Spiritual Idea*. A Spiritual Idea ſpeaks a Spiritual Faculty as the Subject of it. God could not have an Idea of that vaſt number of Creatures he brought into Being, if he had not a Spiritual Nature *. The wiſdom whereby the World was created could never be the fruit of a Corporeal Nature; ſuch Natures are not capable of underſtanding and comprehending the things which are within the compaſs of their Nature, much leſs of producing them: And therefore Beaſts which have only Corporeal Faculties, move to objects by the force of their Senſe, and have no knowledge of things as they are comprehended by the Underſtanding of Man. All acts of wiſdom ſpeak an intelligent and Spiritual Agent: The effects of Wiſdom, Goodneſs, Power are ſo great and admirable, that they beſpeak him a more perfect and eminent Being, than can poſſibly be beheld under a bodily ſhape. Can a Corporeal Subſtance put *Wiſdom in the inward parts and give Underſtanding to the Heart* *?

* Amyral. *moral. Tom.* 1. *p.* 282.

* Job 38. 16.

2. *If God were not a pure Spirit, he could not be one.* If God had a body conſiſting of diſtinct Members, as ours; or all of one Nature, as the VVater and Air are, yet he were then capable of Diviſion, and therefore could not be entirely one. Either thoſe parts would be finite or infinite; if finite, they are not parts of God; for to be God and Finite is a contradiction: If infinite, then there are as many infinites as diſtinct Members, and therefore as many Deities: Suppoſe this Body had all parts of the ſame Nature as Air and VVater hath, every little part of Air is as much Air as the greateſt, and every little part of VVater is as much VVater as the Ocean; ſo every little part of God would be as much God as the whole; as many particular Deities to make up God, as little Atomes to compoſe a Body: VVhat can be more abſurd? If God had a Body like a humane Body, and were compounded of Body and Soul, of Subſtance and Quality, he could not be the moſt perfect Unity; he would be made up of diſtinct Parts, and thoſe of a diſtinct Nature, as the Members of a humane Body are: VVhere there is the greateſt *unity*, there muſt be the greateſt *ſimplicity*; but God is one: As he is free from any change, ſo he is void of any multitude, *Deut.* 6. 4. *The Lord our God is one Lord.*

3. *If God had a Body as we have, he would not be inviſible.* Every material thing is not viſible: The Air is a Body yet inviſible, but it is ſenſible; the cooling Quality of it is felt by us at every Breath, and we know it by our touch, which is the moſt material Senſe. Every Body, that hath Members like to Bodies, is viſible: But God is inviſible *. The Apoſtle reckons it amongſt his other Perfections, 1 *Tim.* 1. 17. *Now unto the King Eternal, Immortal, Inviſible*: He is inviſible to our Senſe, which beholds nothing but material and coloured things; and incomprehenſible to our underſtanding that conceives nothing but what is finite. God is therefore a Spirit uncapable of being ſeen, and infinitely uncapable of being underſtood. If he be Inviſible he is alſo Spiritual. If he had a Body, and hid it from our eyes, he might be ſaid not to be ſeen, but could not be ſaid to be inviſible. VVhen we ſay a thing is viſible, we underſtand that it hath ſuch Qualities which are the object of Senſe, tho' we may never ſee that, which in its own nature is to be ſeen. God hath no ſuch Qualities as fall under the preception of our Senſe. His VVorks are viſible to us, but not his *God-head* *. The Nature of a humane Body is to be ſeen and handled; Chriſt gives us ſuch a deſcription of it, *Luke* 24. 39. *Handle me and ſee, for a Spirit hath not Fleſh and Bones as you ſee me have*: But Man hath been ſo far from ſeeing God, *that it is impoſſible he can ſee him*, 1 Tim. 6. 16. There is ſuch a diſproportion between an infinite object and a finite ſenſe and underſtanding, that it is utterly impoſſible either to behold or comprehend him. But if God had a body more luminous and glorious than that of the Sun, he would be as well viſible to us as the Sun, tho' the immenſity of that light would dazle our eyes, and forbid any cloſe Inſpection into him by the vertue of our Senſe: VVe have ſeen the ſhape and figure of the Sun, but *no Man hath ever ſeen the ſhape of God* *. If God had a Body he were viſible, tho' he might not perfectly and fully be ſeen by us *. As we ſee the Heavens, tho' we ſee not the extenſion, latitude and greatneſs of them. Tho' God hath manifeſted himſelf in a bodily ſhape, *Gen.* 18. 1. *And elſewhere* Jehovah *appear'd to* Abraham: Yet the Subſtance of God was not ſeen, no more than the Subſtance of Angels was ſeen in their Apparitions to Men. A Body was formed to be made viſible by them, and ſuch actions done in that Body, that ſpake the Perſon that did them to be of a higher eminency than a bare Corporeal Creature: Sometimes a Repreſentation is made to the inward ſenſe and imagination, as to *Michaiah* *, and to *Iſaiah*, Chap. 6. v. 1. But they ſaw not the eſſence of God, but ſome Images and Figures of him proportioned to their Senſe or Imagination. *The eſſence of God no Man ever ſaw*, nor can ſee, *John* 1. 18.

* Daille. *in Tim.*

* Rom. 1. 20.

* Joh. 5. 37.

* Goulart. *de Dieu.* p. 94.

* 1 Kings 22. 19.

* Nor doth it follow, that God hath a Body, becauſe *Jacob* is ſaid to *ſee God face to face*, Gen. 32. 30. And *Moſes* had the like Priviledge, *Deut.* 34. 10. This only ſignifies a fuller and clearer manifeſtation of God, by ſome Repreſentations offered to the bodily Senſe, or rather to the *inward Spirit*: For God tells *Moſes, he could not ſee his Face*, Exod. 33. 20. and *that none ever ſaw the ſimilitude of God*, Deut. 4. 15. VVere God a Corporeal Subſtance, he might in ſome meaſure be ſeen by Corporeal Eyes.

* Goulart *de Dieu.* p. 95, 96.

4. *If God were not a Spirit, he could not be infinite.* All *Bodies* are of a finite Nature: Every Body is material, and every material thing is terminated. The Sun, a vaſt Body, hath a bounded greatneſs: The Heavens of a mighty bulk, yet have their

their limits. If God had a Body he muſt conſiſt of Parts, thoſe Parts would be bounded and limited, and whatſoever is limited is of a finite vertue, and therefore below an infinite nature. Reaſon therefore tells us, that the moſt excellent nature, as God is, cannot be of a Corporeal condition, becauſe of the limitation, and other actions which belong to every body. God is infinite, *for the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain him*, 2 Chron. 2. 6. The largeſt Heavens, and thoſe imaginary ſpaces beyond the World, are no bounds to him. He hath an eſſence beyond the bounds of the World, and cannot be included in the vaſtneſs of the Heavens. If God be infinite, then he can have no Parts in him; if he had, they muſt be finite, or infinite: Finite Parts can never make up an infinite Being. A Veſſel of Gold of a pound weight, cannot be made of the quantity of an Ounce. Infinite Parts they cannot be, becauſe then every Part would be equal to the whole, as infinite as the whole, which is contradictory. We ſee in all things every part is leſs than the whole bulk that is compoſed of it; as every Member of a Man is leſs than the whole body of Man. If all the Parts were finite, then God in his Eſſence were finite; and a finite God is not more excellent than a Creature: So that if God were not a Spirit, he could not be infinite.

5. *If God were not a Spirit, he could not be an independent Being.* Whatſoever is compounded of many Parts, depends either eſſentially or integrally upon thoſe Parts; as the eſſence of a Man depends upon the conjunction and union of his two main Parts, his Soul and Body; when they are ſeparated the eſſence of a Man ceaſeth; and the perfection of a Man depends upon every Member of the Body; So that if one be wanting, the perfection of the whole is wanting. As if a Man hath loſt a limb, you call him not a perfect Man, becauſe that Part is gone upon which his perfection, as an intire Man, did depend. If God therefore had a Body, the perfection of the Deity would depend upon every Part of that Body; and the more Parts he were compounded of, the more his dependency would be multiplied according to the number of thoſe Parts of the Body: For that which is compounded of many Parts, is more dependent than that which is compounded of fewer.

And becauſe God would be a dependent Being if he had a Body, he could not be the firſt Being, for the compounding Parts are in order of Nature before that which is compounded by them; as the Soul and Body are before the Man which reſults from the union of them. If God had Parts and Bodily Members as we have, or any compoſition, the Eſſence of God would reſult from thoſe Parts, and thoſe Parts be ſuppoſed to be before God. For that which is a Part, is before that whoſe Part it is, as in Artificial things you may conceive it: All the Parts of a Watch or Clock, are in time before that Watch which is made by ſetting thoſe Parts together. In natural things, you muſt ſuppoſe the Members of a Body framed, before you can call it a Man: So that the Parts of this Body are before that which is conſtituted by them. We can conceive no other of God, if he were not a pure, intire, unmixed Spirit: If he had diſtinct Parts he would depend upon them, thoſe Parts would be before him, his Eſſence would be the effect of thoſe diſtinct Parts, and ſo he would not be abſolutely and intirely the firſt Being: But he is ſo, *Iſa.* 44. 6. *I am the firſt and I am the laſt.* He is the firſt; nothing is before him. Whereas if he had bodily Parts, and thoſe finite, it would follow, God is made up of thoſe Parts which are not God; and that which is not God, is in order of Nature before that which is God: So that we ſee, if God were not a Spirit, he could not be independent.

6. *If God were not a Spirit, he were not immutable and unchangeable.* His immutability depends upon his ſimplicity. He is unchangeable in his Eſſence, becauſe he is a pure and unmixed Spiritual Being. Whatſoever is compounded of Parts, may be divided into thoſe Parts, and reſolved into thoſe diſtinct Parts which make up and conſtitute the Nature. Whatſoever is compounded, is changeable in its own Nature, tho' it ſhould never be changed. *Adam*, who was conſtituted of Body and Soul, had he ſtood in Innocence, had not died; there had been no ſeparation made between his Soul and Body whereof he was conſtituted, and his Body had not reſolved into thoſe Principles of Duſt from whence it was extracted. Yet in his own Nature, he was diſſoluble into thoſe diſtinct Parts whereof he was compounded: And ſo the glorified Saints in Heaven, after the Reſurrection, and the happy meeting of their Souls and Bodies in a new Marriage knot, ſhall never be diſſolved; yet in their own Nature they are mutable and diſſoluble, and cannot be otherwiſe, becauſe they are made up of ſuch diſtinct Parts that may be ſeparated in their own Nature, unleſs ſuſtained by the grace of God: They are immutable by Will, the Will of God, not by Nature. God is immutable by Nature as well as Will: As he hath a neceſſary Exiſtence, ſo he hath a neceſſary Unchangeableneſs, *Mal.* 3. 6. *I the Lord change not.* He is as unchangeable in his Eſſence, as in his Veracity and Faithfulneſs: They are perfections belonging to his Nature. But if he were not a pure Spirit, he could not be immutable by Nature.

7. *If God were not a pure Spirit, he could not be Omnipreſent. He is in Heaven above, and the Earth below* *: *He fills Heaven and Earth* *. The Divine Eſſence is at once in Heaven and Earth; but it is impoſſible a Body can be in two places at one and the ſame time. Since God is every where, he muſt be Spiritual. Had he a Body, he could not penetrate all things; he would be circumſcribed in place. He could not be everywhere but in parts, not in the whole; one Member in one place, and another in another; for to be confined to a particular place, is the property of a Body: But ſince he is diffuſed *through the whole World, higher than Heaven, deeper than Hell, longer than the Earth, broader than the Sea* *, he hath not any corporeal matter. If he had a Body wherewith to fill Heaven and Earth, there could be no Body beſides his own: 'Tis the Nature of Bodies to bound one another, and hinder the extending of one another. Two Bodies cannot be in the ſame place in the ſame point of Earth, one excludes the other: And it will follow hence, that we are nothing, no ſubſtances, meer illuſions; there could be no place for any body elſe *. If his Body were as big as the World, as it muſt be, if with that he filled Heaven and Earth, there would not be room for him to move a hand or a foot, or extend a finger, for there would be no place remaining for the motion.

* Deut. 4. 39
* Jer. 23. 24
* Job 11. 8.
* *Gamacheus*, Theol. Tom. 1. Queſt. 3. c. 3.

8. *If God were not a Spirit, he could not be the moſt perfect Being.* The more perfect any thing is in the rank of Creatures, the more ſpiritual and ſimple it is, as Gold is the more pure and perfect that hath leaſt mixture of other Metals. If God were not a Spirit, there would be Creatures of a more excellent Nature than God; as Angels and Souls, which the Scripture calls Spirits, in oppoſition to Bodies. There is more of perfection in the firſt Notion of a Spirit, than in the Notion of a Body. God cannot be leſs perfect than his Creatures, and contribute an excellency of being to them which he wants himſelf. If Angels and Souls poſſeſs ſuch an excellency, and God want that excellency, he would be leſs than his Creatures, and excellency of the Effect would exceed the excellency of the Cauſe. But every Creature, even the higheſt Creature, is infinitely ſhort of the perfection of God; for whatſoever excellency they have, is finite and limied; 'tis but a ſpark from the Sun, a drop from the Ocean; but

but God is unboundedly perfect in the highest manner, without any limitation; and therefore above Spirits, Angels, the highest Creatures that were made by him: An infinite sublimity, a pure act, to which nothing can be added, from which nothing can be taken.

*1 Joh. 1. 5 *In him there is light and no darkness* *, spirituality without any matter, perfection without any shadow or taint of imperfection: Light pierceth into all things, preserves its own purity, and admits of no mixture of any thing else with it.

Quest. It may be said, *If God be a Spirit, and it is impossible he can be otherwise then a Spirit; how comes God so often to have such Members as we have in our Bodies, ascribed to him*; not only a Soul, but particularly bodily parts; as *heart, arms, hands, eyes, ears, face* and *back-parts*? And how is it that he is never called a *Spirit* in plain words, but in this Text by our Saviour?

Ans. 'Tis true, *many parts* of the Body, and natural affections of the human nature, are reported of God in *Scripture*. *Head*, * *Eyes* and *Eye-lids*, * *Apple* of the *Eye*, *Mouth*, &c. our *Affections* also, *Grief*, *Joy*, *Anger*, &c. But it is to be considered,

* Dan. 7. 9. *Psal. 11. 4.

* *Loquitur lex secund. ling. filiorum hominum*, was the *H.* saying.

1. *That this is in condescension to our weakness.* God being desirous to make himself known to Man, whom he created for his Glory, humbles as it were his own Nature to such representations, as may suite and assist the capacity of the Creature: Since by the condition of our nature nothing erects a notion of it self in our understanding, but as it is conducted in by our sense. God hath served himself of those things which are most exposed to our sense, most obvious to our understandings, to give us some acquaintance with his own Nature, and those things which otherwise we were not capable of having any notion of. As our Souls are linkt with our Bodies, so our knowledge is linkt with our sense; that we can scarce imagine any thing at first but under a corporeal form and figure, till we come by great attention to the Object, to make by the help of reason, a separation of the spiritual substance from the corporeal fancy, and consider it in its own nature. We are not able to conceive a Spirit, without some kind of resemblance to something below it; nor understand the actions of a Spirit, without considering the operations of a human Body in its several Members. As the Glories of another Life are signified to us by the pleasures of this; so the Nature of God, by a gracious condescension to our capacities, is signified to us by a likeness to our own. The more familiar the things are to us which God uses to this purpose, the more proper they are to teach us what he intends by them.

Ans. 2. *All such representations are to signifie the acts of God, as they bear some likeness to those, which we perform by those members he ascribes to himself.* So that those members ascribed to him, rather note his visible operations to us, than his invisible Nature; and signifie that God doth some works like to those which men do, by the assistance of those Organs of their Bodies *. So the wisdom of God is called his Eye, because he knows that with his mind, which we see with our eyes. The efficiency of God is called his Hand and Arm; because as we act with our hands, so doth God with his Power. The Divine Efficacies are signified: By his eyes and ears, we understand his Omniscience; by his face, the manifestation of his Favour; by his mouth, the revelation of his Will; by his nostrils, the acceptation of our Prayers; by his bowels, the tenderness of his Compassion; by his heart, the sincerity of his Affections; by his hand, the strength of his Power; by his feet, the ubiquity of his Presence. And in this, he intends instruction and comfort: By his *Eyes*, he signifies *his watchfulness over us*: By his *Ears*, *his readiness to hear the cryes of the oppressed**: By his *Arm*, his *Power*; an Arm to destroy his Enemies, and an Arm to relieve his People *. All those attributed to God to signifie Divine actions, which he doth without bodily Organs, as we do with them.

* *Amyral.* de Trin. p. 218, 219.

* Psal. 34. v. 15.

* Isa. 51. 9.

3. Consider also, *That only those members which are the instruments of the noblest actions, and under that consideration, are used by him to represent a notion of him to our minds.* Whatsoever is perfect and excellent, is ascribed to him, but nothing that savours of imperfection *. The heart is ascribed to him, it being the principle of vital actions, to signifie the Life that he hath in himself: Watchful and discerning eyes, not sleepy and lazy ones: A mouth to reveal his Will, not to take in food. To eat and sleep are never ascribed to him; nor those parts that belong to the preparing or transmitting nourishment to the several parts of the body, as stomach, liver, reins, nor bowels, under that consideration, but as they are significant of compassion; but only those parts are ascribed to him whereby we acquire knowledge, as eyes and ears, the Organs of learning and wisdom: Or to communicate it to others, as the mouth, lips, tongue, as they are Instruments of speaking, not of tasting: Or those parts which signifie strength and power, or whereby we perform the actions of Charity for the relief of others: Taste, and touch, senses that extend no further than to corporeal things, and are the grossest of all the senses, are never ascribed to him.

* *Episcop. instit. l. 4. § 3 c. 3.*

* It were worth consideration, *whether this describing God by the Members of an human Body, were so much figuratively to be understood, as with respect to the Incarnation of our Saviour, who was to assume the human Nature, and all the Members of a human body?*

* *'Tis Zanchie's observation Tom. 2. de natura Dei, l. 1. c. 4. Thes. 9.*

Asaph speaking in the person of God, *Psal.* 78. 1. *I will open my mouth in Parables*: In regard of *God* it is to be understood figuratively, but in regard of *Christ* literally, *to whom it is applied*, *Mat.* 13. 34, 35. And that Apparition, *Isa.* 6. which was the appearance of *Jehovah*, is applied to *Christ*, *Joh.* 12. 40, 41.

* After the report of the Creation, and the forming of Man, we read of God's speaking to him, but not of God's appearing to him in any visible shape: A voice might be formed in the Air to give Man notice of his duty; some way of information he must have, what positive Laws he was to observe, besides that Law which was engraven in his Nature, which we call the Law of Nature: And without a voice the knowledge of the Divine Will could not be so conveniently communicated to Man: Tho' God was heard in a voice, he was not seen in a shape: But after the Fall we several times read of his appearing in such a form. Tho' we read of his *speaking* before Mans committing of sin, yet not of his *walking*, which is more corporeal, till afterwards *: [Tho' God would not have Man believe him to be corporeal, yet he judged it expedient to give some prenotices of that Divine Incarnation which he had promised.]

* *Amyrald. Moral. Tom. 1. pa. 293, 294.*

* Gen. 3. 8.

* Amyrald.

5. *Therefore we must not conceive of the visible Deity according to the letter of such expressions, but the true intent of them.* Tho' the *Scripture* speaks of his *eyes* and *arms*, yet it denies them to be *arms* of *flesh*. We must not conceive of God according to the Letter, but the design of the *Metaphor*. When we hear things described by Metaphorical expressions for the clearing them up to our fancy, we conceive not of them under that garb, but remove the vail by an act of our reason: When *Christ* is called a *Sun*, a *Vine*, *Bread*, is any so stupid as to conceive him to be a Vine with material Branches and Clusters; or be of the same nature with a Loaf? But the things designed by such *Metaphors* are obvious to the conception of a mean understanding. If we would conceive God to have a body like a man, because he describes himself so, we may conceit him to be like a Bird, because he is mentioned with *wings* *; or like a *Lion* or *Leopard*,

* Job 10. 4. 2 Chron. 32. 8.

* Psal. 36. 7.

pard, becauſe he likens himſelf to them in the Acts of his ſtrength and *fury* *. He is called a *rock*, a *horn*, *fire*, to note his ſtrength and wrath: If any be ſo ſtupid as to think God to be really ſuch, they would make him not only a Man, but worſe than a Monſter.

* Hoſ. 13. 7, 8.

* Maimon. *More Nevoc. par. 1. cap. 27.*

* *Onkelos*, the *Chalde Paraphraſt* upon parts of the Scripture, was ſo tender of expreſſing the notion of any Corporiety in God, that when he meets with any expreſſions of that nature, he tranſlates them according to the true intent of them; as when God is ſaid to *deſcend*, *Gen.* 11. 5. which implies a local motion, a motion from one place to another, he tranſlates it, *and God revealed himſelf*. We ſhould conceive of God according to the deſign of the expreſſions: When we read of his eyes, we ſhould conceive his Omniſcience; of his hand, his power; of his ſitting, his immutability; of his Throne, his Majeſty; and conceive of him as ſurmounting, not only the groſsneſs of bodies, but the Spiritual excellency of the moſt dignified Creatures; ſomething ſo perfect, great, ſpiritual, as nothing can be conceived higher and purer.

* Mores conjectura kabbaliſtica, *p.* 127.

* Chriſt, ſaith one, is truly *Deus figuratus*; and for his ſake, was it more eaſily permitted to the *Jews* to think of God in the ſhape of a Man.

Uſe. *If God be a pure Spiritual Being*, then

1. *Man is not the Image of God, according to his external bodily form and figure.* The Image of God in Man conſiſted not in what is ſeen, but in what is not ſeen; not in the conformation of the members, but rather in the Spiritual faculties of the Soul; or moſt of all in the holy endowments of thoſe faculties, *Eph.* 4. 24. *That ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteouſneſs and true holineſs* *. The Image which is reſtored by redeeming grace, was the Image of God by Original Nature. The Image of God cannot be in that part which is common to us with Beaſts, but rather in that wherein we excel all living Creatures, in reaſon, underſtanding, and an immortal Spirit. God expreſly ſaith, that none *ſaw a ſimilitude* of him, *Deut.* 4 15, 16. which had not been true, if Man in regard of his body had been the Image and Similitude of God; for then a figure of God had been ſeen every day, as often as we ſaw a Man, or beheld our ſelves. Nor would the *Apoſtles* argument ſtand good, *Acts* 17. 29. *That the Godhead is not like to ſtone graven by Art*, if we were not the off-ſpring of God, and bore the ſtamp of his Nature in our Spirits rather than our Bodies *. It was a fancy of *Eugubinus*, that when God ſet upon the actual Creation of Man, he took a bodily form for an Exemplar of that which he would expreſs in his work, and therefore that the words of *Moſes* * are to be underſtood of the body of Man; becauſe there was in Man ſuch a ſhape which God had then aſſumed. To let alone Gods forming himſelf a body for that work as a groundleſs fancy; Man can in no wiſe be ſaid to be the Image of God, in regard of the ſubſtance of his body; but Beaſts may as well be ſaid to be made in the Image of God, whoſe bodies have the ſame Members as the body of Man for the moſt part, and excel Men in the acuteneſs of the ſenſes and ſwiftneſs of their motion, agility of body, greatneſs of ſtrength, aud in ſome kind of ingenuities alſo, wherein Man hath been a Scholar to the Brutes, and beholden to their skill. The Soul comes neareſt the Nature of God, as being a Spiritual ſubſtance; yet conſidered ſingly in regard of its Spiritual ſubſtance, cannot well be ſaid to be the Image of God: A Beaſt, becauſe of its Corporiety, may as well be called the Image of a Man; for there is a greater ſimilitude between Man and a Brute in the rank of Bodies, than there can be between God and the higheſt Angels, in the rank of Spirits. If it doth not conſiſt in the ſubſtance of the Soul, much leſs can it in any ſimilitude of the body. This Image conſiſted partly in the ſtate of Man, as he had dominion over the Creatures; partly in the Nature of Man, as he was an intelligent Being, and thereby was capable of having a grant of that Dominion; but principally in the conformity of the Soul with God in the frame of his Spirit, and the holineſs of his actions. Not at all in the figure and form of his body Phyſically, tho' morally there might be, as there was a rectitude in the body, as an inſtrument to conform to the holy motions of the Soul, as the holineſs of the Soul ſparkled in the actions and members of the body. If Man were like God, becauſe he hath a body, whatſoever hath a body, hath ſome reſemblance to God, and may be ſaid to be in part his Image: But the truth is, the eſſence of all Creatures cannot be an Image of the Immenſe Eſſence of God.

* Col. 3. 10

* Petav. *Theol. Dog. Tom.* 1. *l.* 2. *c.* 1. *p.* 104.

* Gen. 1. 26

2. If God be a pure Spirit; *'Tis unreaſonable to frame any Image or Picture of God* †. Some Heathens have been wiſer in this than ſome Chriſtians: *Pythagoras* forbad his Scholars to engrave any ſhape of him upon a Ring, becauſe he was not to be comprehended by ſenſe, but conceived only in our minds; our hands are as unable to faſhion him, as our eyes to ſee him *. The antient *Romans* worſhipped their Gods 170 years before any material repreſentations of them *; and the antient Idolatrous *Germans* thought it a wicked thing to repreſent God in a human ſhape. Yet ſome, and thoſe no *Romaniſts*, labour to defend the making Images of God in the reſemblance of Man; becauſe he is ſo repreſented in Scripture, he may be, * ſaith one conceived ſo in our minds, and figured ſo to our ſenſe. If this were a good reaſon, why may he not be pictured as a Lion, Horn, Eagle, Rock, ſince he is under ſuch *Metaphors* ſhadowed to us? The ſame ground there is for the one as for the other: What tho' Man be a nobler Creature, God hath no more the body of a Man, than that of an Eagle; & ſome perfections in other Creatures repreſent ſome excellencies in his nature and actions, which cannot be figur'd by a human ſhape, as ſtrength by the Lion, ſwiftneſs and readineſs by the wings of the Bird. But God hath abſolutely prohibited the making *any Image* whatſoever of him, and that with terrible threatnings, *Exod.* 20. 5. *I the Lord am a jealous God, viſiting the iniquities of the Fathers upon their Children*; and *Deut.* 5. 8, 9. After God had given the *Iſraelites* the Commandment, wherein he forbad them to have any other Gods before him, he forbids all figuring of him by the hand of Man; not only Images, but any likeneſs of him either by things in Heaven, in the Earth, or in the Water. How often doth he diſcover his indignation by the Prophets, againſt them that offer to mould him in a Creature form? This Law was not to ſerve a particular diſpenſation, or to endure a particular time, but it was a declaration of his Will, invariable in all places and all times; being founded upon the immutable nature of his Being, and therefore agreeable to the Law of nature; otherwiſe not chargeable upon the Heathens. And therefore when God had declared his Nature and his Works in a ſtately and majeſtick eloquence, he demands of them, *To whom they would liken him, or what likeneſs they would compare unto him? Iſa.* 40, 18: Where they could find any thing that would be a lively image and reſemblance of his infinite excellency? Founding it upon the infiniteneſs of his Nature, which neceſſarily implies the ſpirituality of it. God is infinitely above any Statue; and thoſe that think to draw God by a ſtroke of a Penſil, or form him by the engravings of Art, are more ſtupid than the Statues themſelves.

† Jamblyc. *protrept. c.* 21. *Symb.* 24.

* Auſtin *de Civitat. Dei, l.* 4. *c.* 31. *out of* Varro.

* Tacitus.

* Gerhard *loc. Comun. vol.* 4. *Exegeſis de natura Dei, cap.* 8. § 1.

To ſhew the unreaſonableneſs of it; conſider,

1. *'Tis impoſſible to faſhion any Image of God.* If our more capacious Souls cannot graſp his Nature, our weaker ſenſe cannot frame his Image: 'Tis more poſſible of the two, to comprehend him in our minds, than

than to frame him in an Image to our ſenſe. He inhabits inacceſſible Light: As it is impoſſible for the eye of Man to ſee him, 'tis impoſſible for the Art of Man to paint him upon Walls, and carve him out of Wood. None knows him but himſelf, none can deſcribe him but himſelf *. Can we draw a figure of our own Souls, and expreſs that part of our ſelves, wherein we are moſt like to God? Can we extend this to any bodily figure and divide it into parts? How can we deal ſo with the Original Copy, whence the firſt Draught of our Souls was taken, and which is infinitely more ſpiritual than Men or Angels? No Corporeal thing can repreſent a ſpiritual Subſtance; there is no proportion in Nature between them, God is a Simple, Infinite, Immenſe, Eternal, Inviſible, Incorruptible Being: A Statue is a Compounded, Finite, Limited, Temporal, Viſible and Corruptible Body. God is a living Spirit; but a Statue, neither ſees, nor hears, nor perceives any thing. But ſuppoſe God had a Body, 'tis impoſſible to mould an Image of it in the true Glory of that Body: Can the Statue of an excellent *Monarch* repreſent the Majeſty and Air of his Countenance, tho' made by the skilfulleſt Workman in the World? If God had a Body in ſome meaſure ſuited to his excellency, were it poſſible for Man to make an exact Image of him, who cannot picture the Light, Heat, Motion, Magnitude and dazling Property of the Sun? The excellency of any Corporeal Nature of the leaſt Creature, the Temper, Inſtinct, Artifice, are beyond the power of a Carving-Tool; much more is God.

* Coccei. *ſum. Theol. c. 9. p. 47.*

2. *To make any Corporeal Repreſentation of God is unworthy of God.* 'Tis a diſgrace to his Nature. Whoſoever thinks a Carnal Corruptible Image to be fit for a Repreſentatien of God, renders God no better than a Carnal and Corporeal Being. 'Tis a kind of debaſing an Angel, who is a ſpiritual Nature, to repreſent him in a bodily ſhape, who is as far removed from any fleſhlineſs as Heaven from Earth? much more to degrade the Glory of the Divine Nature to the Lineaments of a Man. The whole ſtock of Images is but a lie of God; *Jer.* 10. 8, 14. *A Doctrine of Vanities and Falſhood:* It re-
* Ro. 1. 25. preſents him in a falſe Garb to the World *, and ſinks
* Ro. 1. 23. *his Glory* into that of *a Corruptible Creature* *. It impairs the Reverence of God in the Minds of Men, and by degrees may debaſe Mens *apprehenſions of God*, and be a means to make them believe he is ſuch a one as themſelves; and that not being free from the Figure, he is not alſo free from the Imperfections of their Bodies. Corporeal Images of God were the Fruits of baſe Imaginations of him; and as they ſprung from them, ſo they contribute to a greater Corruption of the Notions of the Divine Nature: The Heathens begun their firſt Repreſentations of him by the Image of a corruptible Man, then of Birds, till they deſcended, not only to four-footed Beaſts, but creeping things, even Serpents, as the Apoſtle ſeems to intimate in his *enumeration*, Ro. 1. 23. it had been more honourable to have continued in humane repreſentation of him, than have ſunk ſo low as Beaſts and Serpents, the baſer Images; tho' the firſt had been infinitely unworthy of him, he being more above a Man, tho' the nobleſt Creature, than Man is above a Worm, a Toad, or the moſt deſpicable creeping thing upon the Earth. To think we can make an Image of God of a piece of Marble, or an Ingot of Gold, is a greater debaſing of him, than it would be of a Great Prince, if you ſhould repreſent him in the Statue of a Frog. When the *Iſraelites* repreſented God by a Calf, 'tis ſaid, *they ſinned a great ſin*, Exod. 32. 31. And the ſin of *Jeroboam*, who intended only a repreſentation of God by the Calves at
* Hoſ. 10. 15 *Dan* and *Bethel*, is called more emphatically *, *The wickedneſs of your wickedneſs*, the very ſkum and dregs of wickedneſs. As Men debaſed God by this, ſo God debaſed Men for this; he degraded the Iſraelites into Captivity under the worſt of their Enemies, and puniſhed the Heathens with ſpiritual Judgments, as *uncleanneſs* through the Luſts of their own hearts, *Rom.* 1. 24. Which is repeated again in other Expreſſions, *v.* 26, 27. As a meet recompence for their diſgracing the ſpiritual Nature of God. Had God been like to Man, they had not offended in it: But I mention this, to ſhew a probable Reaſon of thoſe baſe Luſts which are in the midſt of us, that have ſcarce been exceeded by any Nation, *viz.* the unworthy and unſpiritual Conceits of God, which are as much a debaſing of him as material Images were when they were more rife in the World; and may be as well the cauſe of thoſe Spiritual Judgments upon Men, as the worſhipping molten and carved Images were the cauſe of the ſame upon the Heathen.

3. *Yet this is natural to Man.* Wherein we may ſee the contrariety of Man to God. Tho' God be a *Spirit*, yet there is nothing Man is more prone to, than to repreſent him under a Corporeal Form. The moſt famous Guides of the Heathen World have faſhioned him, not only according to the more honourable Images of Men, but Beaſtialized him in the form of a Brute. The *Ægyptians*, whoſe Country was the School of Learning to *Greece*, were notoriouſly guilty of this brutiſhneſs in Worſhipping an Ox for an Image of their God; and the *Philiſtines* their *Dagon*, in a figure compoſed of the Image of a Woman and a Fiſh *: Such repreſenta- * *Daille.* *ſuper. Cor.* tions were antient in the oriental Parts. The Gods of *Laban*, that he accuſeth *Jacob* of Stealing from him *, *1. 10. Ser. 3.* * *Gen. 31.* are ſuppoſed to be little Figures of Men. Such was *v. 30, 34.* the Iſraelites *Golden-Calf*; their worſhip was not terminated on the Image, but they worſhipped the true God under that repreſentation: They could not be ſo brutiſh as to call a Calf their Deliverer, and give to him a great Title, [*Theſe be thy Gods, O* Iſrael, *which brought thee up out of the Land of* Ægypt, *Ex.* 32. 4.] Or that which they knew belonged to the true God, the God of *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob* *. They knew the Calf to be formed of their * *Gen. 3.* Ear-rings; but they had conſecrated it to God, as a *v. 16, 17.* repreſentation of him: Tho' they choſe the form of the *Ægyptian* Idol; yet they knew that *Apis*, *Oſiris* and *Iſis* the Gods the *Ægyptians* adored in that figure, had not wrought their Redemption from Bondage, but would have uſed their force, had they been poſſeſſed of any, to have kept them under the Yoke, rather than have freed them from it: The Feaſt alſo which they celebrated before that Image is called by *Aaron*, The Feaſt of the *Lord*, Exod. 32. 5. *A Feaſt to Jehovah*, the incommunicable Name of the Creator of the World. 'Tis therefore evident, That both the Prieſt and the People pretended to ſerve the true God, not any falſe Divinity of *Ægypt*. That God who had reſcued them from *Ægypt* with a mighty Hand, divided the Red-Sea before them, deſtroyed their Enemies, conducted them, fed them by miracle, ſpoken to them from *Mount Sinai*, and amazed them by his Thundrings and Lightnings when he inſtructed them by his Law; a God they could not ſo ſoon forget. And with this repreſenting God by that Image, they are charged by the Pſalmiſt, *Pſa.* 106. 19, 20. *They made a Calf in* Horeb, *and changed their Glory into the ſimilitude of an Ox that eateth Graſs.* They changed their Glory: that is, God, the Glory of *Iſrael*; ſo that they took this Figure for the Image of the true God of *Iſrael*, their own God; not the God of any other Nation in the World. *Jeroboam* intended no other by his Calves, but Symbols of the preſence of the true God, inſtead of the Ark and the propitiatory which remained among the Jews. We ſee the inclination of our Natures in the practice of

the *Iſraelities*; a People choſen out of the whole World to bear up God's Name, and preſerve his Glory: And in that the Images of God were ſo ſoon ſet up in the Chriſtian Church; and to this day, the picture of God in the ſhape of an old Man, is viſible in the Temples of the Romaniſts.

'Tis prone to the Nature of Man.

4. *To repreſent God by a Corporeal Image, and to Worſhip him in and by that Image, is Idolatry.* Tho' the Iſraelites did not acknowledge the Calf to be God, nor intended a worſhip to any of the Ægyptian Deities by it; but worſhipped that God in it, who had ſo lately and miraculouſly deliver'd them from a cruel Servitude; and could not in natural reaſon judge him to be cloathed with a bodily ſhape, much leſs to be like an Ox that eateth Graſs; yet the Apoſtle brings no leſs a charge againſt them, than that of *Idolatry*, 1 Cor. 10. 7. He calls them *Idolaters, who before that Calf, kept a Feaſt to Jehovah*, citing *Exod.* 32. 5. Suppoſe we could make ſuch an Image of God as might perfectly repreſent him; yet ſince God hath prohibited it, ſhall we be wiſer than God? He hath ſufficiently manifeſted himſelf in his works, *without Images*: He is ſeen in the Creatures; more particularly in the Heavens, which declare his Glory. His Works are more excellent Repreſentations of him, as being the Works of his own Hands, than any thing that is the product of the Art of Man. His Glory ſparkles in the Heavens, Sun, Moon and Stars, as being magnificent Pieces of his Wiſdom and Power; yet the kiſſing the Hand to the Sun or the Heavens, as repreſentative of the Excellency and Majeſty of God, is *Idolatry in Scripture Account, and a denial of God**; a proſtituting the Glory of God to a Creature *: Either the worſhip is terminated on the Image it ſelf, and then it is confeſſed by all to be *Idolatry*, becauſe it is a giving that worſhip to a Creature which is the ſole right of God; or not terminated in the Image, but in the Object repreſented by it; 'tis then a fooliſh thing; we may as well terminate our Worſhip on the true Object without, as with an Image. An erected Statue is no ſign or Symbol of God's ſpecial preſence, as the Ark, Tabernacle, Temple were. It is no part of Divine Inſtitution; has no Authority of a Command to ſupport it, no Cordial of a promiſe to encourage it; and the Image being infinitely diſtant from, and below the Majeſty and Spirituality of God, cannot conſtitute one object of Worſhip with him. To put a Religious Character upon any Image formed by the corrupt imagination of Man, as a repreſentation of the inviſible and ſpiritual Deity; is to think the *God-head* to be *like Silver and Gold, or ſtone graven by Art and Man's Device**.

* Job 31. 26, 27, 28.
* *Lawſon.* Body Divinity. p. 161
* Act. 17. v. 29.

3. *This Doctrine will direct us in our Conceptions of God*, as a pure perfect Spirit, than which nothing can be imagin'd more perfect, more pure, more ſpiritual.

1. *We cannot have an adequate or ſuitable Conception of God*: He dwells in inacceſſible Light; inacceſſible to the acuteneſs of our fancy, as well as the weakneſs of our ſenſe. If we could have thoughts of him, as high and excellent as his Nature; our Conceptions muſt be as infinite as his Nature. All our imaginations of him cannot repreſent him, becauſe every created Species is finite; it cannot therefore repreſent to us a full and ſubſtantial Notion of an infinite Being. We cannot ſpeak or think worthily enough of him, who is greater than our words, vaſter than our underſtandings. Whatſoever we ſpeak or think of God, is handed firſt to us by the notice we have of ſome perfection in the Creature, and explains to us ſome particular excellency of God rather than the fulneſs of his Eſſence. No Creature, nor all Creatures together, can furniſh us with ſuch a magnificent Notion of God, as can give us a clear view of him. Yet God in his Word is pleaſed to ſtep below his own excellency, and point us to thoſe excellencies in his Works, whereby we may aſcend to the knowledge of thoſe excellencies which are in his Nature. But the Creatures, whence we draw our Leſſons being finite, and our underſtandings being finite, 'tis utterly impoſſible to have a Notion of God commenſurate to the immenſity and ſpirituality of his Being. [* God is not like to viſible Creatures, nor is there any proportion between him and the moſt ſpiritual.] We cannot have a full Notion of a Spiritual Nature; much leſs can we have of God, who is a Spirit above Spirits. No Spirit can clearly repreſent him. The Angels that are great Spirits, are bounded in their extent, finite in their Being, and of a mutable Nature.

* *Amyrald* Moral. Tom. 1. p. 289.

Yet tho' we cannot have a ſuitable Conception of God, we muſt not content our ſelves without any Conception of him. 'Tis our ſin not to endeavour after a true Notion of him. 'Tis our ſin to reſt in a mean and low Notion of him, when our reaſon tells us we are capable of having higher: But if we aſcend as high as we can, tho' we ſhall then come ſhort of a ſuitable Notion of him; this is not our ſin, but our weakneſs. God is infinitely Superior to the choiceſt *Conceptions*, not only of a ſinner, but of a Creature. If all Conceptions of God below the true Nature of God were ſin, there is not a holy Angel in Heaven free from ſin; becauſe tho' they are the moſt capacious Creatures, yet they cannot have ſuch a Notion of an infinite Being as is fully ſuitable to his Nature, unleſs they were infinite as he himſelf is.

2. But however, *we muſt by no means conceive of God under a humane or corporeal Shape*. Since we cannot have Conceptions honourable enough for his Nature, we muſt take heed we entertain not any which may debaſe his Nature: Tho' we cannot comprehend him as he is, we muſt be careful not to fancy him to be what he is not. 'Tis a vain thing to conceive him with humane Lineaments: We muſt think higher of him, than to aſcribe to him ſo mean a ſhape: We deny his Spirituality when we fancy him under ſuch a form: He is Spiritual, and between that which is Spiritual and that which is Corporeal, there is no reſemblance *. Indeed *Daniel* ſaw God in a humane Form, *Dan.* 7. 9. *The Antient of Days did ſit, whoſe Garment was white as Snow, and the Hairs of his head like pure Wool*; he is deſcribed as coming to Judgment; 'tis not meant of Chriſt probably, becauſe Chriſt, *v.* 13. is called the *Son of Man* coming *near to the Antient of Days*. This is not the proper ſhape of God, for no Man hath ſeen his ſhape. It was a Viſion wherein ſuch Repreſentations were made, as were accommodated to the inward Senſe of *Daniel*; *Daniel* ſaw him in a Rapture or Extaſie, wherein outward Senſes are of no uſe: God is deſcribed, not as he is in himſelf, of a humane Form, but in regard of his fitneſs to Judge: *White* notes the purity and ſimplicity of the Divine Nature: *Antient of Days* in regard of his Eternity; *white Hair* in regard of his Prudence and Wiſdom, which is more eminent in Age than Youth, and more fit to diſcern Cauſes, and to diſtinguiſh betwixt Right and Wrong. Viſions are Riddles and muſt not be underſtood in a Literal Senſe. We are to watch againſt ſuch determinate Conceptions of God. Vain Imaginations do eaſily infeſt us; Tinder will not ſooner take Fire than our Natures kindle into wrong Notions of the Divine Majeſty. We are very apt to faſhion a God like our Selves: We muſt therefore look upon ſuch Repreſentations of God, as accommodated to our weakneſs: And no more think them to be literal deſcriptions of God, as he is in himſelf, than we will think the Image of the Sun in the Water to be the true Sun in the Heavens. We may indeed conceive of Chriſt as Man, who hath in Heaven the Veſtment of our Nature, and is *Deus Figuratus*, tho' we cann't conceive the Godhead under a human ſhape.

* Epiſc. inſti. l. 4. § 2. c. 17.

1. *To*

1. *To have ſuch a fancy is to diſparage and wrong God.* A corporeal fancy of God, is as ridiculous in it ſelf, and as injurious to God, as a wooden Statue. The capricio's of our imagination are often more monſtrous, than the Images which are the Works of Art: 'Tis as irreligious to meaſure Gods Eſſence by our line, his perfections by our imperfections, as to meaſure his thoughts and actings by the weakneſs and unworthineſs of our own. This is to limit an infinite eſſence, and pull him down to our ſcanty meaſures, and render that which is unconceivably above us, equal with us. 'Tis impoſſible we can conceive God after the manner of a Body, but we muſt bring him down to the proportion of a Body, which is to diminiſh his Glory, and ſtoop him below the dignity of his Nature. God is a pure Spirit, he hath nothing of the nature and tincture of a Body; whoſoever therefore conceives of him as having a bodily form, tho' he fancy the moſt beautiful and comely Body, inſtead of owning his dignity, detracts from the ſuper-eminent excellency of his nature and bleſſedneſs. When men fancy God like themſelves in their corporeal nature, they will ſoon make a progreſs, and aſcribe to him their corrupt Nature; and while they cloath him with their Bodies, inveſt him alſo in the infirmities of them. God is a *jealous God*, very ſenſible of any diſgrace, and will be as much incenſed againſt an *inward Idolatry* as an outward: That * Exod. 20. v. 4. * Command which forbad Corporeal Images, would not indulge Carnal Imaginations, ſince the Nature of God is as much wronged by unworthy Images erected in the fancy, as by Statues carved out of Stone or Metals: One as well as the other, is a deſerting of our true Spouſe, and committing Adultery, one with a material Image, and the other with a carnal Notion of God. Since God humbles himſelf to our apprehenſions, we ſhould not debaſe him in thinking him to be that in his Nature, which he makes only a reſemblance of himſelf to us.

2. *To have ſuch fancies of God, will obſtruct and pollute our Worſhip of him.* How is it poſſible to give him a right Worſhip, of whom we have ſo debaſing a Notion? We ſhall never think a corporeal Deity, worthy of a dedication of our Spirits. The hating Inſtruction, and caſting God's Word behind the back, is charged upon the imagination they had, that *God was ſuch a one as themſelves*, Pſal. 50. 17, 21. Many of the wiſer *Heathens* did not judge their Statues to be their Gods, or their Gods to be like their Statues, but ſuited them to their politick deſigns, and judged them a good invention to keep people within the bounds of Obedience and Devotion, by ſuch viſible figures of them, which might imprint a reverence and fear of thoſe Gods upon 'em: But theſe were falſe meaſures: A deſpiſed and undervalued God, is not an Object of Petition or Affection: Who would addreſs ſeriouſly to a God he has low apprehenſions of? The more raiſed thoughts we have of him, the viler ſenſe we ſhall have of our ſelves: They would make us humble and Self-abhorrent in our Supplications to him, *Job* 42. 6. *Wherefore I abhor my ſelf*, &c.

3. Tho' we muſt not conceive of God, as of a Humane or Corporeal ſhape, yet *we cannot think of God without ſome reflection upon our own Being.* We cannot conceive him to be an intelligent Being, but we muſt make ſome compariſon between him and our own underſtanding Nature, to come to a knowledge of him. Since we are incloſed in Bodies, we apprehend nothing but what comes in by ſenſe, and what we in ſome ſort meaſure by ſenſible Objects. And in the conſideration of thoſe things, which we deſire to abſtract from ſenſe, we are fain to make uſe of the aſſiſtances of ſenſe and viſible things; And therefore when we frame the higheſt notion, there will be ſome ſimilitude of ſome corporeal thing in our fancy; and tho' we would ſpiritualize our thoughts, and aim at a more abſtracted and raiſed underſtanding, yet there will be ſome dregs of matter ſticking to our conceptions; yet we ſtill judge by argument and reaſoning, what the thing is we think of under thoſe material Images. * A corporeal Image will follow us, as the ſhadow doth the body: While we are in the body, and ſurrounded with fleſhly matter, we cannot think of things without ſome help from corporeal repreſentations: Something of ſenſe will interpoſe it ſelf in our pureſt conceptions of ſpiritual things; for the faculties which ſerve for contemplation, are either corporeal, as the ſenſe and fancy, or ſo allied to them, that nothing paſſes into them but by the Organs of the Body; ſo that there is a natural inclination to figure nothing but under a corporeal notion, till by an attentive application of the mind and reaſon to the object thought upon, we ſeparate that which is bodily from that which is ſpiritual, and by degrees aſcend to that true notion of that we think upon, and would have a due conception of in our mind. Therefore God tempers the declaration of himſelf to our weakneſs, and the condition of our natures: He condeſcends to our littleneſs and narrowneſs, when he declares himſelf by the ſimilitude of bodily Members. As the light of the Sun is tempered, and diffuſeth it ſelf to our ſenſe thro' the air and vapours, that our weak eyes may not be too much dazled with it: Without it we could not know or judge of the Sun, becauſe we could have no uſe of our ſenſe, which we muſt have before we can judge of it in our underſtanding: So we are not able to conceive of Spiritual Beings in the purity of their own nature, without ſuch a temperament, and ſuch ſhadows to uſher them into our minds. And therefore we find the Spirit of God accommodates himſelf to our contracted and teddered capacities, and uſes ſuch expreſſions of God, as are ſuited to us in this ſtate of fleſh wherein we are: And therefore becauſe we cannot apprehend God in the ſimplicity of his own Being, and his undivided Eſſence, he draws the repreſentations of himſelf from ſeveral Creatures, and ſeveral actions of thoſe Creatures: As ſometimes he is ſaid to be angry, to walk, to ſit, to fly; not that we ſhould reſt in ſuch conceptions of him, but take our riſe from this foundation, and ſuch perfections in the Creatures, to mount up to a knowledge of Gods nature by thoſe ſeveral ſteps, and conceive of him by thoſe divided Excellencies, becauſe we cannot conceive of him in the purity of his own Eſſence. * We cannot poſſibly think or ſpeak of God, unleſs we tranſfer the names of created perfections to him; yet we are to conceive of them in a higher manner when we apply them to the Divine Nature, than when we conſider them in the ſeveral Creatures formally, exceeding thoſe perfections and excellencies which are in the Creature, and in a more excellent manner: * [as one ſaith, tho' we cannot comprehend God without the help of ſuch reſemblances, yet we may without making an Image of him; ſo that inability of ours excuſeth thoſe apprehenſions of him, from any way offending againſt his Divine Nature.] Theſe are not notions ſo much ſuited to the nature of God as the weakneſs of Man: They are helps to our meditations, but ought not to be formal conceptions of him. We may aſſiſt our ſelves in our apprehenſions of him, by conſidering the ſubtilty and ſpirituality of Air, and conſidering the members of a Body, without thinking him to be Air, or to have any corporeal Member. Our reaſon tells us, that whatſoever is a Body, is limited and bounded; and the notion of infiniteneſs and bodilineſs, cannot agree and conſiſt together: And therefore what is offered by our fancy, ſhould be purified by our reaſon.

4. *Therefore we are to elevate and refine all our notions of God, and ſpiritualize our conceptions of him.* Every Man is to have a conception of God; therefore he ought to have one of the higheſt elevation. Since we

* *Nazianzen*

Amirald. Morale Tom. 1. p. 180, &c.

* *Leſſius.*

* *Towerſon on the Commandments, p. 112.*

we cannot have a full notion of him, we ſhould endeavour to make it as high and as pure as we can. Tho' we cannot conceive of God, but ſome corporeal repreſentations or Images in our minds will be converſant with us, as motes in the Air when we look upon the Heavens, yet our conception may, and muſt riſe higher: As when we ſee the draught of the Heavens and Earth in a Globe, or a Kingdom in a Map, it helps our conceptions, but doth not terminate them: We conceive them to be of a vaſt extent, far beyond that ſhort deſcription of them: So we ſhould endeavour to refine every repreſentation of God, to riſe higher and higher, and have our apprehenſions ſtill more purified, ſeparating the perfect from the imperfect, caſting away the one, and greatning the other; conceive him to be a Spirit diffuſed through all, containing all, perceiving all. All the perfections of God are infinitely elevated above the excellencies of the Creatures; above whatſoever can be conceived by the cleareſt and moſt piercing underſtanding. The Nature of God as a Spirit, is infinitely ſuperior to whatſoever we can conceive perfect in the notion of a created Spirit. Whatſoever God is, he is infinitely ſo: He is infinite Wiſdom, infinite Goodneſs, infinite Knowledge, infinite Power, infinite Spirit, infinitely diſtant from the weakneſs of Creatures, infinitely mounted above the excellencies of Creatures: As eaſie to be known that he is, as impoſſible to be comprehended what he is.

Conceive of him as excellent, without any imperfection: A Spirit without parts; great without quantity; perfect without quality; every where without place: Powerful without members; underſtanding without ignorance; wiſe without reaſoning; light without darkneſs; infinitely more excelling the beauty of all Creatures, than the light in the Sun pure and unviolated, exceeds the ſplendor of the Sun diſperſed and divided through a cloudy and mitty Air: And when you have riſen to the higheſt, conceive him yet infinitely above all you can conceive of Spirit, and acknowledge the infirmity of your own minds. And whatſoever conception comes into your minds, ſay, this is not God, God is more than this: If I could conceive him, he were not God; for God is incomprehenſibly above whatſoever I can ſay, whatſoever I can think and conceive of him.

4 Inference. If God be a Spirit, *no corporeal thing can defile him.* Some bring an argument againſt the Omnipreſence of God, that it is a diſparagement to the Divine Eſſence to be every where, in naſty Cottages, as well as beautiful Palaces and garniſht Temples. What place can defile a Spirit? Is Light, which approaches to the nature of Spirit, polluted by ſhining upon a Dung-hill, or a Sun-beam tainted by darting upon a Quag-mire? Doth an *Angel* contract any Soil, by ſtepping into a naſty Priſon to deliver *Peter*? What can ſteam from the moſt noyſom Body, to pollute the ſpiritual nature of God? As he is *of purer eyes than to behold iniquity* *, ſo he is of a more ſpiritual ſubſtance than to contract any phyſical pollution from the places where he doth diffuſe himſelf. Did our Saviour, who had a true Body, derive any taint from the Lepers he touched, the diſeaſes he cured, or the Devils he expell'd? God is a pure Spirit, plungeth himſelf into no filth, is daſh'd with no ſpot by being preſent with all bodies. Bodies only receive defilement from bodies.

* Hab. 1. 13.

5. Inference. *If God be a Spirit, he is active and communicative.* He is not clogg'd with heavy and ſluggiſh matter, which is cauſe of dulneſs and inactivity. The more ſubtil, thin, and approaching nearer the nature of a Spirit any thing is, the more diffuſive it is. Air is a gliding ſubſtance, ſpreads it ſelf through all Regions, pierceth into all Bodies; it fills the ſpace between Heaven and Earth; there is nothing but partakes of the vertue of it. Light, which is an emblem of Spirit, inſinuates it ſelf into all places, refreſheth all things. As Spirits are fuller, ſo they are more overflowing, more piercing, more operative than Bodies. The *Egyptians* Horſes were weak things, becauſe they were *Fleſh and not Spirit* *: The Soul being a Spirit conveys more to the Body, than the Body can to it. What cannot ſo great a Spirit do for us? What cannot ſo great a Spirit work in us? God being a Spirit above all Spirits, can pierce into the center of all Spirits; make his way into the moſt ſecret receſſes; ſtamp what he pleaſes: 'Tis no more to him to turn our Spirits, than to make a Wilderneſs become Waters, and ſpeak a Chaos into a beautiful frame of Heaven and Earth: He can act our Souls with infinite more eaſe, than our Souls can act our Bodies; he can fix in us what motions, frames, inclinations he pleaſes; he can come and ſettle in our hearts with all his Treaſures. 'Tis an encouragement to confide in him, when we petition him for Spiritual Bleſſings: As he is a Spirit, he is poſſeſſed with *Spiritual Bleſſings* *. A Spirit delights to beſtow things ſuitable to its Nature, as Bodies do to Communicate what is agreeable to theirs: As he is a Father of *Spirits*, we may go to him for the *Welfare of our Spirits*; he being a Spirit, is as able to repair our Spirits, as he was to create them.

* Iſa. 31.

* Eph. 1. 3.

As he is a Spirit, he is indefatigable in acting: The members of the Body tire and flag; but whoever heard of a Soul wearied with being active? Whoever heard of a *weary Angel*? In the pureſt ſimplicity, there is the greateſt power, the moſt efficacious goodneſs, the moſt reaching Juſtice to affect the Spirit, that can inſinuate it ſelf every where to puniſh wickedneſs without wearineſs, as well as to comfort goodneſs. God is active, becauſe he is Spirit; and if we be like to God, the more Spiritual we are, the more active we ſhall be.

6 Inference. *God being a Spirit is Immortal.* His being Immortal, and being Inviſible, are joyned together *. Spirits are in their nature incorruptible; they can only periſh by that hand that framed them. Every compounded thing is ſubject to mutation; but God being a pure and ſimple Spirit, is without corruption, without any ſhadow of change *. Where there is compoſition, there is ſome kind of repugnancy of one part againſt the other; and where there is repugnancy, there is a capability of diſſolution. God in regard of his infinite Spirituality, hath nothing in his own nature contrary to it; can have nothing in himſelf which is not himſelf. The World periſhes, Friends change and are diſſolved; Bodies moulder, becauſe they are mutable. God is a Spirit in the higheſt excellency and glory of Spirits; nothing is beyond him; nothing above him; no contrariety with him. This is our comfort, if we devote our ſelves to him; this God is our God; this Spirit is our Spirit; this is our All, our Immutable, our incorruptible Support; a Spirit that cannot die and leave us.

* 1 Tim. 1. v. 17.

* James 1. v. 17.

7 Inference. If God be a Spirit, *we ſee how we can only converſe with him by our Spirits.* Bodies and Spirits are not ſuitable to one another: We can only ſee, know, embrace a Spirit with our Spirits. He judges not of us by our corporeal actions, nor our external devotions, by our masks and diſguiſes: He fixes his eye upon the frame of the Heart, bends his ear to the groans of our Spirits: He is not pleaſed with outward pomp: He is not a Body, therefore the beauty of Temples, delicacy of Sacrinces, fumes of Incenſe, are not grateful to him; by thoſe, or any external action, we have no communion with him: A Spirit when *broken*, is his delightful *Sacrifice* *: We muſt therefore have our Spirits fitted for him, *be renewed in the Spirit of our minds* *, that we may be in a poſture to live with him, and have an intercourſe with him. We can never be united to God, but in our Spirits: Bodies unite with Bodies, Spirits with Spirits. The more ſpiritual any thing is, the more cloſely doth it unite. Air hath the cloſeſt union, nothing meets together ſooner than

* Pſal. 51. 17

* Eph. 4. 23.

that

that when the parts are divided by the interposition of a body.

8 Inference. If God be a Spirit, *he can only be the true satisfaction of our Spirits.* Spirit can only be fill'd with a Spirit. Content flows from likeness and suitableness: As we have a resemblance to God in regard of the spiritual nature of our Soul, so we can have no satisfaction but in him. Spirit can no more be really satisfied with that which is corporeal, than a Beast can delight in the company of an Angel. Corporeal things can no more fill a hungry Spirit, than pure Spirit can feed an hungry Body. God the highest Spirit, can only reach out a full content to our spirits. Man is Lord of the Creation; nothing below him can be fit for his converse; nothing above him offers it self to his converse but God. We have no correspondence with Angels: The influence they have upon us, the protection they afford, is secret and undiscern'd; but God the highest Spirit offers himself to us in his Son, in his Ordinances, is visible in every Creature, presents himself to us in every providence; to him we must seek; in him we must rest. God had no rest from the Creation, till he had made Man; and Man can have no rest in the Creation, till he rests in God. God only is *our dwelling place**; our Souls should *only long for him**; our Souls should only wait upon him. The spirit of Man never riseth to its original glory, till it be carried up on the wings of Faith and Love to its original Copy. The face of the Soul looks most beautiful, when it is turned to the face of God the Father of Spirits; when the derived Spirit is fixed upon the original Spirit, drawing from it Life and Glory. Spirit is only the receptacle of Spirit. God as Spirit is our Principle; we must therefore live upon him. God as Spirit, hath some resemblance to us as his Image; we must therefore only satisfie our selves in him.

* Ps. 90. 1.
* Ps. 63. 1.

9 Inference. If God be a Spirit, *we should take most care of that wherein we are like to God.* Spirit is nobler than Body; we must therefore value our Spirits above our Bodies: The Soul as Spirit, partakes more of the Divine Nature, and deserves more of our choicest cares. If we have any love to this Spirit, we should have a real affection to our own Spirits, as bearing a stamp of the Spiritual Divinity, the chiefest of all the works of God; as it is said of *Behemoth*, *Job* 40. 19. That which is most the Image of this immense Spirit, should be our *Darling:* So *David* calls his *Soul*, *Psal.* 35. 17. Shall we take care of that wherein we partake not of God, and not delight in the Jewel which hath his own signature upon it? God was not only the Framer of spirits, and the end of spirits; but the Copy and Exemplar of Spirits. God partakes of no corporiety, he is pure Spirit. But how do we act, as if we were only matter and body! We have but little kindness for this great Spirit as well as our own, if we take no care of his immediate Off-spring, since he is not only Spirit, but the Father of Spirits*.

10 Inference. If God be a Spirit, *let us take heed of those sins which are spiritual.* *Paul* distinguish'd between the filth of the Flesh, and that of the Spirit*: By the one we defile the Body; by the other we defile the Spirit, which in regard of its Nature is of kin to the Creator. To wrong one who is neer of kin to a Prince, is worse than to injure an inferior Subject. When we make our Spirits, which are most like to God in their Nature, and framed according to his Image, a Stage to act vain Imaginations, wicked Desires and unclean Affections, we wrong God in the excellency of his Work, and reflect upon the nobleness of the Pattern; we wrong him in that part where he hath stampt the most signal character of his own Spiritual Nature; we defile that whereby we have only converse with him as a Spirit, wch he hath ordered more immediately to represent him in this nature, than all Corporeal Things in the World can, and make that Spirit with whom we desire to be joyned, unfit for such a Knot. God's Spirituality is the Root of his other Perfections. We have already heard, he could not be Infinite, Omnipresent, Immutable without it. Spiritual sins are the greatest root of Bitterness within us: As Grace in our Spirits renders us more like to a spiritual God; so spiritual sins bring us into a conformity to a degraded Devil*. Carnal sins change us from Men to Brutes, and Spiritual sins devest us of the Image of God for the Image of Satan. We should by no means make our Spirits a Dung-hill, which bear upon them the Character of the spiritual Nature of God, and were made for his Residence: Let us therefore behave our selves towards God in all those ways which the spiritual Nature of God requires us.

* Heb. 12. 9.
* 2 Cor. 7. 1.
* Ep. 2. 2, 3.

A DISCOURSE Of Spiritual Worship.

HAving thus dispatcht the first Proposition, *God is a Spirit*; it will not be amiss to handle the Inference our Saviour makes from that Proposition: Which is the second Observation propounded.

Doct. That *the Worship due from us to God ought to be spiritual, and spiritually performed.*

Spirit and Truth are understood variously. Either we are to Worship God,

1. *Not by Legal Ceremonies.* The Evangelical administration, being called *Spirit* in opposition to the legal Ordinances as carnal; and *Truth* in opposition to them as typical. As the whole *Judaical* service is called *flesh*; so the whole *Evangelical* service is called *Spirit*. Or *Spirit* may be opposed to the Worship at *Jerusalem*, as it was *carnal*; *Truth*, to the Worship on the Mount *Gerizim*, because it was *false*. They had not the true object of Worship, nor the true Medium of Worship as those at *Jerusalem* had. Their Worship should cease, because it was *false*; and the *Jewish* Worship should cease, because it was *carnal*.

There is no need of a Candle, when the Sun spreads its beams in the Air; no need of those Ceremonies, when the Sun of righteousness appeared: They only served for a Candle to instruct and direct men till the time of his coming. The shadows are chased away by displaying the substance, so that they can be of no more use in the worship of God, since the end for which they were instituted, is expired; and that is discovered to us in the Gospel which the *Jews* sought for in vain, among the baggage and stuff of their Ceremonies.

2. *With a spiritual and sincere frame. In Spirit, i.e.* with Spirit; with the inward operations of all the faculties of our Souls, and the cream and flower of them: And the reason is, because there ought to be a worship suitable to the nature of God. And as the worship was to be spiritual, so the exercise of that worship ought to be in a spiritual manner*. It shall be a worship *in Truth*, because the true God shall be adored

* Lingend. Tom. 2. p. 277. Taylor. Exam. Pref. § 30.

adored without thoſe vain imaginations, and phantaſtick reſemblances of him, which were common among the blind *Gentiles*, and contrary to the glorious nature of God, and unworthy ingredients in Religious ſervices. It ſhall be a *worſhip in Spirit*, without thoſe carnal Rites the degenerate *Jews* reſted on: Such a poſture of Soul which is the life and ornament of every ſervice God looks for at your hands: There muſt be ſome proportion between the object adored, and the manner in which we adore it. It muſt not be a meer corporeal worſhip, becauſe God is not a body; but it muſt riſe from the Center of our Soul, becauſe God is a Spirit. If he were a body, a bodily worſhip might ſuit him, Images might be fit to repreſent him; but being a Spirit, our bodily ſervices enter us not into communion with him. Being a Spirit, we muſt baniſh from our minds all carnal imaginations of him, and ſeparate from our Wills all cold and diſſembled affections to him. We muſt not only have a loud Voice, but an elevated Soul; not only a bended knee, but a broken heart; not only a ſupplicating tone, but a groaning Spirit; not only a ready ear for the word, but a receiving heart; and this ſhall be of greater value with him, than the moſt coſtly outward ſervices offered at *Gerizim* or *Jeruſalem*.

Our *Saviour* certainly meant not by worſhipping in Spirit, only the matter of the Evangelical ſervice, as oppoſed to the legal adminiſtration, without the manner wherein it was to be performed. 'Tis true, God always ſought a worſhip in Spirit; he expected the heart of the worſhipper ſhould joyn with his inſtituted rights of adoration in every exerciſe of them: But he expects ſuch a carriage more under the Goſpel adminiſtration, becauſe of the clearer diſcoveries of his nature made in it, and the greater aſſiſtances conveyed by it. I ſhall therefore,

1. *Lay down ſome general Propoſitions.*
2. *Shew what this Spiritual Worſhip is.*
3. *Why we muſt offer to God a ſpiritual ſervice.*
4. The *Uſe*.

1. *Some general Propoſitions.*

Prop. 1. Firſt, *The right exerciſe of worſhip is founded upon, and riſeth from the ſpirituality of God**. The firſt ground of the worſhip we render to God, is the infinite excellency of his nature, which is not only one attribute, but reſults from all: For God, as God, is the object of worſhip; and the notion of God conſiſts not in thinking him wiſe, good, juſt, but all thoſe infinitely beyond any conception. And hence it follows that God is an object infinitely to be loved and honoured. His goodneſs is ſometimes ſpoken of in *Scripture* as a motive of our homage. *Pſal.* 130. 4. *There is forgiveneſs with thee that thou mayeſt be feared. Fear* in the Scripture dialect ſignifies the *whole worſhip of God*, *Acts* 10. 35. But in every Nation *he that fears him* is accepted of him*. If God ſhould act towards Men according to the rigors of his Juſtice due to them for the leaſt of their Crimes, there could be no exerciſe of any Affection but that of Deſpair, which could not ingender a Worſhip of God which ought to be joyned with Love, not with Hatred. The Beneficence and Patience of God and his readineſs to Pardon Men is the reaſon of the Honour they return to him. And this is ſo evident a Motive, that generally the Idolatrous World rankt thoſe Creatures in the number of their Gods, which they perceived uſeful and beneficial to Mankind; as the Sun and Moon, the Ægyptians the Ox, *&c.* And the more benencial any thing appeared to Mankind, the higher Station Men gave it in the Rank of their Deities, and beſtowed a more peculiar and ſolemn Worſhip upon it. Men worſhipped God to procure or continue his favour, which would not have been acted by them, had they not conceived it a pleaſing thing to him to be merciful and gracious.

* Ames *medul.* l. 2. c. 4. § 20.

* So 2 Kings 17. 32, 33.

Sometimes his Juſtice is propoſed to us as a Motive of Worſhip, *Heb.* 12. 28, 29. *Serve God with Reverence and godly Fear. For our God is a conſuming Fire*; which includes his Holineſs, whereby he doth hate ſin, as well as his wrath, whereby he doth puniſh it. Who but a mad and totally brutiſh Perſon, or one that was reſolved to make war againſt Heaven, could behold the effects of God's Anger in the World, conſider him in his Juſtice as a conſuming Fire, and deſpiſe him, and rather be drawn out by that conſideration to Blaſphemy and Deſpair, than to ſeek all ways to appeaſe him? Now tho' the infinite power of God, his unſpeakable Wiſdom, his incomprehenſible Goodneſs, the holineſs of his Nature, the vigilance of his Providence, the bounty of his Hand ſignifie to Man, that he ſhould love and honour him, and are the Motives of Worſhip; yet the Spirituality of his Nature is the Rule of Worſhip, and directs us to render our Duty to him with all the powers of our Soul. As his Goodneſs beams out upon us, worſhip is due in Juſtice to him; and as he is the moſt excellent Nature, veneration is due to him in the higheſt manner with the choiceſt affections.

So that indeed the ſpirituality of God comes chiefly into conſideration in matter of Worſhip: All his Perfections are grounded upon this: He could not be infinite, immutable, omniſcient if he were a Corporeal Being*: We cannot give him a worſhip unleſs we judge him worthy, excellent and deſerving a Worſhip at our hands: And we cannot judge him worthy of a Worſhip, unleſs we have ſome Apprehenſions and Admirations of his infinite Vertues: And we cannot apprehend and admire thoſe Perfections, but as we ſee them as cauſes ſhining in their Effects. When we ſee therefore the frame of the World to be the Work of his Power; the order of the World to be the Fruit of his Wiſdom, and the Uſefulneſs of the World to be the Product of his Goodneſs: We find the Motives and Reaſons of Worſhip; and weighing that this Power, Wiſdom, Goodneſs, infinitely tranſcend any Corporeal Nature; we find a Rule of Worſhip, that it ought to be offered by us in a manner ſuitable to ſuch a Nature, as is infinitely above any bodily Being. His being a Spirit declares what he is, his other Perfections declare what kind of Spirit he is. All God's Perfections ſuppoſe him a Spirit; all center in this: His Wiſdom doth not ſuppoſe him Merciful, or his Mercy ſuppoſe him omniſcient: There may be diſtinct Notions of thoſe, but all ſuppoſe him to be of a Spiritual Nature. How cold and frozen will our Devotions be, if we conſider not his Omniſcience, whereby he diſcerns our Hearts? How carnal will our Services be, if we conſider him not as a pure Spirit? In our offers to, and tranſactions with Men, we deal not with them as meer Animals, but as rational Creatures; and we debaſe their Natures if we treat them otherwiſe: And if we have not raiſed Apprehenſions of God's Spiritual Nature in our treating with him, but allow him only ſuch frames as we think fit enough for Men; we debaſe his Spirituality to the littleneſs of our own Being. We muſt therefore poſſeſs our Souls with this, we ſhall elſe render him no better than a fleſhly Service. We do not much concern our ſelves in thoſe things, of which we are either utterly ignorant, or have but ſlight apprehenſions of.

* Amy. *diſſert.* 6. *diſp.* 1. *p.* 12.

* *Amirant. de Relig.*

That is the firſt Propoſition; the right exerciſe of Worſhip is grounded upon the Spirituality of God.

Prop. 2. *This Spiritual Worſhip of God is manifeſt by the Light of Nature, to be due to him.* In reference to this conſider,

1. *The outward means or matter of that Worſhip which would be acceptable to God, was not known by the light of Nature.* The Law for a worſhip, and for

a ſpiritual Worſhip, by the Faculties of our Souls was natural, and part of the Law of Creation; tho' the determination of the particular Acts, whereby God would have this Homage teſtified, was of poſitive Inſtitution, and depended not upon the Law of Creation. Tho' *Adam* in Innocence knew God was to be Worſhipped; yet by Nature he did not know by what outward acts he was to pay this reſpect, or at what time he was more ſolemnly to be exerciſed in it than at another: This depended upon the Directions God, as the Sovereign Governour and Law-giver, ſhould preſcribe. You therefore find the poſitive Inſtitutions of the *Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil*, and the determination of the time of Worſhip, *Gen.* 2.3,17. Had there been any ſuch Notion in *Adam* naturally, as ſtrong as that other, that a Worſhip was due to God, there would have been found ſome Reliques of theſe Modes univerſally conſented to by Mankind, as well as of the other: But tho' all Nations have by an univerſal conſent concurred in the acknowledgment of the Being of God, and his right to adoration, and the obligation of the Creature to it; and that there ought to be ſome publick Rule and Polity in matters of Religion; (for no Nation hath been in the World without a Worſhip, and without external Acts and certain Ceremonies to ſignifie that Worſhip) yet their Modes and Rites have been as various as their Climates, unleſs in that common Notion of Sacrifices, not deſcending to them by Nature, but tradition from *Adam*; and the various ways of worſhip have been more provoking than pleaſing: Every Nation ſuited the kind of Worſhip to their particular Ends and Polities they deſigned to Rule by. How God was to be worſhipped, is more difficult to be diſcerned by Nature with its eyes out, than with its eyes clear. * The Pillars upon which the Worſhip of God ſtands, cannot be diſcerned without Revelation, no more than blind *Sampſon* could tell where the Pillars of the *Philiſtines Theatre* ſtood, without one to conduct him. What *Adam* could not ſee with his ſound Eyes, we cannot with our dim Eyes; he muſt be told from Heaven, what Worſhip was fit for the God of Heaven. 'Tis not by Nature that we can have ſuch a full proſpect of God as may content and quiet us; This is the Noble effect of Divine Revelation; he only knows himſelf, and can only make himſelf known to us. It could not be ſuppoſed, that an infinite God, ſhould have no Perfections but what were viſible in the Works of his Hands; and that theſe Perfections ſhould not be infinitely greater, than as they were ſenſible in their preſent Effects: This had been to apprehend God a limited Being, meaner than he is. Now 'tis impoſſible to honour God as we ought, unleſs we know him as he is; and we could not know him as he is, without Divine Revelation from himſelf; for none but God can acquaint us with his own Nature: And therefore the Nations void of this conduct, heap up Modes of Worſhip from their own Imaginations, unworthy of the Majeſty of God, and below the Nature of Man: A Rational Man would ſcarce have owned ſuch for ſigns of Honour, as the Scripture mentions in the Services of *Baal* and *Dagon*. Much leſs an infinitely wiſe and glorious God. And when God had ſignified his Mind to his own People, how unwilling were they to reſt ſatisfied with God's Determination, but would be warping to their own Inventions, and make Gods, and ways of Worſhip to themſelves? * As in the matter of the *Golden Calf*, as was lately ſpoken of.

* King on Jona. p. 63.

* Amos 5. v. 26.

2. *Tho' the outward manner of Worſhip acceptable to God, could not be known without Revelation, and thoſe Revelations might be various; yet the inward manner of Worſhip with our Spirits was manifeſt by Nature.* And not only manifeſt by Nature to *Adam* in Innocence, but after his Fall, and the Scales he had brought upon his Underſtanding by that Fall. When God gave him his poſitive Inſtitutions before the Fall, or whatſoever additions God ſhould have made, had he perſiſted in that ſtate; or when he appointed him after his Fall to teſtifie his Acknowledgement of him by Sacrifices, there needed no Command to him to make thoſe Acknowledgments by thoſe outward ways preſcribed to him, with the Intention and prime Affection of his Spirit: This Nature would inſtruct him in without Revelation: For he could not poſſibly have any ſemblance of reaſon to think, that the offering of Beaſts, or the preſenting the Firſt Fruits of the increaſe of the Ground, as an acknowledgment of God's Sovereignty over him, and his Bounty to him, was ſufficient without devoting to him that part wherein the Image of his Creator did conſiſt: He could not but diſcern by a Reflection upon his own Being, that he was made for God as well as by God: [For it is a natural Principle, of which the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Rom.* 11.36. *For of him, and thro' him, and to him are all things*, &c.] That the whole, whereof he did conſiſt was due to God; and that his Body, the dreggy and duſty part of his Nature, was not fit to be brought alone before God, without that nobler Principle, which he had by Creation link'd with it. Nothing in the whole Law of Nature, as it is informed of Religion, was clearer next to the Being of God, than this manner of Worſhipping God with the Mind and Spirit. And as the Gentiles never ſunk ſo low into the mud of Idolatry, as to think the Images they worſhipped were really their Gods, but the Repreſentations, or Habitations of their Gods; ſo they never deſerted this Principle in the Notion of it, that God was to be honoured with the beſt they were, and the beſt they had: As they never denied the Being of God in the Notion, tho' they did in the practice; ſo they never rejected this Principle in Notion, tho' they did, and now moſt Men do, in the inward obſervation of it: It was a Maxim among them that God was *mens animus*, Mind and Spirit, and therefore was to be honoured with the Mind and Spirit. That Religion did not conſiſt in the Ceremonies of the Body, but the work of the Soul; whence, the ſpeech of one of them, * *Sacrifice to the Gods not ſo much cloathed with purple garments as a pure heart.* And of another *, * *God regards not the multitude of the Sacrifices, but the Diſpoſition of the Sacrificer.* 'Tis not fit we ſhould deny God the Cream and Flower, and give him the flotten part and the ſtalks. And with what Reverence and Intention of Mind they thought their Worſhip was to be performed, is evident by the Prieſts crying out often, *hoc age*, Mind this, let your Spirits be intent upon it. This could not but reſult,

* Menand.

* Jamblick

(1.) *From the Knowledge of our ſelves.* 'Tis a natural Principle, *God hath made us, and not we our ſelves*, Pſal. 100. 1, 2. Man knows himſelf to be a rational Creature: As a Creature he was to ſerve his Creator, and as a rational Creature with the beſt part of that rational Nature he derived from him. By the ſame act of reaſon that he knows himſelf to be a Creature, he knows himſelf to have a Creator: That this Creator is more excellent than himſelf, and that an honour is due from him to the Creator for framing of him; and therefore this honour was to be offered to him by the moſt excellent part which was framed by him. Man cannot conſider himſelf as a thinking, underſtanding Being; but he muſt know that he *muſt* give God the honour of his Thoughts, and worſhip him with thoſe Faculties whereby he Thinks, Wills, and Acts *. He muſt know his Faculties were given him to act, and to act for the glory of that God who gave him his Soul and the Faculties of it; and he could not in reaſon think they muſt be only active in his own Service, and the Service of the Creature, and idle and unprofitable in the Service of his Creator.

* Amyrald. *Mor. Tom.* 1. *p.* 309,310.

With the ſame Powers of our Soul whereby we contemplate God, we muſt alſo worſhip God: We cannot think of him but with our Minds, nor love him but with our Will; and we cannot worſhip him without the acts of Thinking and Loving, and therefore cannot worſhip him without the exerciſe of our inward Faculties: How is it poſſible then for any Man that knows his own nature, to think that extended Hands, bended Knees, and lifted-up Eyes, were ſufficient Acts of Worſhip, without a quickned and active Spirit?

(2.) *From the knowledge of God.* As there was a knowledge of God by Nature, ſo the ſame nature did dictate to Man that God was to be glorified as God: The Apoſtle implies the inference in the charge he brings againſt them for neglecting it. *We ſhould ſpeak of God as he is*, ſaid one *; and the ſame reaſon would inform them, that they were to act towards God as he is. The excellency of the Object required a Worſhip according to the dignity of his Nature, which could not be anſwered but by the moſt ſerious inward affection, as well as outward decency; and a want of this, cannot but be judged to be unbecoming the Majeſty of the Creator of the World, and the excellency of Religion. No Nation, no Perſon did ever aſſert, that the vileſt part of Man was enough for the moſt excellent Being, as God is: That a bodily Service could be a ſufficient acknowledgment of the greatneſs of God, or a ſufficient return for the bounty of God.* Man could not but know that he was to act in Religion, conformably to the Object of Religion, and to the excellency of his own Soul: The notion of a God was ſufficient to fill the mind of Man with admiration and reverence, and the firſt concluſion from it would be to honour God, and that he have all the affection placed on him, that ſo infinite and ſpiritual a Being did deſerve: The progreſs then would be, that this excellent Being was to be honoured with the motions of the Underſtanding and Will, with the pureſt and moſt ſpiritual Powers in the Nature of Man, becauſe he was a Spiritual Being, and had nothing of matter mingled with him. Such a brutiſh imagination, to ſuppoſe that blood and fumes, beaſts and incenſe, could pleaſe a Deity without a ſpiritual frame, cannot be ſuppoſed to befal any but thoſe that had loſt their Reaſon in the Rubbiſh of Senſe. Meer rational Nature could never conclude, that ſo excellent a Spirit would be put off with a meer animal Service; and attendance of matter and body without Spirit, when they themſelves of an inferior Nature, would be loath to ſit down contented with an outſide Service from thoſe that belong to them: So that this inſtruction of our Saviour, that God is to be worſhipped in Spirit and Truth, is conformable to the ſentiments of Nature, and drawn from the moſt undeniable Principles of it. The excellency of God's Nature, and the excellent conſtitution of Humane faculties, concur naturally to ſupport this perſwaſion: This was as natural to be known by Men, as the neceſſity of Juſtice and Temperance for the ſupport of Humane Societies and Bodies. 'Tis to be feared that if there be not among us ſuch brutiſh apprehenſions, there are ſuch brutiſh dealings with God in our Services againſt the light of Nature, when we place all our worſhip of God in outward attendances and drooping countenances, with unbelieving frames and formal devotions; when Prayer is muttered over in private ſlightly, as a Parrot learns leſſons by rote, not underſtanding what it ſpeaks, or to what end it ſpeaks it; not glorifying God in thought and ſpirit, with underſtanding and will.

*Rom. 1. 21. Bias.

* Amyrald. *Ib.*

3. *Spiritual Worſhip therefore was always required by God, and always offered to him by one or other.* Man had a perpetual obligation upon him to ſuch a worſhip from the nature of God, and what is founded upon the nature of God is unvariable. This and that particular mode of worſhip, may *wax old as a Garment, and as a Veſture may be folded up and changed*, as the expreſſion is of the Heavens *: But God endures for ever; his ſpirituality fails not, therefore a worſhip of him in Spirit muſt run through all ways and rites of Worſhip. God muſt ceaſe to be Spirit, before any ſervice but that which is ſpiritual, can be accepted by him. The light of Nature is the light of God; the light of Nature being unchangeable; what was dictated by that, was always, and will always be required by God. The worſhip of God being perpetually due from the Creature, the worſhipping him as God is as perpetually his right. Tho' the outward expreſſions of this Honour were different, one way in Paradice, (for a worſhip was then due, ſince a ſolemn time for that worſhip was appointed) another under the Law, another under the Goſpel; the Angels alſo worſhip God in Heaven, and fall down before his Throne; yet tho' they differ in rites, they agree in this neceſſary ingredient: All rites, tho' of a different ſhape, muſt be offered to him not as Carcaſſes, but animated with the affections of the Soul. *Abels* Sacrifice had not been ſo excellent in Gods eſteem, without thoſe gracious habits and affections working in his Soul *. Faith works by Love; his heart was on fire as well as his Sacrifice. *Cain* reſted upon his Preſent, perhaps thought he had obliged God; he depended upon the outward Ceremony, but ſought not for the inward Purity: It was an Offering brought to the Lord *; he had the right object but not the right manner, *Gen.* 4. 7. *If thou doſt well, ſhalt thou not be accepted?* And in the command afterwards to *Abraham*, *Walk before me, and be thou perfect*, was the direction in all our religious acts and walkings with God. A ſincere act of the Mind and Will, looking above and beyond all Symbols, extending the Soul to a pitch far above the Body, and ſeeing the day of Chriſt through the veil of the Ceremonies, was required by God: And tho' *Moſes* by Gods order had inſtituted a multitude of Carnal Ordinances, Sacrifices, Waſhings, Oblations of ſenſible things, and recommended to the People the diligent obſervation of thoſe Statutes by the allurements of Promiſes, and denouncing of Threatnings, as if there were nothing elſe to be regarded, and the true workings of Grace were to be buried under a heap of Ceremonies, yet ſometimes he doth point them to the inward worſhip, and by the Command of God, requires of them the *Circumciſion* of the *Heart*, Deut. 10. 16. the turning to God with *all their heart*, and *all their Soul*, Deut. 30. 10. whereby they might recollect, that it was the engagement of the Heart, and the worſhip of the Spirit, that was moſt agreeable to God; and that he took not any pleaſure in their obſervance of Ceremonies, without true Piety within, and the true Purity of their thoughts.

*Heb. 11. 12.

* Heb. 11. 4

* Gen. 4. 5.

4. *'Tis therefore as much every Mans duty to worſhip God in Spirit, as it is their duty to worſhip him.* Worſhip is ſo due to him as God, as that he that denies it, diſowns his Deity: And Spiritual worſhip is ſo due, that he that waves it denies his Spirituality. 'Tis a debt of Juſtice we owe to God to worſhip him, and it is as much a debt of Juſtice to worſhip him according to his Nature. Worſhip is nothing elſe but a rendring to God the honour that is due to him; and therefore the right poſture of our Spirits in it, is as much, or more due, than the material worſhip in the modes of his own preſcribing; that is grounded both upon his Nature, and upon his Command; this only upon his Command; that is perpetually due, whereas the Channel wherein outward Worſhip runs may be dried up, and the River diverted another way: Such a Worſhip wherein the mind thinks of God, feels a ſenſe of God, has the Spirit conſecrated to God, the Heart glowing with affections to God; 'tis elſe a mocking God with a feather. A rational Nature muſt worſhip God with that wherein the glory of God doth moſt ſparkle in him. God is moſt viſible in the

frame

frame of the Soul, 'tis there his Image glitters: He hath given us a Jewel as well as a Caſe, and the Jewel as well as the Caſe we muſt return to him: The *Spi-*
*Eccl.12.7. *rit* is Gods *gift*, and muſt *return to him* *: It muſt return to him in every ſervice morally, as well as it muſt return to him at laſt phyſically. 'Tis not fit we ſhould ſerve our Maker only with that which is the Brute in us, and withhold from him that which doth conſtitute us reaſonable Creatures; we muſt give him our
*Rom.12.1 Bodies, but a *living Sacrifice* *. If the Spirit be abſent from God when the Body is before him, we preſent a dead Sacrifice; 'tis morally dead in the duty, tho' it be naturally alive in the poſture and action. 'Tis not an indifferent thing whether we ſhall Worſhip God or no, nor is it an indifferent thing whether we ſhall Worſhip him with our Spirits or no; as the excellency of Mans knowledge conſiſts in knowing things as they are in Truth, ſo the excellency of the Will in willing things as they are in goodneſs. As it is the excellency of Man to know God as God, ſo it is no leſs his excellency, as well as his duty, to honour God as God. As the obligation we have to the Power of God for our Being, binds us to a worſhip of him, ſo the obligation we have to his bounty for faſhioning us according to his own Image, binds us to an exerciſe of that part wherein his Image doth conſiſt. God hath *made all things for himſelf*, Prov.16.4. that is, for the evidence of his own goodneſs and wiſdom: We are therefore to render him a glory according to the excellency of his nature, diſcovered in the frame of our own. 'Tis as much our ſin not to glorifie God as God, as not to attempt the glorifying of him at all: 'Tis our ſin not to worſhip God as God, as well as to omit the teſtifying any reſpect at all to him. As the Divine Nature is the object of Worſhip, ſo the Divine Perfections are to be honoured in Worſhip: We do not honour God if we honour him not as he is; we honour him not as a Spirit, if we think him not worthy of the ardors and raviſhing admirations of our Spirits. If we think the Devotions of the Body are ſufficient for him, we contract him into the condition of our own Being; and not only deny him to be a Spiritual Nature, but daſh out all thoſe Perfections which he could not be poſſeſſed of, were he not a Spirit.

5. *The Ceremonial Law was aboliſh'd to promote the Spirituality of Divine Worſhip.* That ſervice was groſs, carnal, calculated for an infant and ſenſitive Church; it conſiſted in Rudiments, the Circumciſion of the Fleſh, the blood and ſmoke of Sacrifices, the ſteams of Incenſe, obſervation of Days, diſtinction of Meats, Corporeal Purifications; every Leaf of the Law is clogged with ſome Rite to be particularly obſerved by them: The Spirituality of Worſhip lay veil'd under a thick Cloud, that the People could not behold the glory of the Goſpel, which lay covered under thoſe ſhadows, 2 *Cor.*3.13. *They could not ſtedfaſtly look to the end of that which is aboliſhed*: They underſtood not the Glory and Spiritual intent of the Law, and therefore came ſhort of that Spiritual frame in the Worſhip of God, which was their duty. And therefore in oppoſition to this adminiſtration, the Worſhip of God under the Goſpel is called by our Saviour in the Text, *a Worſhip in ſpirit*; more ſpiritual for the matter, more ſpiritual for the motives, and more ſpiritual for the manner and frames of Worſhip.

(1.) *This legal ſervice is called fleſh in Scripture, in oppoſition to the Goſpel, which is called ſpirit.* The Ordinances of the Law, tho' of Divine Inſtitution, are dignified by the Apoſtle with no better a Title than
*Heb.9.10. *Carnal Ordinances* *, and a *Carnal Command* *; but
*Heb.7.16. the Goſpel is called *the Miniſtration of the Spirit*, as being attended with a ſpecial and ſpiritual efficacy on
* 2Cor.3.8. the minds of Men *: And when the degenerate *Galatians*, after having taſted of the pure ſtreams of the Goſpel, turned about to drink of the thicker ſtreams of the Law; the Apoſtle tells them, that they begun *in the Spirit*, and would now be *made perfect in the Fleſh* *. They would leave the Righteouſneſs of Faith * Gal. 3.3. for a Juſtification by Works. The Moral Law which is in its own nature *Spiritual* *, in regard of the abuſe *Rom.7.14 of it, in expectation of Juſtification by the outward works of it, is called *Fleſh*; much more may the Ceremonial adminiſtration, which was never intended to run parallel with the Moral, nor had any foundation in nature as the other had.

That whole Oeconomy conſiſted in ſenſible and material things which only touched the fleſh: 'Tis called *the Letter* and the *oldneſs of the Letter* *; as *Rom. 7.6. Letters which are but empty ſounds of themſelves, but put together and formed into words, ſignifie ſomething to the mind of the Hearer or Reader: An old Letter, a thing of no efficacy upon the Spirit, but as a Law written upon Paper. The Goſpel hath an efficacious Spirit attending it, ſtrongly working upon the Mind and Will, and moulding the Soul into a Spiritual frame for God, according to the Doctrine of the Goſpel; the one is old and decays, the other is new and increaſeth daily.

And as the Law it ſelf is called *fleſh*, ſo the obſervers of it, and reſters in it, are called *Iſrael after the fleſh* *: And the Evangelical worſhipper is called a * 1 Cor.10. *Few after the Spirit*, Rom.2.29. They were *Iſrael* af- v.18. ter the fleſh as born of *Jacob*, not *Iſrael after the Spirit as born of God*; and therefore the Apoſtle calls them *Iſrael* and not *Iſrael* *. *Iſrael* after a carnal birth, * Rom.9.6. not *Iſrael* after a ſpiritual: *Iſrael* in the Circumciſion of the fleſh, not *Iſrael* by a regeneration in the heart.

(2.) *The legal Ceremonies were not a fit means to bring the heart into a ſpiritual frame.* They had a ſpiritual intent; the *Rock* and *Manna* prefigured the Salvation and ſpiritual nouriſhment by the Redeemer. 1 Cor.10. The Sacrifices were to point them to the Juſtice of v.3,4. God in the puniſhment of ſin, and the mercy of God in ſubſtituting them in their ſteads, as types of the Redeemer, and the Ranſom by his blood. The Circumciſion of the fleſh was to inſtruct them in the Circumciſion of the heart: They were fleſh in regard of their matter, weakneſs and cloudineſs: Spiritual in regard of their intent and ſignification: They did inſtruct, but not efficaciouſly work ſtrong ſpiritual affections in the Soul of the Worſhipper. They were *weak and beggerly elements* *; had neither wealth to inrich, nor ſtrength * Gal.4.9. to nouriſh the Soul: They could not *perfect* the Comers to them, or put them into a frame agreeable to the nature of God *, nor *purge the Conſcience from thoſe* *Heb.10.1. *dead* and dull diſpoſitions which were by nature in Heb.9.9. them *: Being carnal, they could not have an efficacy *Heb.9.15. to purifie the Conſcience of the offerer, and work ſpiritual effects: Had they continued without the exhibition of Chriſt, they could never have wrought any *change* in us, or purchaſed any *favour* for us *. At the * Burges best they were but ſhadows, and came unexpreſſibly *vind.* p.256. ſhort of the efficacy of that perſon and ſtate whoſe ſhadows they were. The ſhadow of a Man is too weak to perform what the Man himſelf can do, becauſe it wants the Life, Spirit and Activity of the ſubſtance: The whole Pomp and Scene was ſuited more to the ſenſitive than the intellectual nature; and like Pictures, pleaſed the fancy of Children, rather than improved their reaſon. The *Jewiſh* ſtate was a ſtate of *Childhood* *, and that adminiſtration a *Pedagogy* *. The Law 4Gal.5.2. was a School-maſter, fitted for their weak and childiſh *Gal.4.24. capacity, and could no more Spiritualize the heart, than the teachings in a Primer-School can enable the Mind, and make it fit for Affairs of State: And becauſe they could not better the Spirit, they were inſtituted only for a time, as elements delivered to an Infant Age, which naturally lives a life of ſenſe, rather than a life of reaſon. It was alſo a ſervile ſtate, which doth rather debaſe than elevate the Mind; rather Carnalize than

Spiritualize the Heart: Beſides, 'tis a ſenſe of mercy, that both melts and elevates the heart into a Spiritual frame: * *There is forgiveneſs with thee that thou mayeſt be feared*: And they had in that ſtate but ſome glimmerings of mercy in the daily bloody intimations of Juſtice: There was no Sacrifice for ſome ſins, but a cutting off without the leaſt hints of pardon; and in the yearly remembrance of ſin, there was as much to ſhiver them with fear, as to poſſeſs them with hopes. And ſuch a ſtate which always held them under the Conſcience of ſin, could not produce a free Spirit, which was neceſſary for a worſhip of God according to his nature.

* Pſal.130. v.4.

(3.) *In their uſe they rather hindred than furthered a Spiritual worſhip.* In their own nature they did not tend to the obſtructing a Spiritual worſhip, for then they had been contrary to the nature of Religion, and the end of God who appointed them: Nor did God cover the Evangelical Doctrine under the clouds of the legal adminiſtration, to hinder the people of *Iſrael* from perceiving it; but becauſe they were not yet capable to bear the ſplendor of it, had it been clearly ſet before them. The ſhining of the face of *Moſes* was too dazling for their weak eyes, and therefore there was a neceſſity of a *veil*, not for the things themſelves, but the *weakneſs of their eyes* *. The carnal affections of that people ſunk down into the things themſelves, ſtuck in the outward pomp, and pierced not through the veil to the ſpiritual intent of them. And by the uſe of them, without rational conceptions, they beſotted their minds, and became ſenſeleſs of thoſe Spiritual motions required of them. Hence came all their expectations of a carnal *Meſſiah*; the veil of Ceremonies was ſo thick, and the film upon their eyes ſo condenſed, that they could not look through the veil to the Spirit of Chriſt. They beheld not the Heavenly *Canaan* for the beauty of the Earthly, nor minded the regeneration of the Spirit, while they reſted upon the purifications of the fleſh: The prevalency of ſenſe, and ſenſitive affections, diverted their minds from enquiring into the intent of them. Senſe and matter are often clogs to the mind, and ſenſible objects are the ſame often to ſpiritual motions. Our Souls are never more raiſed, than when they are abſtracted from the intanglements of them. A pompous worſhip made up of many ſenſible objects, weakens the ſpirituality of Religion: Thoſe that are moſt zealous for outward, are uſually moſt cold and indifferent in inward obſervances: And thoſe that overdo in carnal modes, uſually underdo in ſpiritual affections.

* 2Cor.3. v.13,14.

This was the *Jewiſh* ſtate *. The nature of the ceremonies being pompous and earthly by their ſhow and beauty, meeting with their weakneſs and childiſh affections, filled their eyes with an outward luſtre; allured their minds, and detained them from ſeeking things higher and more ſpiritual: The kernel of thoſe rites lay concealed in a thick ſhell, the ſpiritual glory was little ſeen, and the ſpiritual ſweetneſs little taſted. Unleſs the *Scripture* be diligently ſearched, it ſeems to transfer the worſhip of God from true faith and the ſpiritual motions of the heart, and ſtake it down to outward obſervances, and the *opus operatum*. Beſides, the voice of the Law did only declare Sacrifices, and invited the Worſhipper to them, with a promiſe of the atonement of ſin, turning away the wrath of God. It never plainly acquainted them, that thoſe things were types and ſhadows of ſomething future, that they were only outward purifications of the fleſh: It never plainly told them, at the time of appointing them, that thoſe Sacrifices could not aboliſh ſin, and reconcile them to God. Indeed we ſee more of them, ſince their death and diſſection, in that one Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, than can be diſcern'd in the *five Books of Moſes*: Beſides, Man naturally affects a carnal Life, and therefore affects a carnal Worſhip: He deſigns the gratifying his ſenſe, and would have a Religion of the ſame nature. Moſt Men have no mind to buſie their Reaſon above the things of ſenſe, and are naturally unwilling to raiſe them up to thoſe things which are allied to the ſpiritual nature of God; and therefore the more ſpiritual any Ordinance is, the more averſe is the heart of Man to it. There is a *ſimplicity of the Goſpel*, from which our minds are eaſily corrupted by things that pleaſure the ſenſe, as *Eve* was by the curioſity of her eye, and the liquoriſhneſs of her Palate *. From this Principle hath ſprung all the Idolatry in the World. The Jews knew they had a God who had delivered them, but they would have a ſenſible God to go before them *: And the Papacy at this day, is a witneſs of the truth of this natural Corruption.

* Illyric. *de velam. Moſis*, p. 221, &c.

* 2Cor.11. v.3.

* Exod.32. v.1.

4. *Upon theſe accounts therefore God never teſtified himſelf well pleaſed with that kind of Worſhip.* He was not diſpleaſed with them as they were his own inſtitution, and ordained for the repreſenting (tho' in an obſcure manner) the glorious things of the Goſpel; nor was he offended with thoſe peoples obſervance of them: For ſince he had commanded them, it was their duty to perform them, and their ſin to neglect them: But he was diſpleaſed with them as they were practiſed by them, with Souls as morally carnal in the practices, as the ceremonies were materially carnal in their ſubſtance. It was not their diſobedience to obſerve them, but it was a diſobedience, and a contempt of the end of the inſtitution to reſt upon them; to be warm in them, and cold in morals: They fed upon the Bone, and neglected the Marrow; pleaſed themſelves with the Shell, and ſought not for the Kernel: They joyned not with them the internal Worſhip of God, Fear of him, with Faith in the promiſed Seed, which lay veil'd under thoſe coverings, *Hoſ.6.6. I deſired Mercy, and not Sacrifice; and the knowledge of God, more than burnt Offerings:* And therefore he ſeems ſometimes weary of his own inſtitutions, and calls them not his own, but *their* Sacrifices, *their* Feaſts, *Iſa.1.11,14.* They were *his* by appointment, *theirs* by abuſe: The Inſtitution was from his goodneſs and condeſcenſion, therefore *his*; the corruption of them was from the Vice of their Nature; therefore *theirs*. He often blamed them for their carnality in them; ſhew'd his diſlike of placing all their Religion in them, gives the Sacrificers upon that account, no better a Title, than that of the Princes of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* *, and compares the Sacrifices themſelves to the *cutting off a Dogs neck, Swines blood*, and the *murder of a Man* *. And indeed, God never valued them, or expreſt any delight in them: He deſpiſed the *Feaſts* of the wicked, *Amos* 5.21. and had no eſteem for the material Offerings of the Godly, *Pſal.*50.13. *Will I eat the fleſh of Bulls, or drink the blood of Goats?* Which he ſpeaks to his Saints and People, before he comes to reprove the wicked; which he begins, *v.16. But to the wicked, God ſaid*, &c. So ſlightly he eſteemed them, that he ſeems to diſown them to be any part of his command, when he brought his People out of the Land of *Egypt*, Jer.7.21. *I ſpake not to your Fathers, nor commanded them concerning burnt Offerings and Sacrifices.* He did not value nor regard them, in compariſon of that inward frame which he had required by the moral Law; that being given before the Law of Ceremonies, obliged them in the firſt place, to an obſervance of thoſe Precepts. They ſeemed to be below the Nature of God, and could not of themſelves pleaſe him. None could in reaſon perſwade themſelves, that the death of a Beaſt was a proportionable Offering for the ſin of a Man, or ever was intended for the expiation of Tranſgreſſion. In the ſame rank are all our bodily ſervices under the Goſpel: A loud voice without Spirit, bended bulruſhes without inward affections, are no more delightful to God, than the Sacrifices of Animals: 'Tis but a change of one Brute for another of

* Iſa.1.10.

* Iſa. 66.3.

a higher ſpecies; a meer Brute, for that part of Man which hath an agreement with Brutes: Such a Service is a meer Animal Service, and not Spiritual.

5. *And therefore God never intended that ſort of worſhip to be durable, and had often mentioned the change of it for one more Spiritual.* It was not good or evil in it ſelf; whatſoever goodneſs it had, was ſolely deriv'd to it by Inſtitution, and therefore it was mutable. It had no conformity with the Spiritual Nature of God who was to be worſhipped; nor with the Rational Nature of Man, who was to worſhip, and therefore he often ſpeaks of taking away the *New Moons*, and *Feaſts*, and *Sacrifices*, and all the ceremonial Worſhip, as things he took no pleaſure in, to have a Worſhip more ſuited to his excellent Nature: But he never ſpeaks of removing the Goſpel Adminiſtration, and the worſhip preſcribed there, as being more agreeable to the Nature and Perfections of God, and diſplaying them more Illuſtriouſly to the World.

The Apoſtle tells us, it was to be *diſannull'd because of its weakneſs* *: A determinate time was fixed for its duration, till the accompliſhment of the truth figured under that *Pedagogy* *. Some of the modes of that worſhip being only typical, muſt naturally expire and be inſignificant in their uſe, upon the finiſhing of that by the Redeemer, which they did prefigure: And other patts of it, tho' God ſuffered them ſo long because of the weakneſs of the Worſhipper; yet becauſe it became not God to be always worſhipped in that manner, he would reject them, and introduce another more ſpiritual and elevated. *Incenſe and a pure Offering* ſhould be offered every where unto his Name *.

*Heb.7.18. * Gal.4.2. *Mal.1.11.

* He often told them he would make a *New Covenant* by the *Meſſiah*, and the Old ſhould be rejected; that the *former things ſhould not be remembred, and the things of old no more conſidered*, when he ſhould do *a new thing in the Earth* *: Even the Ark of the Covenant, the Symbol of his Preſence, and the Glory of the Lord, in that Nation ſhould not any more be remembered and viſited *; that the Temple and Sacrifices ſhould be rejected, and others eſtabliſhed; that the Order of the *Aaronical Prieſthood* ſhould be aboliſh'd, and that of *Melchiſedeck* ſet up in the ſtead of it in the Perſon of the *Meſſiah* to endure for *ever* *: That *Jeruſalem* ſhould be changed, a new Heaven and Earth created, a Worſhip more conformable to Heaven, more advantageous to Earth. God had proceeded in the removal of ſome part of it, before the time of taking down the whole furniture of this Houſe: The Pot of *Manna* was loſt, *Urim* and *Thummim* ceaſed, the glory of the Temple was diminiſh'd, and the ignorant People wept at the ſight of the one, without raiſing their Faith and Hope in the conſideration of the other, which was promiſed to be filled with a Spiritual Glory. And as ſoon as ever the Goſpel was ſpread in the World, God thundred out his Judgments upon that place in which he had fixed all thoſe legal obſervances; ſo that the *Jews*, in the Letter and Fleſh, could never practiſe the main part of their Worſhip, ſince they were expelled from that place where it was only to be celebrated. 'Tis one thouſand ſix hundred years ſince they have been deprived of their *Altar*, which was the foundation of all the Levitical worſhip, and have wandred in the World *without a Sacrifice*, *a Prince* or *Prieſt*, an *Ephod* or *Teraphim* *.

* Pſal. Pen. 142. * Iſa. 43. v. 18, 19. * Jer. 3. 16. * Pſal. 110. * Hoſ. 3. 4.

And God fully put an end to it in the Command he gave to the Apoſtles, and in them to us, in the preſence of *Moſes* and *Elias*, to hear his Son only, *Matth.* 17. 5. *Behold a voice out of the Cloud, which ſaid, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleaſed, hear him.* And at the death of our Saviour, teſtified it to that whole Nation and the World, by the rending in twain the Veil of the Temple.

The whole frame of that Service, which was Carnal, and by reaſon of the corruption of Man, weakned, is nulled; and a ſpiritual worſhip is made known to the World, that we might now ſerve God in a more Spiritual manner, and with more Spiritual frames.

6 Propoſition. *The Service and Worſhip the Goſpel ſettles, is ſpiritual, and the performance of it more ſpiritual.* Spirituality is the Genius of the Goſpel, as Carnality was of the Law; the Goſpel is therefore called *Spirit*. We are abſtracted from the imployments of ſenſe, and brought nearer to a heavenly State. The *Jews* had Angels Bread poured upon them; we have Angels Service preſcribed to us, the Praiſes of God, Communion with God in Spirit, through his Son *Jeſus Chriſt*, and ſtronger foundations for ſpiritual affections. 'Tis called a *reaſonable Service* *, 'tis ſuited to a Rational Nature, tho' it finds no friendſhip from the corruption of Reaſon. It preſcribes a Service fit for the reaſonable Faculties of the Soul, and advanceth them while it employs them. The word *reaſonable* may be tranſlated, *word Service* *, as well as *reaſonable Service*; an Evangelical Service in oppoſition to a Law Service. All Evangelical Service is reaſonable, and all truly reaſonable Service is Evangelical.

*Rom. 12. 1 * V. Hammond *in loc.*

The *matter* of the worſhip is Spiritual; it conſiſts in love of God, faith in God, recourſe to his goodneſs, Meditation on him, and Communion with him. It lays aſide the Ceremonial, Spiritualizeth the Moral: The Commands that concerned our Duty to God, as well as thoſe that concerned our Duty to our Neighbour, were reduced by Chriſt to the Spiritual intention.

The *Motives* are Spiritual; 'tis a ſtate of more *grace* as well as of more *truth* *, ſupported by ſpiritual promiſes, beaming out in ſpiritual priviledges: Heaven comes down in it to Earth, to ſpiritualize Earth for Heaven.

*John 1. 17

The *manner* of worſhip is more Spiritual; higher flights of the Soul, ſtronger ardours of affections, ſincerer aims at his glory; miſts are removed from our minds, cloggs from the Soul, more of love than fear; Faith in Chriſt kindles the affections and works by them.

The *aſſiſtances* to Spiritual worſhip are greater. The Spirit doth not drop, but is plentifully poured out. It doth not light ſometimes upon, but dwells in the heart. Chriſt ſuited the Goſpel to a Spiritual heart, and the Spirit changeth a Carnal heart to make it fit for a Spiritual Goſpel. He blows upon the Garden, and cauſes the Spices to flow forth: And often makes the Soul in worſhip like the Chariots of *Aminadab*, in a quick and nimble motion. Our Bleſſed Lord and Saviour, by his death, diſcovered to us the nature of God; and after his Aſcenſion, ſent his Spirit to fit us for the worſhip of God, and converſe with him.

One Spiritual Evangelical believing breath, is more delightful to God than Millions of Altars made up of the richeſt Pearls, and ſmoaking with the coſtlieſt Oblations, becauſe it is Spiritual: And a mite of Spirit is of more worth than the greateſt weight of Fleſh. One Holy Angel is more excellent than a whole World of meer Bodies.

7 Propoſition. *Yet the Worſhip of God with our Bodies is not to be rejected upon the account that God requires a Spiritual Worſhip.* Tho' we muſt perform the weightier Duties of the Law, yet we are not to omit, and leave undone the lighter Precepts. Since both the *Magnalia* and *minutula legis*, the greater and the leſſer Duties of the Law, have the ſtamp of Divine Authority upon them.

As God under the Ceremonial Law did not command the worſhip of the Body, and the Obſervation of

of outward Rites without the Engagement of the Spirit; ſo neither doth he command that of the Spirit, without the peculiar attendance of the Body.

The *Schwelkfendians* denied bodily Worſhip. And the indecent Poſtures of many in publick Attendance, intimate no great care either of compoſing their Bodies or Spirits. A morally diſcompoſed Body intimates a tainted Heart.

Our *Bodies* as well as our *Spirits* are to be preſen-
*Ro. 12. 1. ted to God *. Our Bodies in lieu of the Sacrifices of Beaſts, as in the Judaical Inſtitutions; Body for the whole Man; a living Sacrifice, not to be ſlain, as the Beaſts were, but living a new Life, in a holy Poſture, with crucified Affections: This is the inference the Apoſtle makes of the Priviledges of Juſtification, Adoption, Co-heirſhip with Chriſt, which he had before diſcourſed of; Priviledges conferred upon the Perſon and not upon a part of Man.

1. *Bodily Worſhip is due to God.* He hath a right to an Adoration by our Bodies as they are his by Creation; his right is not diminiſht but increaſed by the bleſſing of Redemption, 1 Cor. 6. 20. *For you are bought with a Price, therefore glorifie God in your Bodies and your Spirits, which are Gods.* The Body as well as the Spirit is redeemed, ſince our Saviour ſuffered Crucifixion in his Body, as well as Agonies in his Soul. Body is not taken here for the whole Man, as it may be in *Rom.* 12. But for the material part of our Nature, it being diſtinguiſht from the Spirit: If we are to render to God an Obedience with our Bodies, we are to render him ſuch Acts of Worſhip with our Bodies, as they are capable of. As God is the Father of Spirits, ſo he is the God of all Fleſh: Therefore the fleſh he hath framed of the Earth, as well as the Noble Portion he hath breathed into us, cannot be denyed him without a palpable Injuſtice: The Service of the Body we muſt not deny to God, unleſs we will deny him to be the Author of it, and the exerciſe of his providential care about it. The mercies of God are renewed every day upon our Bodies as well as our Souls, and therefore they ought to expreſs a fealty to God for his boun-
*Sherman's *Greek in the Temple.* p. 61, 62. ty every day; [* both are from God, both ſhould be for God. Man conſiſts of Body and Soul, the Service of Man is the Service of both. The Body is to be ſanctified as well as the Soul, and therefore to be offered to God as well as the Soul. Both are to be glorified, both are to glorifie: As our Saviours Divinity was manifeſted in his Body, ſo ſhould our ſpirituality in ours. To give God the Service of the Body and not of the Soul, is Hypocriſie; to give God the Service of the Spirit, and not of the Body, is ſacrilege; to give him neither, Atheiſm.] If the only part of Man that is viſible were exempted from the Service of God, there could be no viſible Teſtimonies of Piety given upon any occaſion: Since not a Moiety of Man, but the whole is God's Creature, he ought to pay a homage with the whole, and not only with a moiety of himſelf.

2. *Worſhip in Socities is due to God, but this cannot be without ſome bodily Expreſſions.* The Law of Nature doth as much direct Men to combine together in publick Societies for the acknowledment of God, as in Civil Communities for ſelf-preſervation and order. And the notice of a Society for Religion is more antient than the mention of Civil Aſſociations for Politick Government, *Gen.* 4. 26. *Then began Men to call upon the Name of the Lord, viz.* in the time of *Seth.* No queſtion but *Adam* had worſhipped God before as well as *Abel*, and a Family-Religion had been preſerved; but as Mankind increaſed in diſtinct
* Stilling-fleet's *Irenicum. c.* 1. § 1. *p.* 23. Families, they knit together in Companies to ſolemnize the Worſhip of God. * Hence, as ſome think, thoſe that incorporated together for ſuch ends, were called the *Sons of God*: Sons by profeſſion, tho' not Sons by Adoption: As thoſe of *Corinth* were Saints by profeſſion, tho' in ſuch a corrupted Church they could not be all ſo by Regeneration; yet Saints, as being of a Chriſtian Society, *and calling upon the Name of Chriſt, i. e. worſhipping God in Chriſt*, tho' they *might not be all Saints in Spirit and Practice.* So *Cain* and *Abel* met together to worſhip, *Gen.* 4. 3. *At the end of the days*, at a ſet time. God ſettled a publick Worſhip among the *Jews*, inſtituted Synagogues for their Convening together, whence call'd the *Synagogues of God* *. * Pſ. 47. 8. The Sabbath was inſtituted to acknowledge God a common Benefactor. Publick Worſhip keeps up the memorials of God in a World prone to Atheiſm, and a ſenſe of God in a heart prone to Forgetfulneſs. The Angels ſung in Company, not ſingly at the Birth of Chriſt *, and praiſed God not only with a ſimple *Luk. 2. 13. elevation of their Spiritual Nature, but audibly by forming a voice in the Air: Affections are more lively, Spirits more raiſed in Publick than Private: God will credit his own Ordinance. Fire increaſeth by laying together many Coals on one Place; ſo is Devotion inflamed by the union of many Hearts, and by a joynt Preſence: Nor can the approach of the laſt day of Judgment, or particular Judgments upon a Nation give a Writ of eaſe from ſuch Aſſemblies, *Heb.* 10. 25. *Not forſaking the aſſembling our ſelves together, but ſo much the more as you ſee the day approaching*: Whether it be underſtood of the day of Judgment, or the day of the Jewiſh Deſtruction and the Chriſtian Perſecution, the Apoſtle uſes it as an Argument to quicken them to the obſervance, not to encourage them to a neglect. Since therefore natural light informs us, and Divine inſtitution commands us publickly to acknowledge our ſelves the Servants of God, it implies the Service of the Body: Such acknowledgments cannot be without viſible Teſtimonies, and outward Exerciſes of Devotion, as well as inward Affections. This promotes God's Honour, checks others Prophaneneſs, allures *Men* to the ſame Expreſſions of Duty. And tho' there may be Hypocriſie, and an outward Garb without an inward frame; yet better a moiety of Worſhip, than none at all; better acknowledge God's Right in one than diſown it in both.

3. *Jeſus Chriſt the moſt Spiritual Worſhipper, worſhip'd God with his Body*: He prayed orally, and kneeled, *Father, if it be thy Will*, &c *. He bleſſed with his *Luke 22. mouth, *Father, I thank thee* *. He lifted up his Eyes, *v.* 41, 42. as well as elevated his Spirit, when he praiſed his *Matt. 11. Father for mercy received, or begged for the bleſſings *v.* 26. his Diſciples wanted *. The Strength of the Spi- * John 11. rit muſt have vent at the outward *Members*. The *v.* 41. Holy Men of God have employed the Body in ſignificant expreſſions of Worſhip: *Abraham* in falling on his face, *Paul* in kneeling, employing their Tongues, lifting up their Hands. Tho' *Jacob* was bed-rid, yet he would not worſhip God without ſome devout expreſſions of Reverence; 'tis in one place *leaning upon his Staff* *, in another *bowing himſelf upon his Beds-* * Heb. 11. *head* *: The reaſon of the diverſity is in the Hebrew *v.* 21. word, which without vowels may be read *Mittah* a * Gen. 47. Bed, or *Matteh* a Staff; howſoever, both ſignifie a *v.* 31. Teſtimony of Adoration by a Reverent Geſture of the Body. Indeed in Angels and ſeparated Souls a Worſhip is performed purely by the Spirit; but whiles the Soul is in conjunction with the Body, it can hardly perform a ſerious act of worſhip without ſome Tincture upon the outward Man, and reverential compoſure of the Body: Fire cann't be in the cloaths, but it will be felt by the Members; nor flames be pent up in the Soul without burſting out in the Body: The heart can no more reſtrain it ſelf from breaking out, than *Joſeph* could incloſe his affections, without ex- * Gen. 45. preſſing them in tears to his Brethren *. *We believe,* *2 Cor. 4. *and therefore ſpeak* *. *v.* 1, 2. *v.* 13.

To

To conclude; God hath appointed ſome parts of Worſhip which cannot be performed without the body, as Sacraments; we have need of them, becauſe we are not wholly ſpiritual and incorporeal Creatures.

The Religion, which conſiſts in externals only, is not for an intellectual nature: A worſhip purely intellectual, is too ſublime for a nature allied to ſenſe and depending much upon it: The Chriſtian mode of worſhip is proportioned to both; it makes the ſenſe to aſſiſt the mind, and elevates the ſpirit above the ſenſe: Bodily worſhip helps the ſpiritual: The members of the body reflect back upon the heart, the voice bars diſtractions, the tongue ſets the heart on fire in good as well as in evil. 'Tis as much againſt the light of nature to ſerve God without external ſignifications, as to ſerve him only with them without the intention of the mind. As the inviſible God declares himſelf to men by viſible works and ſigns, ſo ſhould we declare our inviſible frames by viſible expreſſions: God hath given us a ſoul and body in conjunction, and we are to ſerve him in the ſame manner he hath framed us.

The ſecond thing I am to ſhew, is, *what Spiritual Worſhip is.* In general, the whole Spirit is to be employed: The Name of God is not ſanctified but by the engagement of our Souls.

Worſhip is an act of the underſtanding, applying it ſelf to the knowledge of the excellency of God, and actual thoughts of his Majeſty, recognizing him as the ſupreme Lord and Governour of the world, which is natural knowledge; beholding the glory of his Attributes in the Redeemer, which is Evangelical knowledge: This is the ſole act of the ſpirit of Man. The ſame reaſon is for all our worſhip as for our thankſgiving: This muſt be done with underſtanding, *Pſal.* 47.7. *Sing ye praiſe with underſtanding*, with a knowledge and ſenſe of his greatneſs, goodneſs and wiſdom. 'Tis alſo an act of the Will, whereby the Soul adores and reverenceth his Majeſty, is raviſht with his amiableneſs, embraceth his goodneſs, enters it ſelf into an intimate Communion with this moſt lovely object, and pitcheth all his affections upon him.

We muſt worſhip God underſtandingly; 'tis not elſe a reaſonable ſervice: The Nature of God, and the Law of God abhor a blind Offering; we muſt worſhip him heartily, elſe we offer him a dead Sacrifice: A reaſonable ſervice is that wherein the mind doth truly act ſomething with God. All ſpiritual acts muſt be acts of reaſon, otherwiſe they are not human acts, becauſe they want that principle which is conſtitutive of Man, and doth difference him from other Creatures: Acts done only by ſenſe are the acts of a Brute; acts done by reaſon are the acts of a Man: That which is only an act of ſenſe, cannot be an act of Religion: The ſenſe without the conduct of reaſon is not the ſubject of Religious acts, for then Beaſts were capable of Religion as well as Men: There cannot be Religion where there is not reaſon; and there cannot be the exerciſe of Religion, where there is not an exerciſe of the rational faculties. Nothing can be a Chriſtian act, that is not a human act: Beſides, all worſhip muſt be for ſome end; the worſhip of God muſt be for God; 'tis by the exerciſe of our rational faculties, that we only can intend an end: An ignorant and carnal worſhip is a brutiſh worſhip.

Particularly,

1. *Spiritual Worſhip is a Worſhip from a ſpiritual Nature.* Not only Phyſically ſpiritual, ſo our Souls are in their frame; but morally ſpiritual, by a renewing principle. The heart muſt be firſt caſt into the mould of the Goſpel, before it can perform a worſhip required by the Goſpel. *Adam* living in Paradice, might perform a ſpiritual worſhip; but *Adam* fallen from his rectitude, could not: We being Heirs of his Nature, as Heirs of his Impotence: Reſtoration to a ſpiritual Life, muſt precede any act of ſpiritual worſhip. As no work can be good, ſo no worſhip can be ſpiritual, till we are created in Chriſt*. Chriſt is our Life *. As no natural action can be performed without life in the root or heart, ſo no ſpiritual act without Chriſt in the Soul: Our being in Chriſt, is as neceſſary to every ſpiritual act, as the union of our Soul with our Body is neceſſary to natural action. Nothing can exceed the limits of its nature; for then it ſhould exceed it ſelf in acting, and do that which it hath no principle to do. A Beaſt cannot act like a Man, without partaking of the nature of a Man; nor a Man act like an *Angel*, without partaking of the Angelical nature: How can we perform ſpiritual acts, without a ſpiritual principle. Whatſoever worſhip proceeds from the corrupted nature, cannot deſerve the title of ſpiritual worſhip, becauſe it ſprings not from a ſpiritual habit. If thoſe that are *evil cannot ſpeak good things*, thoſe that are carnal cannot offer a ſpiritual ſervice. Poyſon is the fruit of a *Vipers* nature, *Matt.* 12.34. *Oh, Generation of Vipers, how can you being evil ſpeak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth ſpeaks.* As the root is, ſo is the fruit. If the Soul be habitually carnal, the worſhip cannot be actually ſpiritual: There may be an intention of ſpirit, but there is no ſpiritual principle as a root of that intention. A heart may be ſenſibly united with a duty, when it is not ſpiritually united with Chriſt in it. Carnal motives, and carnal ends may fix the mind in an act of worſhip, as the ſenſe of ſome preſſing affliction may enlarge a mans mind in Prayer. Whatſoever is agreeable to the Nature of God, muſt have a ſtamp of Chriſt upon it; a ſtamp of his grace in performance, as well as of his Mediation in the acceptance. The *Apoſtle lived not*, but *Chriſt lived in him* *; the Soul worſhips not, but Chriſt in him: Not that Chriſt performs the act of worſhip, but enables us ſpiritually to worſhip, after he enables us ſpiritually to live. As God counts not any Soul living but in Chriſt, ſo he counts not any a ſpiritual worſhipper but in Chriſt. The goodneſs and farneſs of the fruit comes from the fatneſs of the Olive wherein we are engrafted: We muſt find healing in Chriſts wings, before God can find ſpirituality in our ſervices. All worſhip iſſuing from a dead nature, is but a dead ſervice: A living action cannot be performed, without being knit to a living root.

* Eph. 2.10
* Col. 3.4.
* Gal. 2.20.

2. *Spiritual Worſhip is done by the influence, and with the aſſiſtance of the Spirit of God.* A heart may be ſpiritual, when a particular act of worſhip may not be ſpiritual. The Spirit may dwell in the heart, when he may ſuſpend his influence on the act. Our worſhip is then ſpiritual, when the fire that kindles our affections comes from Heaven, as that fire upon the Altar wherewith the Sacrifices were conſumed. God taſts a ſweetneſs in no ſervice, but as it is dreſt up by the hand of the Mediator, and hath the Air of his own Spirit in it: They are but natural acts, without a ſupernatural aſſiſtance: Without an actual influence, we cannot act from ſpiritual motives, nor for ſpiritual ends, nor in a ſpiritual manner. We cannot *mortifie* a luſt without the *Spirit* *, nor quicken a ſervice without the Spirit. Whatſoever corruption is killed, is ſlain by his Power; whatſoever duty is ſpiritualized, is refined by his Breath. He *quickens our dead bodies* in our Reſurrection *; he renews our dead Souls in our Regeneratioa; he quickens our carnal ſervices in our adorations: The choiceſt acts of worſhip are but *infirmities*, without his auxiliary *help* *. We are Loggs, unable to move our ſelves, till he raiſe our faculties to a pitch agreeable to God; puts his hand to the duty, and lifts that up, and us with it. Never any great act was performed by the *Apoſtles* to God, or for God, but they are ſaid to be filled with the

* Rom. 8.13
* Rom. 8.11
* Rom. 8.26

the Holy Ghoſt. Chriſt could not have been conceived immaculate as that *holy thing*, without the Spirits overſhadowing the Virgin; nor any ſpiritual act conceived in our heart, without the ſpirits moving upon us, to bring forth a living Religion from us. The acts of Worſhip are ſaid to be in the Spirit, *ſupplication in the* *Eph.6.18. *Spirit* *; not only with the ſtrength and affection of our own Spirits, but with the mighty operation of the * Jude 20. Holy Ghoſt, if *Jude* may be the Interpreter *. The Holy Ghoſt exciting us, impelling us, and firing our Souls by his divine flame; raiſing up the affections, and making the Soul cry, with a holy importunity, *Abba*, Father. To render our Worſhip ſpiritual, we ſhould, before every ingagement in it, implore the actual preſence of the Spirit, without which we are not able to ſend forth one ſpiritual breath or groan; but be Wind-bound, like a Ship without a Gale, and our Worſhip be no better than carnal. How doth the Spouſe ſolicit the Spirit with an *awake oh North-wind, and come* Cant.4.16. *thou South-wind*, &c.

3. *Spiritual Worſhip is done with Sincerity*: When the heart ſtands right to God, and the Soul performs what it pretends to perform: When we ſerve God with our Spirits, as the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 1. 9. *God is my Witneſs, whom I ſerve with my Spirit in the Goſpel of his Son*. This is not meant of the Holy Ghoſt; for the Apoſtle would never have called the Spirit of God, his own Spirit; but with *my Spirit*, that is a ſincere frame of heart. A Carnal worſhip, whether under the Law or Goſpel, is when we are buſied about external Rites, without an inward compliance of Soul. *Pro.23.26 God demands the heart; * *My Son give me thy heart*, not give me thy tongue, or thy lips, or thy hands; theſe may be given without the heart, but the heart can never be beſtowed without theſe as its attendants. A heap of Services can be no more welcome to God, without our Spirits, than all *Jacobs* Sons could be to *Joſeph*, without the *Benjamin* he deſired to ſee. God is not taken with the Cabinet, but the Jewel: He firſt reſpected *Abels* Faith and Sincerity, and then his Sacrifice; he diſreſpected *Cains* Infidelity and Hypo- *Moulin. Semons De cad.4.Ser.4 p.80.* criſie, and then his Offering. [For this cauſe he rejected the Offerings of the *Jews*, the Prayers of the *Phariſees*, and the Alms of *Ananias* and *Saphira*, becauſe their hearts and their duties were at a diſtance from one another. In all Spiritual Sacrifices, our Spirits are Gods Portion. Under the Law, the Reins were to be conſumed by the Fire on the Altar, becauſe the ſecret intentions of the heart were ſignified by them, *Pſal.* 7. 9. *The Lord trieth the Heart and the Reins*. It was an ill *Omen* among the Heathen, if a *Victim* wanted a Heart. The Widows Mites with her heart in them, were more eſteemed than the richer Offerings without it.] Not the quantity of Service, but the will in it, is of account with this infinite Spirit. All that was to be brought for the framing of the Tabernacle, was to be offered *willingly with the* *Exod.25. v. 7. *heart* *. The more of Will, the more of Spirituality and Acceptableneſs to God, *Pſal.*119.108. *Accept the Free-will Offering of my lips*. Sincerity is the Salt which ſeaſons every Sacrifice. The Heart is moſt like to the object of Worſhip: The Heart in the Body is the ſpring of all vital Actions; and a ſpiritual Soul is the ſpring of all ſpiritual Actions. How can we imagine God can delight in the meer Service of the Body, any more than we can delight in converſe with a Carcaſs?

Without the Heart 'tis no Worſhip; 'tis a Stage-Play; an Acting a Part without being that Perſon really which is Acted by us: A Hypocrite in the notion of the Word, is a Stage-Player. We may as well ſay a Man may believe with his Body, as worſhip God only with his Body. Faith is a great ingredient in Worſhip, and it is *with the heart* Man *believes unto* * Rom. 10. v. 10. *Righteouſneſs* *. We may be truly ſaid to worſhip God, tho' we want perfection; but we cannot be ſaid to worſhip him, if we want ſincerity. A Statue upon a Tomb, with eyes and hands lifted up, offers as good and true a Service; it wants only a voice, the geſtures and poſtures are the ſame; nay, the Service is better, 'tis not a mockery, it repreſents all that it can be framed to: But to worſhip without our Spirits, is a preſenting God with a Picture, an Eccho, Voice, and nothing elſe; a Complement, a meer Lye, a *compaſſing* *him about with Lyes* *. Without the heart, the tongue * Hoſ. 11. is a Lyar, and the greateſt Zeal diſſembling with him. v. 12. To preſent the Spirit, is to preſent that which can never naturally die; to preſent him only the Body, is to preſent him that which is every day crumbling to duſt, and will at laſt lie rotting in the Grave: To offer him a few Rags eaſily torn; a skin for a Sacrifice, a thing unworthy the Majeſty of God; a fixed eye and elevated hands, with a ſleepy Heart and earthly Soul, are pitiful things for an ever bleſſed and glorious Spirit: Nay, it is ſo far from being Spiritual, that it is Blaſphemy: To pretend to be a Jew *outwardly*, without being ſo *inwardly*, is in the Judgment of Chriſt to Blaſpheme *. And is not the ſame Title *Revel.2.9. to be given with as much reaſon to thoſe that pretend a worſhip and perform none? Such a one is not a Spiritual Worſhipper, but a blaſpheming Devil in *Samuel's* Mantle.

4. *Spiritual Worſhip is performed with an unitedneſs of heart*. The heart is not only now and then with God, but *united to fear* or worſhip *his name* *. A ſpi- * Pſ.86.11. ritual Duty muſt have the engagement of the ſpirit, and the thoughts tied up to the ſpiritual Object: The union of all the Parts of the heart together with the Body, is the life of the Body; and the Moral union of our hearts, is the life of any Duty. A heart quickly flitting from God, makes not God his Treaſure; he ſlights the worſhip, and therein affronts the Object of Worſhip. All our thoughts ought to be raviſhed with God, bound up in him as in a bundle of life: But when we ſtart from him to gaze after every feather, and run after every bubble, we diſown a full and affecting excellency, and a ſatisfying ſweetneſs in him. When our thoughts run from God, 'tis a Teſtimony we have no ſpiritual affection to God: Affection would ſtake down the thoughts to the Object affected: 'Tis but a *Mouth-love*, as the Prophet phraſeth it *: But their hearts go *after their Covetouſneſs*: Co- * Ezek.33. vetous Objects Pipe, and the Heart Danceth after v.31. them; and thoughts of God are ſhifted off, to receive a multitude of other imaginations: The Heart and the Service ſtayed a while together, and then took leave of one another. The *Pſalmiſt* * ſtill found his * Pſ. 39.18. heart with God when he *awak'd*; ſtill with God in ſpiritual affections, and fixed meditations. A carnal heart is ſeldom with God, either in or out of worſhip: If God ſhould knock at the heart in any Duty, it would be found not at home, but ſtraying abroad. Our worſhip is ſpiritual, when the door of the heart is ſhut againſt all Intruders, as our Saviour commands in *Cloſet Duties* *. It was not his meaning, to command the * Mat.6.6. ſhutting the Cloſet-door, and leave the Heart-door open for every thought that would be apt to haunt us. Worldly affections are to be laid aſide, if we would have our Worſhip ſpiritual. This was meant by the Jewiſh cuſtom of wiping or waſhing off the duſt of their feet, before their entrance into the Temple; and of not bringing money in their girdles. To be ſpiritual in Worſhip, is to have our Souls gathered and bound up wholly in themſelves, and offered to God. Our Loyns muſt be girt, as the faſhion was in the Eaſtern Countries, where they wore long Garments, that they might not waver with the Wind, and be blown between their leggs, to obſtruct them in their Travel; our Faculties muſt not hang looſe about us. He is a carnal Worſhipper, that gives God but a piece of his heart, as well as he

he that denies him the whole of it; that hath ſome thoughts pitch'd upon God in Worſhip, and as many willingly upon the World, *David* ſought God, not with a moiety of his heart, but with *his whole heart*, with his intire frame *. He brought not half his heart, and left the other in the poſſeſſion of another Maſter. It was a good Leſſon *Pythagoras* gave his Scholars *, *Not to make the obſervance of God a Work by the by.* If thoſe Gueſts be invited, or entertained kindly, or if they come unexpected, the ſpirituality of that Worſhip is loſt; the Soul kicks down what is wrought before. But if they be Brow-beaten by us, and our grief, rather than our pleaſure, they divert our ſpiritual intention from the work in hand, but hinder not Gods acceptance of it as ſpiritual, becauſe they are not the acts of our Will, but offences to our Wills.

*Pſ.119.10

* Ὀυ γὰς παϱεϱγὸν δεῖ ποιεῖσθαι τὴν Θεόν *Jamblich.* l.1.c.518. page 87.

5. *Spiritual Worſhip is performed with a ſpiritual activity and ſenſibleneſs of God.* With an active Underſtanding to meditate on his excellency, and an active Will to embrace him when he drops upon the Soul. If we underſtand the amiableneſs of God, our affections will be raviſh'd; if we underſtand the immenſity of his goodneſs, our ſpirits will be enlarged. We are to act with the higheſt intention, ſuitable to the greatneſs of that God with whom we have to do, *Pſal.*150.2. *Praiſe him according to his excellent greatneſs*: Not that we can Worſhip him equally, but in ſome proportion, the frame of the heart is to be ſuited to the excellency of the Object: Our ſpiritual ſtrength is to be put out to the utmoſt, as Creatures that act naturally do: The Sun ſhines, and the Fire burns to the utmoſt of their natural Power. This is ſo neceſſary, that *David*, a ſpiritual Worſhipper, prays for it before he ſets upon acts of adoration, *Pſal.*80.18. *Quicken us, that we may call upon thy Name.* As he was loth to have a drowzy faculty, he was loth to have a drowzy inſtrument, and would willingly have them as lively as himſelf, *Pſal.*57.8. *Awake up my glory; awake Pſaltery and Harp; I my ſelf will awake early.* How would this Divine Soul ſcrew himſelf up to God, and be turned into nothing but a holy flame? Our Souls muſt be boiling hot when we ſerve the Lord *. The heart doth no leſs burn when it ſpiritually comes to God, than when God doth ſpiritually *approach* to it *. A *Nabals* heart, one as cold as a ſtone, cannot offer up a ſpiritual ſervice.

*Ro.12.11.

* Luke 24. v. 32.

Whatſoever is enjoyned us as our Duty, ought to be performed with the greateſt intenſeneſs of our Spirit. As it is our Duty to pray, ſo it is our Duty to pray with the moſt fervent importunity. 'Tis our Duty to love God, but with the pureſt and moſt ſublime affections: Every command of God requires the whole ſtrength of the Creature to be imployed in it. That love to God, wherein all our Duty to God is ſummed up, is to be with all our ſtrength, with all our might, *&c.*

* *Lady* Falklands *Life.* p. 130. * Tho' in the Covenant of Grace he hath mitigated the ſeverity of the Law, and requires not from us ſuch an elevation of our Affections as was poſſible in the ſtate of Innocence, yet God requires of us the utmoſt *moral Induſtry* to raiſe our Affections to a pitch, at leaſt equal to what they are in other things: What ſtrength of Affection we naturally have, ought to be as much and more excited in acts of Worſhip than upon other occaſions, and our ordinary Works. As there was an inactivity of Soul in Worſhip and a quickneſs to ſin, when ſin had the dominion; ſo when the Soul is Spiritualized, the temper is changed; there is an inactivity to ſin and an ardor in Duty: The more the Soul is *dead to ſin*, the more it is *alive to God* *, and the more lively too in all that concerns God and his Honour. For Grace being a new ſtrength added to our natural, determines the affections to new Objects, and excites them to a greater vigor. And as the hatred of ſin is more ſharp, the love to every thing that deſtroys the dominion of it, is more ſtrong. And acts of Worſhip may be reckoned as the chiefeſt Batteries againſt the power of this inbred Enemy. When the Spirit is in the Soul, like the Rivers of Waters flowing out of the Belly, the Soul hath the activity of a River, and makes haſte to be ſwallow'd up in God, as the Streams of the River in the Sea. Chriſt makes his People *Kings and Prieſts to God* *; First Kings, then Prieſts: Gives firſt a Royal temper of Heart, that they may offer ſpiritual Sacrifices as Prieſts: Kings and Prieſts to God acting with a magnificent Spirit in all their Motions to him: We cann't be Spiritual Prieſts, till we be Spiritual Kings. The Spirit appeared in the likeneſs of fire, and where he reſides, communicates, like fire, purity and activity.

* Rev.1.6.

Dulneſs is againſt the Light of Nature. I do not remember that the Heathen ever offer'd a Snail to any of their falſe Deities, nor an Aſs, but to *Priapus* their unclean Idol; but the *Perſians* ſacrificed to the Sun a Horſe, a ſwift and generous Creature. God provided againſt thoſe in the Law, commanding an Aſſes Firſtling, the off-ſpring of a ſluggiſh Creature, to be *Redeemed*, or his *neck broke*; but by no means to be offered to him *. God is a Spirit infinitely active, and therefore frozen and benummed Frames are unſuitable to him: He rides upon a *Cherub* and flies, he comes upon the *Wings of the Wind*, he rides upon a *ſwift Cloud* *; and therefore demands of us not a dull Reaſon, but an active Spirit: God is a living God, therefore muſt have a lively Service. Chriſt is life, and ſloathful Adorations are not fit to be offered up in the name of Life. The Worſhip of God is called Wreſtling in Scripture, and *Paul* was a *Striver* in the Service of his Maſter *, *in an Agony* *. Angels worſhip God ſpiritually with their Wings on; and when God commands them to worſhip Chriſt, the next Scripture quoted is, that he makes them *flames of fire* *.

*Ex.13.13.

*Iſa.19.1.

* Col.1.29. * ἀγωνιζόμενος. * Heb.1.7.

If it be thus, how may we charge our ſelves? What *Paul* ſaid of the ſenſual *Widow* *, that ſhe is *dead while ſhe lives*, we may ſay often of our ſelves, we are dead while we Worſhip. Our hearts are in duty as the *Jews* were in Deliverances, as thoſe *in a Dream* *; by which unexpectedneſs, God ſhewed the greatneſs of his care and mercy; and we attend him as Men in a dream whereby we diſcover our negligence and folly. This activity doth not conſiſt in outward Acts. The Body may be hot and the heart may be faint; but in an inward ſtirring, meltings, flights. In the higheſt Raptures the Body is moſt inſenſible. Strong Spiritual Affections are abſtracted from outward Senſe.

* 1 Tim.5.6

* Pſ.126.1.

6. *Spiritual Worſhip is performed with acting Spiritual Habits.* When all the living Springs of Grace are opened, as the Fountains of the deep were in the deluge, the Soul and all that is within it, all the ſpiritual impreſſes of God upon it, erect themſelves to *bleſs his holy Name* *.

* Pſ.130.1.

This is neceſſary to make a Worſhip Spiritual. As Natural Agents are determined to act ſuitable to their proper Nature; ſo rational Agents are to act conformable to a rational Being: When there is a conformity between the act and the nature whence it flows, 'tis a good act in its kind; if it be rational, 'tis a good rational act, becauſe ſuitable to its Principle: As a *Man* endowed with Reaſon muſt act ſuitable to that Endowment, and exerciſe his Reaſon in his Acting; ſo a Chriſtian endued with Grace muſt act ſuitable to that Nature, and exerciſe his Grace in his Acting. Acts done by a natural inclination are no more humane Acts, than the natural Acts of a Beaſt may be ſaid to be humane; Tho' they are the acts of a Man, as he is the efficient cauſe of them, yet they are not humane acts, becauſe they ariſe not from that principle of Reaſon which denominates him a Man. So acts of Worſhip performed by a bare exerciſe of Reaſon, are not Chriſtian and Spiritual Acts, becauſe they come not from the Principle which conſtitutes him a Chriſtian; Reaſon is not the Principle, for then

all rational Creatures would be Chriſtians: They ought therefore to be acts of a higher principle; Exerciſes of that Grace whereby Chriſtians are what they are: Not but that rational acts in Worſhip are due to God; for Worſhip is due from us as Men; and we are ſettled in that rank of being by our Reaſon. Grace doth not exclude Reaſon, but ennobles it, and calls it up to another form: But we muſt not reſt in a bare rational VVorſhip, but exert that Principle whereby we are Chriſtians. To VVorſhip God with our Reaſon, is to worſhip him as Men: To worſhip God with our Grace, is to worſhip him as Chriſtians, and ſo ſpiritually: but to worſhip him only with our Bodies, is no better than Brutes.

Our deſires of the word are to iſſue from the regenerate Principle, 1 *Pet.*2.2. *As new born Babes deſire the ſincere Milk of the Word*: It ſeems to be not a Compariſon but a Reſtriction. All Worſhip muſt have the ſame ſpring, and be the exerciſe of that Principle; otherwiſe we can have no Communion with God. Friends that have the ſame habitual Diſpoſitions, have a fundamental fitneſs for an agreeable Converſe with one another; but if the temper wherein their likneſs conſiſts, be languiſhing, and the ſtring out of tune, there is not an actual fitneſs; and the preſent Indiſpoſition breaks the Converſe, and renders the Company troubleſome. Tho' we may have the habitual Graces which compoſe in us a reſemblance to God, yet for want of acting thoſe ſuitable Diſpoſitions, we render our ſelves unfit for his Converſe, and make the Worſhip, which is fundamentally ſpiritual, to become actually carnal. As the Will cannot naturally act to any Object, but by the exerciſe of its affections, ſo the Heart cannot ſpiritually act towards God, but by the exerciſe of Graces. This is God's Muſick, *Eph.*5.19. *Singing and making Melody to God in your Hearts.* Singing and all other Acts of Worſhip are outward, but the ſpiritual Melody is *by Grace in the Heart*, Col.3.16. This renders it a ſpiritual Worſhip; for it is an effect of the fulneſs of the Spirit in the Soul, as *v.*19. *But be filled with the Spirit*: The overflowing of the Spirit in the Heart, ſetting the Soul of a Believer thus on Work to make a Spiritual Melody to God, ſhews that ſomething higher than bare Reaſon is put in tune in the Heart. Then is the fruit of the Garden pleaſant to Chriſt when the holy Spirit, *the North and South Wind blow upon the Spices*, and ſtrike out the fragrancy of them *. Since God is the Author of Graces and beſtows them to have a Glory from them, they are beſt employed about him and his Service. 'Tis fit he ſhould have the Cream of his own Gifts. Without the exerciſe of Grace we perform but a Work of Nature, and offer him a few dry Bones without Marrow.

*Cant. 4. v. 16.

The whole ſet of Graces muſt be one way or other exerciſed. If any treble be wanting in a Lute, there will be a great defect in the Muſick. If any one ſpiritual ſtring be dull, the ſpiritual Harmony of Worſhip will be ſpoiled.

And therefore,

1. Firſt, *Faith muſt be acted in Worſhip. A confidence in God.* A natural Worſhip cannot be performed without a natural Confidence in the Goodneſs of God. VVhoſever comes to him, muſt regard him as a *Rewarder* and a Faithful Creator *. A Spiritual VVorſhip cannot be performed without an Evangelical Confidence in him as a gracious Redeemer. To think him a Tyrant meditating Revenge, damps the Soul; to regard him as a gracious King full of tender Bowels, Spirits the Affections to him. The *Mercy* of God is the proper Object of Truſt, *Pſal.*33.18. *The Eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his Mercy.* The VVorſhip of God in the old Teſtament is moſt deſcribed by *Fear*: In the new Teſtament by *Faith*. Fear, or the VVorſhip of God and hope in his Mercy are link'd together; when they go hand in hand, the accepting Eye of God is upon us: When we do not truſt, we do not worſhip. Thoſe of *Judah* had the Temple Worſhip among them, eſpecially in *Joſiah's* time, *Zeph.*3.2. the time of that Prophecy; yet it was accounted no Worſhip, becauſe no *Truſt* in the Worſhippers. Intereſt in God, cannot be improved without an Exerciſe of Faith. The Goſpel Worſhip is propheſied of, to be a confidence in God, as in a Husband more than in a Lord, *Hoſ.* 2. 16. *Thou ſhalt call me* Iſhi, *and ſhalt call me no more* Baali: *Thou ſhalt call me*, that is, thou ſhalt Worſhip me. Worſhip being often comprehended under Invocation. More confidence is to be exerciſed in a Husband or Father, than in a Lord or Maſter.

*Heb.11.6.

If a Man have not Faith, he is without Chriſt; and though a Man be in Chriſt by the habit of Faith, he performs a Duty out of Chriſt without an act of Faith: Without the Habit of Faith, our Perſons are out of Chriſt; and without the exerciſe of Faith, the Duties are out of Chriſt. As the want of Faith in a Perſon is the death of the Soul; ſo the want of Faith in a Service, is the death of the Offering. Tho' a Man were at the coſt of an Ox; yet to kill it without bringing it to the *door of the Tabernacle*, was not a Sacrifice, but a Murder. The Tabernacle was a Type of Chriſt; and a look to him is neceſſary in every ſpiritual Sacrifice. As there muſt be Faith to make any Act, an act of Obedience; ſo there muſt be Faith to make any act of Worſhip Spiritual. That Service is not Spiritual, that is not Vital; and it cannot be Vital, without the Exerciſe of a Vital Principle: All Spiritual Life is *hid in Chriſt*, and drawn from him by *Faith* *. Faith, as it hath relation to Chriſt, makes every act of Worſhip, a living act, and conſequently a ſpiritual act. Habitual unbelief cuts us off from the Body of Chriſt, *Rom.*11.20. *Becauſe of unbelief they were broken off*; and a want of actuated belief breaks us off from a preſent Communion with Chriſt in Spirit. As unbelief in us hinders Chriſt from doing any mighty Work, ſo unbelief in us hinders us from doing any mighty ſpiritual Duty.

*Lev.17.3.

*Gal. 2.20.

So that the exerciſe of Faith, and a Confidence in God, is neceſſary to every Duty.

2. *Love muſt be acted to render a Worſhip Spiritual.* Tho' God commanded Love in the Old-Teſtament; yet the manner of giving the Law, beſpoke more of Fear than Love. The Diſpenſation of the Law was with *Fire*, *Thunder*, &c. proper to raiſe horror and benum the Spirit; which effect it had upon the *Iſraelites*, when they deſired that God would ſpeak no more to them. Grace is the Genius of the *Goſpel*, proper to excite the affection of Love. The Law was given by the Diſpoſition of Angels, with ſigns to amaze; the Goſpel was uſher'd in with the Songs of Angels, compoſed of Peace and Good Will, calculated to raviſh the Soul. Inſtead of the terrible voice of the Law, *Do this and live*: The comfortable Voice of the Goſpel is, *Grace, Grace*: Upon this account the Principle of the old Teſtament was *Fear*; and the worſhip often expreſt by the fear of God. The Principle of the new Teſtament is *Love*. The *Mount* Sinai *gendreth to Bondage* *; Mount *Sion*, from whence the Goſpel or Evangelical Law goes forth, gendreth to Liberty; and therefore the *Spirit of Bondage unto Fear*, as the property of the Law is oppoſed to the ſtate of *Adoption*, the Principle of *Love*, as the Property of the *Goſpel* *: And therefore the worſhip of God under the Goſpel, or new Teſtament, is often expreſt by Love than *Fear*; as proceeding from higher Principles, and acting nobler Paſſions. In this ſtate, we are to ſerve *him without fear* *; without a Bondage-fear; not without a fear of unworthy treating him; with a fear of his *goodneſs* as it is propheſied of *: Goodneſs is not the object of terror, but Reverence. God in the Law, had more the Garb of a Judge; in the Goſpel, of a *Father*: The Name of

*Gal.4.24.

*Ro. 8. 15.

*Luk.1.74.

*Hoſ.9.5.

of a Father is ſweeter, and beſpeaks more of Affection. As their Services were with a feeling of the Thunders of the Law in their Conſciences; ſo is our Worſhip to be with a ſenſe of Goſpel-Grace in our Spirits: Spiritual Worſhip is that therefore, which is exerciſed with a Spiritual and heavenly Affection, proper to the Goſpel. The Heart ſhould be enlarged, according to the Liberty the Goſpol gives of drawing neer to God as a Father: As he gives us the nobler Relation of Children, we are to act the nobler Qualities of Children. Love ſhould act according to its Nature, which is deſire of Union; deſire of a moral Union by Affections, as well as a myſtical Union by Faith; as flame aſpires to reach flame, and become one with it. In every act of worſhip, we ſhould endeavour to be united to God, and become one Spirit with him: This Grace doth ſpiritualize Worſhip: In that one word *Love*, God hath wrapt up all the Devotion he requires of us: 'Tis the total Sum of the firſt Table, *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God.* 'Tis to be acted in every thing we do: But in worſhip, our hearts ſhould more ſolemnly riſe up and acknowledge him aimable and lovely, ſince the Law is ſtript of its curſing Power, and made ſweet in the Blood of the Redeemer. Love is a thing acceptable of it ſelf; but nothing acceptable without it. The Gifts of one Man to another are ſpiritualized by it. We would not value a Preſent, without the Affection of the Donor: Every Man would lay claim to the Love of others, tho' he would not to their Poſſeſſions. Love is God's Right in every Service, and the nobleſt thing we can beſtow upon him in our Adorations of him. God's Gifts to us are not ſo eſtimable, without his Love; nor our Services valuable by him, without the exerciſe of a choice Affection. *Hezekiah* regarded not his Deliverance, without the Love of the Deliverer; *In love to my Soul thou haſt delivered me* *. So doth God ſay, in love to my Honour thou haſt worſhipped me. *Iſa.38.17.

So that Love muſt be acted, to render our Worſhip Spiritual.

3. *A Spiritual ſenſibleneſs of our own weakneſs, is neceſſary to make our Worſhip Spiritual.* Affections to God cannot be without Relentings in our ſelves. When the Eye is ſpiritually fixed upon a ſpiritual God, the Heart will mourn, that the VVorſhip is no more ſpiritually ſutable. The more we act love upon God, as amiable and gracious, the more we ſhould exerciſe grief in our ſelves, as we are vile and offending. Spiritual Worſhip is a melting Worſhip, as well as an elevating Worſhip; it exalts God, and debaſeth the Creature. The Publican was more ſpiritual in his humble addreſs to God, when the *Phariſee* was wholly carnal with his ſwelling language. A ſpiritual love in Worſhip will make us grieve, that we have given him ſo little, and could give him no more. 'Tis a part of ſpiritual duty to bewail our carnality mixed with it; as we receive mercies ſpiritually, when we receive them with a ſenſe of Gods goodneſs and our own vileneſs, in the ſame manner we render a ſpiritual Worſhip.

4. *Spiritual deſires for God render the ſervice ſpiritual.* When the Soul *follows hard after him* *; purſues after God as a God of Infinite communicative goodneſs, with ſighs and groans unutterable. A ſpiritual Soul ſeems to be transformed into hunger and thirſt, and becomes nothing but deſire. A carnal VVorſhipper is taken with the beauty and magnificence of the Temple; a ſpiritual VVorſhipper deſires to ſee the glory of God in the Sanctuary *; he *pants* after God. As he came to Worſhip to find God, ſo he boyls up in deſires for God, and is loth to go from it without God, *the living God*, Pſal.42.2. He would ſee the *Urim* and the *Thummim*; the unuſual ſparkling of the ſtones upon the High-Prieſts Breaſt-Plate. That deſerves not the Title of ſpiritual Worſhip, when the Soul makes no longing inquiries; *ſaw you him whom my Soul loves?* A ſpiritual VVorſhip is, when our deſires are chiefly for God in the VVorſhip: As *David* deſires to dwell in the Houſe of the Lord; but his deſire is not terminated there, but to behold the *beauty* of the Lord *, and taſte the raviſhing ſweetneſs of his preſence. No doubt but *Elijah*'s deſires for the enjoyment of God, while he was mounting to Heaven, were as fiery as the Chariot wherein he was carried. Unutterable groans acted in VVorſhip, are the fruit of the Spirit, and certainly render it a ſpiritual Service *. Strong Appetites are agreeable to God, and prepare us to eat the fruit of VVorſhip. A ſpiritual *Paul* preſſeth forward to know Chriſt, and the power of his Reſurrection; and a ſpiritual VVorſhipper actually aſpires in every Duty to know God, and the power of his Grace. To deſire VVorſhip as an end, is carnal; to deſire it as a means, and act deſires in it for communion with God in it, is ſpiritual, and the fruit of a ſpiritual life. *Pſal.27.4. *Rom.8.26

5. *Thankfulneſs and admiration are to be exerciſed in Spiritual Services.* This is a worſhip of Spirits. *Praiſe* is the adoration of the *bleſſed Angels* *, and of glorified Spirits, *Rev.*4.11. *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive Glory, and Honour, and Power*: And *Rev.*5. *v.*13,14. they worſhip him, aſcribing *Bleſſing, Honour, Glory and Power, to him that ſits upon the Throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever.* Other acts of worſhip are confined to this Life, and leave us as ſoon as we have ſet our foot in Heaven; there no notes, but this of Praiſe, are warbled out. The Power, Wiſdom, Love and Grace, in the diſpenſation of the Goſpel, ſeat themſelves in the Thoughts and Tongues of bleſſed Souls. Can a Worſhip on Earth be ſpiritual, that hath no mixture of an eternal heavenly duty with it? The Worſhip of God in Innocence had been chiefly an admiration of him in the works of Creation; and ſhould not our Evangelical worſhip be an admiration of him in the work of Redemption, which is a reſtoration to a better ſtate? After the Petitioning for Pardoning Grace *, there is a rendring the *Calves* or Heifers of *our lips*, alluding to the Heifers uſed in Euchariſtical Sacrifices. The praiſe of God is the choiceſt Sacrifice and Worſhip, under a diſpenſation of redeeming Grace; this is the prime and eternal part of Worſhip under the Goſpel. The Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.*149.& 150. ſpeaking of the Goſpel-times, ſpurs on to this kind of Worſhip, *Sing to the Lord a new Song*; *Let the Children of Zion be joyful in their King*; *Let the Saints be joyful in Glory, and ſing aloud upon their Beds*; *Let the high praiſes of God be in their mouths*: He begins and ends both Pſalms with *praiſe ye the Lord.* That cannot be a Spiritual and Evangelical Worſhip, that hath nothing of the praiſe of God in the heart. The conſideration of Gods adorable perfections diſcovered in the Goſpel, will make us come to him with more ſeriouſneſs, beg Bleſſings of him with more confidence, fly to him with a winged Faith and Love, and more ſpiritually glorifie him in our attendances upon him. *Iſa.6.3. *Hoſ.14.2.

7. *Spiritual Worſhip is performed with delight.* The Evangelical Worſhip is Prophetically ſignified by keeping the Feaſt of Tabernacles; *they ſhall go up from year to year, to worſhip the King the Lord of Hoſts, and to keep the Feaſt of Tabernacles.* Why that Feaſt, when there were other Feaſts obſerved by the *Jews*? That was a Feaſt celebrated with the greateſt joy; typical of the gladneſs which was to be under the exhibition of the *Meſſiah*, and a thankful commemoration of the Redemption wrought by him. It was to be celebrated five days after the *ſolemn day of Atonement*, Levit.23.34. compared with *v.* 27. wherein there was one of the ſolemneſt types of the Sacrifice of the death of Chriſt. In this Feaſt they commemorated their exchange of *Egypt* for *Canaan*; the Manna wherewith they were fed; the Water out of the Rock wherewith they were refreſh'd. In remembrance of this, they Zach.14.16

*Pſal.63.8.

*Pſal.63.2.

poured Water on the ground, pronouncing thoſe words in *Iſaiah*, they ſhall *draw Waters out of the Wells of Salvation*, which our Saviour refers to himſelf, *John* 7. *v.*37. inviting them to him to drink, *upon the laſt day, the great day of the Feaſt of* Tabernacles, wherein this ſolemn Ceremony was obſerved. Since we are freed by the death of the Redeemer from the Curſes of the Law, God requires of us a Joy in ſpiritual Priviledges. A ſad frame in Worſhip, gives the lye to all Goſpel-liberty; to the Purchaſe of the Redeemers death; the Triumphs of his Reſurrection: 'Tis a carriage, as if we were under the influences of the legal Fire and Lightning, and an entring a Proteſt againſt the freedom of the Goſpel. The Evangelical Worſhip is a Spiritual Worſhip; and *Praiſe*, *Joy* and *Delight*, are Propheſied of, as great ingredients in attendance on Goſpel Ordinances, *Iſa.*12.3,4,5. What was occaſion of terror in the Worſhip of God under the Law, is the occaſion of delight in the Worſhip of God under the Goſpel. The Juſtice and Holineſs of God, ſo terrible in the Law, becomes comfortable under the Goſpel, ſince they have feaſted themſelves on the Active and Paſſive Obedience of the Redeemer. The approach is to God as gracious, not to God as unpacified; as a Son to a Father, not as a Criminal to a Judge. Under the Law God was repreſented as a Judge, remembring their Sin in their Sacrifices, and repreſenting the puniſhment they had merited; in the Goſpel as a Father, accepting the Atonement, and publiſhing the Reconciliation wrought by the Redeemer. Delight in God, is a Goſpel frame; therefore the more joyful, the more ſpiritual. The *Sabbath is to be a delight*; not only in regard of the Day, but in regard of the Duties of it *; in regard of the marvelous Work he wrought on it, raiſing up our bleſſed Redeemer on that day, whereby a foundation was laid for the rendring our Perſons and Services acceptable to God, *Pſal.*118.24. *This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will be glad and rejoyce in it.* A lumpiſh frame becomes not a Day and a Duty, that hath ſo noble and ſpiritual a mark upon it.

* Iſa.58.13.

The Angels in the firſt act of Worſhip after the Creation, were highly joyful, *Job* 38.7. They *ſhouted for joy*, &c.

The Saints have particularly acted this in their Worſhip. *David* would not content himſelf with an approach to the Altar, without going to God as his *exceeding joy*, Pſal.43.4. My triumphant joy: When he danced before the Ark, he ſeems to be transformed into delight and pleaſure, 2 *Sam.* 6. 14, 16. He had as much delight in Worſhip, as others had in their Harveſt and Vintage. And thoſe that took joyfully the ſpoiling of their Goods, would as joyfully attend upon the Communications of God. Where there is a fulneſs of the Spirit, there is a *making melody to God in the heart* *; and where there is an acting of love, (as there is in all ſpiritual ſervices) the proper fruit of it is joy in a near approach to the Object of the Souls affection. Love is *appetitus unionis*: The more love, the more delight in the approachings of God to the Soul, or the out-goings of the Soul to God. As the Object of Worſhip is amiable in a ſpiritual eye, ſo the means tending to a communion with this Object are delightful in the exerciſe: Where there is no delight in a Duty, there is no delight in the Object of the Duty: The more of Grace, the more of Pleaſure in the actings of it: As the more of Nature there is in any natural Agent, the more of pleaſure in the act: So the more Heavenly the Worſhip, the more Spiritual. Delight is the frame and temper of Glory. A heart filled up to the brim with joy, is a heart *filled* up to the brim *with the ſpirit*: *Joy* is the fruit of the Holy Ghoſt *.

* Eph. 5. v. 18, 19.

* Gal.5.22.

1. *Not the joy of Gods diſpenſation flowing from God, but a gracious active joy ſtreaming to God.* There is a joy, when the Comforts of God are dropt into the Soul, as Oyl upon the Wheel; which indeed makes the faculties move with more ſpeed and activity in his ſervice, like the *Chariots of Aminadab*: And a Soul may ſerve God in the ſtrength of this taſte, and its delight terminated in the ſenſible comfort. This is not the joy I mean, but ſuch a joy that hath God for its Object, delighting in him as the term, in worſhip as the way to him: The firſt is Gods diſpenſation, the other is our duty: The firſt is an act of Gods favour to us, the ſecond a ſprout of habitual grace in us. The Comforts we have from God, may elevate our Duties, but the Grace we have within, doth ſpiritualize our Duties.

2. *Nor is every delight an argument of a ſpiritual Service.* All the requiſites to worſhip muſt be taken in. A Man may invent a Worſhip, and delight in it; as *Micah* in the adoration of his Idol, when he was glad he had got both an *Ephod* and a *Levit* *. As a Man may have a contentment in ſin, ſo he may have a contentment in Worſhip; not becauſe it is a Worſhip of God, but the Worſhip of his own Invention, agreeable to his own humour and deſign, as *Iſa.*58.2. 'tis ſaid, they *delighted in approaching to God*, but it was for carnal ends. Novelty ingenders Complacency; but it muſt be a Worſhip wherein God will delight; and that muſt be a Worſhip according to his own Rule and infinite Wiſdom, and not our ſhallow fancies.

* Judges 17

God requires cheerfulneſs in his Service, eſpecially under the Goſpel, where he ſits upon a Throne of Grace; diſcovers himſelf in his amiableneſs, and acts the Covenant of Grace, and the ſweet relation of a Father. The Prieſts of old were not to ſully themſelves with any ſorrow, when they were in the exerciſe of their Functions. God put a bar to the natural affections of *Aaron* and his Sons, when *Nadab* and *Abihu* had been cut off by a ſevere hand of God *. Every true Chriſtian in a higher Order of Prieſthood, is a Perſon dedicated to Joy and Peace, offering himſelf a lively Sacrifice of Praiſe and Thankſgiving: And there is no Chriſtian Duty, but is to be ſet off and ſeaſoned with cheerfulneſs: He that loves a cheerful Giver in acts of Charity, requires no leſs a cheerful Spirit in acts of Worſhip: As this is an ingredient in worſhip, ſo it is the means to make your ſpirits intent in Worſhip. When the heart triumphs in the conſideration of Divine excellency and goodneſs, it will be angry at any thing that offers to jog and diſturb it.

* Lev.10.6.

8. *Spiritual Worſhip is to be performed*, tho' with a delight in God; yet *with a deep reverence of God.* The Goſpel in advancing the ſpirituality of Worſhip, takes off the terror, but not the reverence of God; which is nothing elſe in its own nature, but a due and high eſteem of the excellency of a thing according to the nature of it: And therefore the Goſpel preſenting us with more illuſtrious notices of the glorious nature of God, is ſo far from indulging any diſeſteem of him, that it requires of us a greater reverence ſuitable to the height of its diſcovery, above what could be ſpell'd in the Book of Creation: The Goſpel-worſhip is therefore expreſt by trembling, *Hoſ.*11.10. *They ſhall walk after the Lord; he ſhall roar like a Lion; when he ſhall roar, then the Children ſhall tremble from the Weſt.* When the Lion of the Tribe of *Judah* ſhall lift up his powerful voice in the Goſpel, the Weſtern *Gentiles* ſhall run trembling to walk after the Lord. God hath always attended his greateſt manifeſtations with remarkable Characters of Majeſty, to create a reverence in his Creature: He cauſed the *Wind to march before him*; to cut the Mountain, when he manifeſted himſelf to *Elijah*, 1 Kings 19.11. *A Wind and a Cloud of Fire*, before that magnificent Viſion to *Ezekiel*, Ezek.1.4,5. *Thunders and Lightnings* before the giving the Law, *Exod.*19.18. And a *mighty Wind* before the giving the Spirit, *Acts* 2. God requires of us an awe of him in the very act of performance. The Angels are pure, and cannot fear him as Sinners, but in *reverence they cover their Faces* when they ſtand before him *.

* Iſa.6.2.

His

His power ſhould make us reverence him, as we are Creatures: His Juſtice as we are Sinners: His Goodneſs as we are reſtored Creatures. *[God is cloathed with unſpeakable Majeſty; the glory of his face ſhines brighter than the Lights of Heaven in their beauty. Before him the Angels tremble, and the Heavens melt; we ought not therefore to come before him with the Sacrifice of Fools, nor tender a duty to him, without falling low upon our faces, and bowing the knees of our hearts in token of reverence.] Not a ſlaviſh fear, like that of Devils, but a godly fear, like that of Saints *, joyned with a ſenſe of an *unmoveable Kingdom*, becometh us. And this the Apoſtle calls a grace neceſſary to make our ſervice acceptable; and therefore the grace neceſſary to make it ſpiritual, ſince nothing finds admiſſion to God, but what is of a ſpiritual nature. The conſideration of his glorious nature, ſhould imprint an awful reſpect upon our Souls to him: His goodneſs ſhould make his Majeſty more adorable to us, as his Majeſty makes his goodneſs more admirable in his condeſcenſions to us. As God is a Spirit, our Worſhip muſt be ſpiritual; and being he is the ſupream ſpirit, our Worſhip muſt be reverential. We muſt obſerve the State he takes upon him in his Ordinances: *He is in Heaven, we upon the Earth*; we muſt not therefore be *haſty to utter any thing before God*, Eccleſ. 5. 7. Conſider him a Spirit in the higheſt Heavens, and our ſelves Spirits dwelling in a dreggy Earth. Looſe and gariſh frames debaſe him to our own quality: Slight poſtures of Spirit, intimate him to be a ſlight and mean Being: Our being in Covenant with him, muſt not lower our awful apprehenſions of him: As he is *the Lord thy God*, 'tis a *glorious and fearful* Name, *or wonderful* *: Tho' he lay by his Juſtice to Believers, he doth not lay by *his Majeſty*, when we have a confidence in him, becauſe he is the Lord our God; we muſt have awful thoughts of his Majeſty, becauſe his Name is glorious. God is *terrible* from his Holy Places, in regard of the great things he doth for his *Iſrael* *. We ſhould behave our ſelves with that inward honour and reſpect of him, as if he were preſent to our bodily eyes: The higher apprehenſions we have of his Majeſty, the greater awe will be upon our hearts in his preſence, and the greater ſpirituality in our acts. We ſhould manage our hearts ſo, as if we had a view of God in his heavenly glory.

* Daille Sur. 3. Jean. p. 150.
* Heb. 12. v. 28.
* Deut. 28. v. 58.
* Pſ. 68. 35.

9. Spiritual Worſhip is to be performed with humility in our Spirits. This is to follow upon the reverence of God. As we are to have high thoughts of God, that we may not debaſe him, we muſt have low thoughts of our ſelves, not to vaunt before him. When we have right notions of the Divine Majeſty, we ſhall be as Worms in our own thoughts, and creep as Worms into his preſence: We can never conſider him in his glory, but we have a fit opportunity to reflect upon our ſelves, and conſider how baſely we revolted from him, and how graciouſly we are reſtored by him: As the Goſpel affords us greater diſcoveries of Gods nature, and ſo enhanceth our reverence of him, ſo it helps us to a fuller underſtanding of our own vileneſs and weakneſs, and therefore is proper to ingender Humility: The more Spiritual and Evangelical therefore any ſervice is, the more humble it is. That is a ſpiritual Service, that doth moſt manifeſt the glory of God; and this cannot be manifeſted by us, without manifeſting our own emptineſs and nothingneſs. The Heathens were ſenſible of the neceſſity of Humility by the Light of Nature *; after the Name of God ſignified by Ἐι inſcribed on the Temple at *Delphos*, followed Γνῶθι σεαυτὸν, whereby was infinuated, that when we have to do with God, who is the only *Ens*, we ſhould behave our ſelves with a ſenſe of our own infirmity, and infinite diſtance from him. As a Perſon, ſo a Duty leavened with Pride, hath nothing of ſincerity, and therefore nothing of ſpirituality in it, *Hab.* 2. 4. *His Soul which is lifted up, is not upright in him.* The Elders that were crowned by God to be *Kings* and *Prieſts*, to offer ſpiritual Sacrifices, uncrown themſelves in their VVorſhip of him, and caſt down their Ornaments at *his feet* *: The Greek word to VVorſhip προσκυνεῖν ſignifies to creep like a Dog upon his belly before his Maſter; to lie low. How deep ſhould our ſenſe be of the Priviledge of Gods admitting us to his Worſhip, and affording us ſuch a mercy under our deſerts of wrath? How mean ſhould be our thoughts, both of our Perſons and Performances? How patiently ſhould we wait upon God for the ſucceſs of VVorſhip? How did *Abraham*, the Father of the Faithful, equal himſelf to the Earth, when he ſupplicated the God of Heaven, and devoted himſelf to him under the Title of very *Duſt* and *Aſhes* *? *Iſaiah* did but behold an Evangelical Apparition of God and the Angels VVorſhiping him, and preſently reflects upon his *own uncleanneſs* *. Gods preſence both requires and cauſes Humility. How lowly is *David* in his own opinion, after a magnificent duty performed by himſelf and his People? 1 *Chron.* 29. 14. *Who am I? And what is my People, that we ſhould be able to offer ſo willingly?* The more ſpiritual the Soul is in its carriage to God, the more humble it is; and the more gracious God is in his communications to the Soul, the lower it lies.

* Rev. 4. 10. compared with 5. and the 10.
* Gen. 18. v. 27.
* Iſa. 6. 5.

God commanded not the fiercer Creatures to be offered to him in Sacrifices, but Lambs and Kids, meek and lowly Creatures; none that had ſtings in their tails, or venom in their tongues *. The *meek Lamb* was the daily Sacrifice: The *Doves* were to be offered by *Pairs*: God would not have *Hony* mixed with any *Sacrifice*, *Lev.* 2. 11. That breeds Choler, and Choler Pride; but *Oyl*, he commanded to be uſed; that ſupplies and mollifies the parts. Swelling Pride, and boiling Paſſions render our ſervices carnal; they cannot be ſpiritual, without an humble ſweetneſs and an innocent ſincerity: One grain of this tranſcends the moſt coſtly Sacrifices. A *Contrite Heart* puts a gloſs upon Worſhip *. The departure of Men and Angels from God, began in Pride; our approaches and return to him muſt begin in Humility: And therefore all thoſe Graces which are bottom'd on Humility, muſt be acted in Worſhip, as Faith, and a ſenſe of our own indigence. Our bleſſed Saviour, the moſt ſpiritual Worſhipper, proſtrated himſelf in the Garden with the greateſt lowlineſs, and offered himſelf upon the Croſs a Sacrifice with the greateſt humility. Melted Souls in Worſhip, have the moſt ſpiritual conformity to the Perſon of Chriſt in the ſtate of Humiliation, and his deſign in that ſtate: As Worſhip without it is not ſuitable to God, ſo neither is it advantageous for us. A time of Worſhip, is a time of Gods Commuuication. The Veſſel muſt be melted to receive the Mould it is deſigned for: Softned Wax is fitteſt to receive a ſtamp, and a ſpiritually melted Soul fitteſt to receive a ſpiritual impreſſion. We cannot perform duty in an evangelical and ſpiritual ſtrain, without the meltings and meanneſs in our ſelves which the Goſpel requires.

* *Caudam aculeatam vel linguam nigram* Alexand. *ab* Alex. *l.* 3. *c.* 12.
* Pſal. 51. v. 16, 17.

10. *Spiritual Worſhip is to be performed with Holineſs.* God is a holy Spirit; a likeneſs to God muſt attend the worſhiping of God, as he is: Holineſs is alway in ſeaſon; *It becomes his houſe for ever* *. We never can ſerve the *living God*, till we *have Conſciences purged from dead works*, *Heb.* 9. 14. Dead works in our Conſciences, are unſuitable to God, an eternal living Spirit. The more mortified the heart, the more quickned the ſervice. Nothing can pleaſe an infinite Purity, but that which is pure: Since God is in his Glory, in his Ordinances, we muſt not be in our Filthineſs. The Holineſs of his Spirit doth ſparkle in his Ordinances, the holineſs of our Spirits ought alſo to ſparkle in our obſervance of them. The *Holineſs* of God is moſt celebrated in the worſhip of Angels *: Spiritual worſhip ought to be like Angelical: That

* Pſal. 91. 5.
* Iſa. 6. 3. Revel. 4. 8.

* *Plutarch* Moral, p. 344.

cannot

cannot be with Souls totally impure. As there muſt be perfect holineſs to make a worſhip perfectly ſpiritual; ſo there muſt be ſome degree of holineſs to make it in any meaſure ſpiritual. God would have all the Utenſils of the *Sanctuary* employed about his ſervice to be holy: The *Inwards* of the Sacrifice were to be rinſed thrice *. The Crop and Feathers of Sacrificed Doves, was to be hung Eaſtward towards the entrance of the Temple, at a diſtance from the Holy of Holies where the preſence of God was moſt eminent *. When *Aaron* was to go into the Holy of Holies, he was to *ſanctifie himſelf* in an extraordinary manner *. The Prieſts were to be *bare-footed* in the Temple, in the exerciſe of their Office; ſhoes alway were to be put off upon holy ground: *Look to thy foot when thou goeſt to the Houſe of God*, ſaith the wiſe man, *Eccleſ.* 5. 1. Strip the affections, the feet of the Soul, of all the dirt contracted; diſcard all earthly and baſe thoughts from the heart. A Beaſt was not to touch the *Mount Sinai*, without loſing his Life: Nor can we come near the Throne with brutiſh affections, without loſing the life and fruit of the worſhip. An unholy Soul degrades himſelf from a Spirit to a Brute, and the worſhip from ſpiritual to brutiſh. If any unmortified ſin be found in the Life, as it was in the comers to the Temple, it taints and pollutes the *Worſhip* *. All worſhip is an acknowledgment of the excellency of God as he is *holy*: Hence it is called a *ſanctifying Gods Name*: How can any perſon ſanctifie Gods Name, that hath not a holy reſemblance to his Nature? If he be not holy as he is holy, he cannot worſhip him according to his excellency in Spirit and in Truth: No worſhip is ſpiritual wherein we have not a communion with God. But what intercourſe can there be between a holy God, and an impure Creature; between Light and Darkneſs? We have no fellowſhip with him in any ſervice, unleſs *we walk in the Light*, in ſervice and out of ſervice, as he is Light *. The Heathen thought not their Sacrifices agreeable to God, without waſhing their hands, whereby they ſignified the preparation of their hearts, before they made the Oblation: Clean hands without a pure heart, ſignifie nothing: The frame of our hearts muſt anſwer the purity of the outward Symbols, *Pſal.* 26. 6. *I will waſh my hands in Innocence, ſo will I compaſs thine Altar, O Lord.* He would obſerve the appointed Ceremonies, but not without *cleanſing his heart as well as his hands.* Vain man is apt to reſt upon outward acts and rites of worſhip: But this muſt alway be practiſed: The words are in the Preſent Tenſe, *I waſh, I compaſs.* Purity in worſhip ought to be our continual care. If we would perform a ſpiritual ſervice, wherein we would have communion with God, it muſt be in *Holineſs*: If we would walk with Chriſt, it muſt be in *white* *; alluding to the white Garments the Prieſts put on, when they went to perform their ſervice: As without this we cannot ſee God in Heaven, ſo neither can we ſee the beauty of God in his own Ordinances.

* *As the Jewiſh Doctors obſerve on* Lev. 1. 9.
* Lev. 1. 16.
* Lev. 16. 4.
* Iſa. 1. 15.
* Jerem. 7. 9, 10.
* 1 Joh. 1. 7
* Rev. 3. 4.

11. *Spiritual Worſhip is performed with ſpiritual ends, with raiſed aims at the glory of God.* No duty can be ſpiritual that hath a carnal aim: Where God is the ſole Object, he ought to be the principal End: In all our actions he is to be our End, as he is the principle of our Being; much more in Religious Acts, as he is the Object of our worſhip. The worſhip of God in Scripture, is expreſt by the *ſeeking of him* *: *Him*, not our ſelves; all is to be referred to God. As we are *not to live to our ſelves*, that being the ſign of a carnal ſtate; ſo we are not to worſhip for our ſelves, *Rom.* 14. 7, 8. As all actions are denominated good from their end, as well as their object; ſo upon the ſame account they are denominated ſpiritual. The end ſpiritualizeth our natural actions; much more our religious: Then are our faculties devoted to him, when they center in him. If the intention be evil, there is nothing but darkneſs in the whole ſervice, *Luke* 11. 34. The firſt Inſtitution of the *Sabbath*, the ſolemn day for worſhip, was to contemplate the glory of God in his ſtupendous works of Creation, and render him a homage for them, *Rev.* 4. 11. *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive Honour, Glory and Power; for thou haſt created all things, and for thy pleaſure they are and were created.* No worſhip can be returned without a glorifying of God; and we cannot actually glorifie him, without direct aims at the promoting his honour. As we have immediately to do with God, ſo we are immediately to mind the praiſe of God. As we are not to content our ſelves with habitual grace, but be rich in the exerciſe of it in worſhip; ſo we are not to acquieſce in habitual aims at the glory of God, without the actual outflowings of our hearts in thoſe aims.

* Heb. 11. 6

'Tis natural for Man to worſhip God for *ſelf*: Self-righteouſneſs is the rooted aim of Man in his worſhip ſince his revolt from God, and being ſenſible it is not to be found in his natural actions, he ſeeks for it in his moral and religious. By the firſt Pride we flung God off from being our Soveraign, and from being our end; ſince, a Phariſaical ſpirit ſtruts it in nature, not only to do things to be ſeen of men, but to be admired by God, *Iſa.* 58. 3. *Wherefore have we faſted and thou takeſt no knowledge?* This is to have God worſhip them, inſtead of being worſhiped by them. *Cain*'s carriage after his Sacrifice, teſtified ſome baſe end in his worſhip; he came not to God as a Subject to a Soveraign, but as if he had been the Soveraign, and God the Subject; and when his deſign is not anſwered, and his deſire not gratified, he proves more a Rebel to God, and a Murderer of his Brother. Such baſe ſcents will riſe up in our worſhip from the body of death which cleaves to us, and mix themſelves with our ſervices, as Weeds with the Fiſh in the Next. *David* therefore, after his People had offered willingly to the Temple, begs of God, that their *hearts might be prepared to him* *; that their hearts might ſtand right to God, without any ſquinting to ſelf-ends.

* 1 Chron. 29. 18.

Some preſent themſelves to God, as poor men offer a Preſent to a great Perſon; not to honour him, but to gain for themſelves a reward richer than their gift. *What profit is it that we have kept his Ordinances*, &c? *Mal.* 3. 14. Some worſhip him, intending thereby to make him amends for the wrong they have done him; wipe off their ſcores, and ſatiſfie their debts; as though a ſpiritual wrong could be recompenſed with a bodily ſervice, and an infinite Spirit be outwitted and appeaſed by a carnal flattery. *Self* is the Spirit of Carnality: To pretend a homage to God, and intend only the advantage of *ſelf*, is rather to mock him, than worſhip him. When we believe that we ought to be ſatisfied, rather than God glorified; we ſet God below our ſelves, imagine that he ſhould ſubmit his own honour to our advantage: We make our ſelves more glorious than God, as tho' we were not made for him, but he hath a Being only for us; this is to have a very low eſteem of the Majeſty of God. Whatſoever any man aims at in worſhip above the glory of God, that he forms as an Idol to himſelf inſtead of God, and ſets up a Golden-Image: God counts not this as a worſhip. The Offerings made in the Wilderneſs for forty years together, God eſteemed as not offered to him, *Amos* 5. 25. *Have you offered to me Sacrifices and Offerings in the Wilderneſs forty years, O Houſe of* Iſrael? They did it not to God, but to themſelves; for their own ſecurity, and the attainment of the poſſeſſion of the promiſed Land. A ſpiritual Worſhiper performs not worſhip for ſome hopes of carnal advantage; he uſes Ordinances as means to bring God and his Soul together; to be more fitted to honour God in the World, in his particular

particular place: When he hath been inflamed and humble in any addreſs or duty, he gives God the glory; his heart ſuits the doxology at the end of the Lord's Prayer, aſcribes the Kingdom, Power and Glory to God alone; and if any viper of Pride ſtarts out upon him, he endeavours preſently to ſhake it off. That which was the firſt end of our framing, ought to be the chief end of our acting towards God: But when men have the ſame ends in worſhip as Brutes, the ſatisfaction of a ſenſitive part; the ſervice is no more than Brutiſh. The acting for a ſenſitive end, is unworthy of the Majeſty of God to whom we addreſs, and unbecoming a rational Creature. The acting for a ſenſitive end, is not rational, much leſs can it be a ſpiritual ſervice; though the act may be good in it ſelf, yet not good in the Agent, becauſe he wants a due end: We are then ſpiritual, when we have the ſame end in our redeemed ſervices, as God had in his redeeming love, *viz.* his own glory.

12. *Spiritual ſervice is offered to God in the name of Chriſt.* Thoſe are only *ſpiritual Sacrifices, that are offered up to God by Jeſus Chriſt* *; that are the fruits of the Sanctification of the Spirit, and offered in the mediation of the Son: As the Altar ſanctifies the gift, ſo doth Chriſt ſpiritualize our ſervices for Gods acceptation; as the Fire upon the Altar ſeparated the airy and finer parts of the Sacrifice from the terrene and earthly: This is the *Golden Altar* upon which the Prayers of the Saints are offered up *before the Throne* *. As all that we have from God ſtreams through his blood; ſo all that we give to God aſcends by vertue of his merits. All the bleſſings God gave to the *Iſraelites* came out of *Sion* *, that is, from the Goſpel hid under the Law; all the duties we preſent to God are to be preſented in *Sion*, in an evangelical manner: All our worſhip muſt be bottomed on Chriſt. God hath intended that we ſhould *honour the Son as we honour the Father:* As we honour the Father by offering our ſervice only to him; ſo we are to honour the Son by offering it only in his name: In him alone God is well pleaſed, becauſe in him alone he finds our ſervices ſpiritual and worthy of acceptation: We muſt therefore take faſt hold of him with our Spirits, and the faſter we hold him, the more ſpiritual is our worſhip. To do any thing in the name of Chriſt, is not to believe the worſhip ſhall be accepted for it ſelf, but to have our eye fixed upon Chriſt for the acceptance of it, and not to reſt upon the work done as carnal people are apt to do. The Creatures preſent their acknowledgments to God by Man; and Man can only preſent his by Chriſt. It was utterly unlawful after the building of the Temple, to ſacrifice any where elſe: The Temple being a Type of Chriſt, it is utterly unlawful for us to preſent our Services in any other name than his.

* 1 Pet. 2. 5.

*Rev. 8. 3.

* Pſ. 134. 3.

This is the way to be Spiritual. If we conſider God out of Chriſt, we can have no other Notions but thoſe of Horror and Bondage. We behold him a Spirit, but environ'd with Juſtice and Wrath for Sinners: But the conſideration of him in Chriſt, vails his Juſtice; draws forth his Mercy; repreſents him more a Father than a Judge. In Chriſt the Aſpect of Juſtice is changed, and by that the temper of the Creature; ſo that in and by this Mediator, we *can have a ſpiritual boldneſs, and acceſs to God with Confidence* *; whereby the Spirit is kept from benummedneſs and diſtraction; and our Souls quickned and refined. The Thoughts kept upon Chriſt in a Duty of Worſhip, quickly elevates the Soul, and ſpiritualizeth the whole Service. Sin makes our Services black, and the Blood of Chriſt makes both our Perſons and Services white.

* Eph. 3. 12.

To conclude this Head.

God is a Spirit infinitely happy, therefore we muſt approach to him with cheerfulneſs; He is a Spirit of infinite Majeſty, therefore we muſt come before him with Reverence; He is a Spirit infinitely High, therefore we muſt offer up our Sacrifices with the deepeſt Humility; He is a Spirit infinitely Holy, therefore we muſt addreſs with Purity; He is a Spirit infinitely Glorious, we muſt therefore acknowledge his Excellency in all that we do, and in our Meaſures contribute to his Glory, by having the higheſt Aims in his Worſhip; He is a Spirit infinitely provoked by us, therefore we muſt offer up our Worſhip in the Name of a pacifying Mediator and Interceſſour.

3. The third general is, *Why a Spiritual Worſhip is due to God, and to be offered to him.* We muſt conſider the Object of Worſhip, and the Subject of Worſhip; the Worſhipper and the Worſhipped. God is a Spiritual Being; Man is a reaſonable Creature. The Nature of God informs us, what is fit to be preſented to him; our own Nature informs us, what is fit to be preſented by us.

Reaſon 1. *The beſt we have is to be preſented to God in Worſhip.* For,

1. *Since God is the moſt excellent Being, he is to be ſerved by us with the moſt excellent thing we have, and with the choiceſt Veneration.* God is ſo incomprehenſibly excellent, that we cannot render him what he deſerves; We muſt render him what we are able to offer; the beſt of our Affections; the flower of our Strength; the cream and top of our Spirits. By the ſame Reaſon that we are bound to give to God the beſt Worſhip, we muſt offer it to him in the beſt manner. We cannot give to God any thing too good for ſo Bleſſed a Being: God being a *great* King, ſlight Services become not his Majeſty *: 'Tis unbecoming the Majeſty of God, and the reaſon of a Creature, to give him a trivial thing: 'Tis unworthy to beſtow the beſt of our Strength on our Luſt, and the worſt and weakeſt in the Service of God. An infinite Spirit, ſhould have Affections as near to infinite as we can: As he is a Spirit without Bounds, ſo he ſhould have a Service without Limits: When we have given him all, we *cannot ſerve him* according to the excellency of his Nature *; and ſhall we give him leſs than all? His infinite Excellency and our Dependance on him, as Creatures, demands the choiceſt Adoration: Our Spirits being the nobleſt part of our Nature, are as due to him, as the Service of our Bodies which are the vileſt: To ſerve him with the worſt only, is to diminiſh his Honour.

* Mal. 1. 13.

* Joſh. 24. v. 19.

2. *Under the Law, God commanded the beſt to be offered him.* He would have the *Males*, the beſt of the kind; the *Fat*, the beſt of the Creature *: He commanded them to offer him the *Firſtlings* of the Flock; not the Firſtlings of the Womb, but the Firſtlings of the Year: The *Jewiſh* Cattle having two breeding times, in the beginning of the *Spring*, and the beginning of *September*; the latter breed was the weaker, which *Jacob* knew *, when he laid the Rods before the Cattle when they were ſtrong in the Spring, and with-held them when they were feeble in the Autumn. One Reaſon (as the *Jews* ſay) why God accepted not the Offerings of *Cain*, was, becauſe he brought the meaneſt, not the beſt of the Fruit; and therefore 'tis ſaid, only that he brought of the *Fruit* of the Ground, *Gen.* 4. 3. not the firſt of the Fruit, or the beſt of the Fruit; as *Abel* who brought the *Firſtling* of his Flock, and the Fat thereof, *v.* 4.

* Ex. 29. 13. *The inward Fat, not the Offalls.*

* Gen. 30.

3. *And this the Heathen practiſed by the Light of Nature.* They for the moſt part offered Males, as being more worthy; and burnt the Male, not the Female Frankincenſe, as it is divided into thoſe two kinds: They offered the beſt, when they offered their Children to *Moloch*. Nothing more excellent than Man, and nothing dearer to Parents than their Children, which are parts of themſelves. When the *Iſraelites* would have a Golden-Calf for a Repreſentation of God, they would dedicate their Jewels, and ſtrip their

their Wives and Children of their Richeſt Ornaments, to ſhew their *Devotion*. Shall Men ſerve their dumb Idols with the beſt of their Subſtance, and the ſtrength of their Souls; and ſhall the Living God have a duller Service from us, than Idols had from them? God requires no ſuch hard, but delightful Worſhip from us, [our Spirits.]

4. *All Creatures ſerve Man, by the providential Order of God, with the beſt they have.* As we by God's Appointment receive from Creatures the beſt they can give, ought we not with a free-will render to God the beſt we can offer? The Beaſts give us their beſt Fat; the Trees their beſt Fruit; the Sun its beſt Light; the Fountains their beſt Streams: Shall God order us the beſt from Creatures, and we put him off with the worſt from our ſelves?

5. *God hath given us the choiceſt thing he had.* A Redeemer that was the Power of God, and the Wiſdom of God: The beſt he had in Heaven, his own Son, and in himſelf, a Sacrifice for us, that we might be enabled to preſent our ſelves a Sacrifice to Him. And Chriſt offered himſelf for us, the beſt he had, and that with the ſtrength of the Deity thro' the Eternal Spirit; and ſhall we grudge God the beſt part of our ſelves? As God would have a worſhip from his Creature, ſo it muſt be with the beſt part of his Creature. If we have given our ſelves *to the Lord**, we can worſhip with no leſs than our ſelves. What is the Man without his Spirit? If we are to worſhip God with all that we have received from him, we muſt Worſhip him with the beſt part we have received from him: 'Tis but a ſmall glory we can give him with the beſt, and ſhall we deprive him of his Right by giving him the worſt? As what we are, is from God; ſo what we are, ought to be for God. Creation is the Foundation of VVorſhip, *Pſ.* 100.2,3. *Serve the Lord with gladneſs: Know ye that the Lord he is God; 'tis he that hath made us*: He hath ennobled us with ſpiritual Affections; where is it fitteſt for us to employ them, but upon him? and at what time, but when we come ſolemnly to converſe with him? Is it Juſtice to deny him the Honour of his beſt Gift to us? Our Souls are more his Gift to us, than any thing in the World: Other things are ſo given that they are often taken from us, but our Spirits are the moſt durable Gift. Rational Faculties cannot be removed without a Diſſolution of Nature.

*2 Cor. 8. 5.

*Amyrald. *Mor. Tom.* 2. p. 311.

Well then*, as he is God, he is to be honoured with all the Propenſions and Ardor that the infiniteneſs and excellency of ſuch a Being requires, and the incomparable Obligations he hath laid upon us in this ſtate deſerve at our Hands: In all our Worſhip therefore, our Minds ought to be filled with the higheſt Admiration, Love and Reverence. Since our End was to glorifie God, we Anſwer not our End, and Honour him not, unleſs we give him the choiceſt we have.

Reaſon 2. *We cannot elſe act towards God according to the nature of Rational Creatures.* Spiritual Worſhip is due to God, becauſe of his Nature; and due from us, becauſe of our Nature. As we are to adore God, ſo we are to adore him as Men: The Nature of a Rational Creature makes this Impreſſion upon him: He cannot view his own Nature without having this Duty ſtriking upon his Mind. As he knows by inſpection into himſelf, that there was a God that made him; ſo, that he is made to be in ſubjection to God; ſubjection to him in his Spirit as well as his Body, and ought morally to teſtifie this Natural Dependance on him: His Conſtitution informs him, that he hath a Capacity to Converſe with God; that he cannot converſe with him, but by thoſe inward Faculties: If it could be managed by his Body without his Spirit, Beaſts might as well Converſe with God as Men. It can never be a *reaſonable Service* as it ought to be*, unleſs the Reaſonable Faculties be employed in the Management of it: It muſt be a Worſhip prodigiouſly lame, without the concurrence of the chiefeſt part of Man with it. As we are to act conformably to the Nature of the Object, ſo alſo to the Nature of our own Faculties. Our Faculties in the very Gift of them to us were deſtined to be exerciſed; about what? What? All other things but the Author of them: 'Tis a conceit cannot enter into the heart of a Rational Creature, that he ſhould act as ſuch a Creature in other things, and as a ſtone in things relating to the Donor of them; as a Man, with his Mind about him in the Affairs of the World, as a Beaſt without Reaſon in his acts towards God. If a Man did not employ his Reaſon in other things, he would be an unprofitable Creature in the World: If he do not employ his ſpiritual Faculties in Worſhip, he denies them the proper end and uſe for which they were given him; 'tis a practical denial that God hath given him a Soul, and that God hath any right to the exerciſe of it. If there were no Worſhip appointed by God in the VVorld, the natural inclination of Man to ſome kind of Religion would be in vain; and if our inward Faculties were not employed in the Duties of Religion, they would be in vain: The true end of God in the endowment of us with them, would be defeated by us, as much as lies in us, if we did not ſerve him with that which we have from him ſolely at his own coſt. As no Man can with reaſon conclude, that the reſt commanded on the Sabbath and the Sanctification of it, was only a reſt of the Body; that had been performed by the Beaſts as well as Men; but ſome higher end was aimed at for the rational Creature: So no Man can think that the command for VVorſhip, terminated only in the preſence of the Body; that God ſhould give the command to Man as a reaſonable Creature, and expect no other Service from him than that of a Brute.

*Ro. 12. 1.

God did not require a worſhip from Man, for any want he had, or any Eſſential Honour that could accrue to him; but that Men might teſtifie their gratitude to him, and dependance on him. 'Tis the moſt horrid Ingratitude, not to have lively and deep Sentiments of Gratitude after ſuch Obligations, and not to make thoſe due acknowledgments that are proper for a rational Creature. Religion is the higheſt and choiceſt act of a reaſonable Creature: No Creature under Heaven is capable of it that wants Reaſon. As it is a violation of Reaſon not to worſhip God, ſo it is no leſs a violation of Reaſon not to worſhip him with the Heart and Spirit: It is a high diſhonour to God, and defeats him not only of the Service due to him from Man, but that which is due to him from all the Creatures. Every Creature, as it is an effect of God's *Power* and *Wiſdom*, doth paſſively worſhip God; that is, it doth afford matter of Adoration to Man that hath reaſon to collect it and return it where it is due: VVithout the exerciſe of the Soul we can no more hand it to God, than without ſuch an exerciſe we can gather it from the Creature: So that by this neglect, the Creatures are reſtrained from anſwering their chief end; they cannot pay any ſervice to God without Man; nor can Man without the Employment of his rational Faculties, render a Homage to God, any more than Beaſts can. This Engagement of our inward Power ſtands firm and unviolable, let the Modes of VVorſhip be what they will, or the Changes of them by the Sovereign Authority of God never ſo frequent; this could not expire or be changed, as long as the Nature of Man indured. As Man had not been capable of a Command for VVorſhip, unleſs he had been indued with ſpiritual Faculties; ſo he is not active in a true practice of Worſhip, unleſs they be employed by him in it. The Conſtitution of Man makes this manner of Worſhip perpetually obligatory; and the Obligation can never ceaſe, till Man ceaſe to be a Creature furniſht with ſuch Faculties:

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In our worſhip therefore, if we would act like rational Creatures, we ſhould extend all the powers of our Souls to the utmoſt pitch, and eſſay to have apprehenſions of God, equal to the excellency of his Nature, which tho' we may attempt, we can never attain.

Reaſon 3. *Without this engagement of our Spirits, no act is an act of Worſhip.* True VVorſhip being an acknowledgment of God and the Perfections of his Nature, reſults only from the Soul, that being only capable of knowing God and thoſe Perfections, which are the Object and Motive of VVorſhip. The poſture of the Body is but to teſtifie the inward temper and affection of the Mind: If therefore it teſtifies what it is not, 'tis a Lie and no Worſhip: The cringes a Beaſt may be taught to make to an Altar, may as well be called Worſhip, ſince a Man thinks as little of that God he pretends to honour, as the Beaſt doth of the Altar to which he bows. Worſhip is a reverent remembrance of God, and giving ſome honour to him with the intention of the Soul: It cannot juſtly have the name of VVorſhip, that wants the eſſential part of it: 'Tis an aſcribing to God the glory of his Nature, an owning ſubjection and obedience to him as our Soveraign Lord: This is as impoſſible to be performed without the Spirit, as that there can be life and motion in a Body without a Soul: 'Tis a drawing near to God, not in regard of his eſſential preſence; ſo all things are near to God, but in an aknowledgment of his excellency, which is an act of the Spirit; *without this, the worſt of Men in a place of Worſhip, are as near to God as the beſt.* The neceſſity of the conjunction of our Soul, ariſeth from the nature of Worſhip, which being the moſt ſerious thing we can be employed in, the higheſt converſe with the higheſt object, requires the choiceſt temper of Spirit in the performance. That cannot be an act of Worſhip, which is not an act of Piety and Vertue; but there is no act of Vertue done by the Members of the Body, without the concurrence of the Powers of the Soul. We may as well call the preſence of a dead Carcaſs in a place of Worſhip, an act of Religion, as the preſence of a living Body without an intent Spirit: The ſeparation of the Soul from one is Natural, the other Moral; that renders the Body lifeleſs, but this renders the Act loathſome to God: As the Being of the Soul gives life to the Body, ſo the operation of the Soul gives life to the Actions: As he cannot be a Man that wants the form of a Man, a rational Soul, ſo that cannot be a VVorſhip that wants an eſſential part, the act of the Spirit: God will not vouchſafe any acts of Man ſo noble a Title without the requiſite qualifications, *Hoſ.* 5.6. *They ſhall go with their Flocks and their Herds, to ſeek the Lord,* &c. A multitude of Lambs and Bullocks for Sacrifice, to appeaſe Gods anger: God would not give it the Title of VVorſhip, tho' Inſtituted by himſelf, when it wanted the qualities of ſuch a ſervice: The Spirit of VVhoredom was in the midſt of them, *v.*4. In the judgment of our Saviour, it is a *vain Worſhip, when the Traditions of Men are taught for the Doctrines of God* *; and no leſs vain muſt it be, when the Bodies of Men are preſented to ſupply the place of their Spirits. As an omiſſion of Duty is a contempt of Gods Soveraign Authority, ſo the omiſſion of the manner of it, is a contempt of it, and of his amiable excellency; and that which is a contempt and mockery, can lay no juſt claim to the Title of VVorſhip.

*Mat.15.9.

Reaſon 4. *There is in Worſhip, an approach of God to Man.* It was Inſtituted to this purpoſe, that God might give out his bleſſings to Man: And ought not our Spirits to be prepared and ready to receive his communications? VVe are in ſuch acts, more peculiarly in his preſence. In the *Iſraelites* hearing the Law, it is ſaid God was to *come among them* *: Then, Men are ſaid to ſtand before the Lord *: *God before whom I ſtand*, that is, whom I VVorſhip: And therefore when *Cain* forſook the VVorſhip of God ſettled in his Fathers Family, he is ſaid *to go out from the preſence of the Lord*, Gen.4.16. God is eſſentially preſent in the World; graciouſly preſent in his Church. The name of the Evangelical City is *Jehovah Shammah* *, *the Lord is there.* God is more graciouſly preſent in the Evangelical Inſtitutions, than in the Legal: He *loves the Gates of* Zion, *more than all the dwellings of* Jacob *: His Evangelical Law and VVorſhip which was to go forth from *Zion*, as the other did from *Sinai*, *Mic.*4.2. God delights to approach to Men, and converſe with them in the VVorſhip Inſtituted in the Goſpel, more than in all the dwellings of *Jacob.* If God be graciouſly preſent, ought not we to be ſpiritually preſent? A liveleſs Carcaſs ſervice, becomes not ſo high and delectable a preſence as this: 'Tis to thruſt him from us, not invite him to us: 'Tis to practiſe in the Ordinances, what the Prophet predicts concerning Mens uſage of our Saviour, *Iſa.*53.2. *There is no form, no comelineſs, nor beauty, that we ſhould deſire him.* A ſlightneſs in VVorſhip, reflects upon the excellency of the object of VVorſhip. God and his VVorſhip are ſo link'd together, that whoſoever thinks the one not worth his inward care, eſteems the other not worth his inward affection. How unworthy a ſlight is it of God, who proffers the opening his Treaſure, the re-impreſſing his Image, conferring his Bleſſings, admits us into his preſence, when he hath no need for us, who hath millions of Angels to attend him in his Court, and celebrate his Praiſe? He that VVorſhips not God with his Spirit, regards not Gods preſence in his Ordinances, and ſlights the great end of God in them, and that Perfection he may attain by them. VVe can only expect, what God hath promiſed to give, when we render to him what he hath commanded us to preſent. If we put off God with a Shell, he will put us off with a Husk. How can we expect his heart, when we do not give him ours? or hope for the bleſſing needful for us, when we render not the glory due to him? It cannot be an advantageous VVorſhip, without ſpiritual Graces; for thoſe are uniting, and Union is the ground of all Communion.

*Exod.19. *v.*10,11. *Deut.10.8 Kings 1.17.

Reaſon 5. *To have a ſpiritual Worſhip is Gods end, in the reſtoration of the Creature; both in Redemption by his Son, and Sanctification by his Spirit.* A fitneſs for ſpiritual Offerings, was the end of the *Coming of Chriſt* *; He ſhould purge them, as gold and ſilver by fire, a ſpirit burning up their droſs, melting them into a holy compliance with, and ſubmiſſion to God. To what purpoſe? That they may offer to the Lord an Offering in Righteouſneſs; a pure Offering from a purified Spirit: He came to *bring us to God* * in ſuch a Garb, as that we might be fit to converſe with him. Can we be thus, without a fixedneſs of our Spirits on him?

* Mal.3.3.

* 1Pet.3.18

The offering of ſpiritual Sacrifices, is the end of making any a ſpiritual *Habitation*, and a *holy Prieſthood* *. VVe can no more be VVorſhipers of God, without a VVorſhipers nature, than a Man be a Man without Humane Nature. As Man was at firſt created for the Honour and VVorſhip of God, ſo the deſign of reſtoring that Image, which was defaced by ſin, tends to the ſame end. VVe are not brought to God by Chriſt, nor are our ſervices preſented to him, if they be without our Spirits. VVould any Man that undertakes to bring another to a Prince, introduce him in a ſlovenly and ſordid habit, ſuch a garb that he knows hateful to him? Or bring the Cloaths or Skin of a Man ſtuft with ſtraw, inſtead of the Perſon? To come with our skins before God without our ſpirits, is contrary to the deſign of God, in Redemption and Regeneration.

* 1 Pet.2.5

If a carnal VVorſhip would have pleaſed God, a carnal heart would have ſerved his turn, without the expence of his Spirit in Sanctification: He beſtows upon Man a ſpiritual nature, that he may return to

him a ſpiritual ſervice: He enlightens the Underſtanding, that he may have a rational ſervice; and new moulds the VVill, that he may have a voluntary ſervice. As it is the Milk of the VVord wherewith he feeds us, ſo it is the ſervice of the Word wherewith we muſt glorifie him. So much as there is of confuſedneſs in our Underſtanding, ſo much of ſtarting and levity in our VVills; ſo much of ſlipperineſs and skipping in our affections, ſo much is abated of the due qualities of the VVorſhip of God, and ſo much we fall ſhort of the end of Redemption and Sanctification.

Reaſon 6. *A ſpiritual Worſhip is to be offered to God, becauſe no Worſhip but that can be acceptable.* VVe can never be ſecured of acceptance without it; he being a Spirit, nothing but the worſhip in Spirit can be ſuitable to him: VVhat is unſuitable cannot be acceptable; there muſt be ſomething in us, to make our ſervices capable of being preſented by Chriſt for an actual acceptation. No ſervice is *acceptable to God by Jeſus Chriſt*, but as it is a ſpiritual Sacrifice, and offered by a ſpiritual heart, 1 *Pet.*2.5. The Sacrifice is firſt ſpiritual, before it be acceptable to God by Chriſt: When it is *an offering in righteouſneſs*, it is then, and only then, pleaſant to the Lord, *Mal.*3.3,4. No Prince would accept a gift that is unſuitable to his Majeſty, and below the condition of the Perſon that preſents it: Would he be pleaſed with a Bottle of Water for drink, from one that hath his Cellar full of Wine? How unacceptable muſt that be, that is unſuitable to the Divine Majeſty? And what can be more unſuitable, than a withdrawing the operations of our Souls from him, in the oblation of our Bodies? We as little *glorifie God, as God*, when we give him only a corporeal Worſhip, as the Heathen did, when they *repreſented him* in a corporeal ſhape *; one as well as the other denies his ſpiritual nature: This is worſe, for had it been lawful to repreſent God to the eye, it could not have been done, but by a bodily figure ſuted to the ſenſe; but ſince it is neceſſary to Worſhip him, it cannot be by a corporeal attendance, without the operation of the ſpirit. A ſpiritual frame is more pleaſing to God, than the higheſt exterior adornments; than the greateſt gifts, and the higheſt Prophetical Illumination. *The glory of the ſecond Temple* exceeded the glory of the firſt *: As God accounts the ſpiritual glory of Ordinances moſt beneficial for us, ſo our ſpiritual attendance upon Ordinances is moſt pleaſing to him: He that offers the greateſt ſervices without it, offers but fleſh, *Hoſ.*8.13. *They Sacrifice Fleſh for the Sacrifices of my Offerings, but the Lord accepts them not*, Spiritual frames are the Soul of Religious Services; all other carriages without them, are contemptible to this Spirit: We can never lay claim to that promiſe of God, none ſhall *ſeek my face in vain:* We affect a vain ſeeking of him, when we want a due temper of Spirit for him: And vain Spirits ſhall have vain returns: 'Tis more contrary to the nature of Gods Holineſs to have communion with ſuch, than it is contrary to the nature of Light to have communion with Darkneſs.

*Rom.1.21

*Hag.2.8,9

To make uſe of this,

Uſe 1. Firſt it ſerves for *information.*

1. If Spiritual Worſhip be required by God; *How ſad is it for them that are ſo far from giving God a ſpiritual Worſhip, that they render him no Worſhip at all?* I ſpeak not of the neglect of publick, but of private, when Men preſent not a devotion to God from one years end to the other. The Speech of our Saviour, that we muſt Worſhip God in Spirit and in Truth, implies that a Worſhip is due to him from every one: That is the common impreſſion upon the Conſciences of all Men in the World, if they have not by ſome conſtant courſe in groſs ſins, hardned their Souls, and ſtifled thoſe natural ſentiments. There was never a Nation in the World, without ſome kind of Religion; and no Religion was ever without ſome modes, to teſtifie a devotion. The Heathens had their Sacrifices and Purifications; and the *Jews*, by Gods order, had their Rites, whereby they were to expreſs their Allegiance to God.

Conſider,

1. *Worſhip is a duty incumbent upon all Men.* 'Tis a homage Mankind owes to God, under the relation wherein he ſtands obliged to him: 'Tis a prime and immutable Juſtice to own our Allegiance to him. 'Tis as unchangeable a truth that God is to be Worſhiped, as that God is: He is to be Worſhiped as God; as Creator; and therefore by all, ſince he is the Creator of all, the Lord of all, and *all are his Creatures, and all are his Subjects.* Worſhip is founded upon Creation, *Pſal.*100.2.3. 'Tis due to God for himſelf, and his own eſſential excellency, and therefore due from all: 'Tis due upon the account of Mans nature: The humane rational nature is the ſame in all. Whatſoever is due to God upon the account of Mans Nature, and the Natural obligations he hath laid upon Man, is due from all Men, becauſe they all enjoy the benefits which are proper to their nature.

Man in no ſtate was exempted, nor can be exempted from it: In Paradiſe he had his Sabbaths and Sacraments; Man therefore diſſolves the obligation of a reaſonable Nature, by neglecting the Worſhip of God.

Religion is in the firſt place to be minded. As ſoon as *Noah* came out of the Ark, he contrived not a Habitation for himſelf, but an Altar for the Lord, to acknowledge him the Author of his preſervation from the Deluge *: And whereſoever *Abraham* came, his firſt buſineſs was to erect an Altar, and pay his Arrears of gratitude to God, before he ran upon the ſcore for new Mercies *: He left a teſtimony of VVorſhip where ever he came.

*Gen.8.20.

*Gen.12.7. Gen. 13. v. 4.18.

2. *Wholly therefore to neglect it, is a high degree of Atheiſm.* He that calls not upon God, ſaith *in his heart there is no God*; and ſeems to have the ſentiments of natural Conſcience, as to God, ſtifled in him *: It muſt ariſe from a conceit that there is no God, or that we are equal to him, adoration not being due from perſons of an equal ſtate; or that God is unable, or unwilling to take notice of the adoring acts of his Creatures. VVhat is any of theſe but an undeifying the ſupream Majeſty? VVhen we lay aſide all thoughts of paying any homage to him, we are in a fair way opinionatively to deny him, as much as we practically diſown him. VVhere there is no knowledge of God, that is, no *acknowledgment of God*, a gap is opened to all Licentiouſneſs *: And that by degrees brawns the Conſcience, and raſeth out the ſenſe of God. Thoſe forſake God that *forget his Holy Mountain* *: They do not practically own him as the Creator of their Souls or Bodies. 'Tis the ſin of *Cain*, who turning his back upon VVorſhip, is ſaid to *go out from the preſence of the Lord* *. Not to VVorſhip him with our Spirits, is againſt his Law of Creation: Not to VVorſhip him at all, is againſt his act of Creation: Not to VVorſhip him in Truth is Hypocriſie: Not to VVorſhip him at all is Atheiſm, whereby we render our ſelves worſe than the Worms in the Earth, or a Toad in a Ditch.

* Pſal.14. v.1,4.

*Hoſ.4.1,2.

*Iſa.65.11.

*Gen.4.16.

3. *To perform a Worſhip to a falſe God, or to the true God, in a falſe manner, ſeems to be leſs a ſin than to live in perpetual neglects of it.* Tho' it be directed to a falſe Object inſtead of God, yet it is under the notion of a God, and ſo is an acknowledgment of ſuch a Being as God in the VVorld; whereas the total neglect of any VVorſhip, is a practical denying of the exiſtence of any ſupream Majeſty.

VVhoſoever conſtantly omits a Publick and Private VVorſhip, tranſgreſſes againſt an univerſally received dictate; for all Nations have agreed in the common notion

notion of worſhiping God, tho' they have diſagreed in the ſeveral Modes and Rites whereby they would teſtifie that adoratiou. By a worſhip of God, tho' ſuperſtitious, a veneration and reverence of ſuch a Being is maintained in the VVorld; whereas by a total neglect of VVorſhip, he is vertually diſowned and diſcarded, if not from his Exiſtence, yet from his Providence and Government of the VVorld: All the mercies we breath in are denied to flow from him. A fooliſh VVorſhip owns Religion, tho' it beſpatters it. As if a ſtranger coming into a Country miſtakes a Subject for the Prince, and pays that reverence to the Subject, which is due to the Prince, tho' he miſtakes the object, yet he owns an Authority; or if he pays any reſpect to the true Prince of that Country, after the mode of his own, tho' appearing ridiculous in the place where he is, he owns the Authority of the Prince; whereas the omiſſion of all reſpect would be a contempt of Majeſty: And therefore the Judgments of God have been more ſignal upon the Sacrilegious contemners of VVorſhip among the Heathens, than upon thoſe that were diligent and devout in their falſe VVorſhip; and they generally owned the bleſſings received, to the preſervation of a ſenſe, and worſhip of a Deity among them. Tho' ſuch a worſhip be not acceptable to God, and every Man is bound to offer to God a devotion agreeable to his own mind, yet it is commendable, not as worſhip, but as it ſpeaks an acknowledgment of ſuch a Being as God in his power in Creation, and his beneficence in his Providence.

VVell then, omiſſions of worſhip are to be avoided. Let no Man execute that upon himſelf, which God will pronounce at laſt as the greateſt miſery, and bid God depart from him, who will at laſt be loath to hear God bid him depart from him. Tho' Man hath natural ſentiments that God is to be Worſhiped, yet having an hoſtility in his nature, he is apt to neglect, or give it him in a ſlight manner. He therefore ſets a particular mark and notice of attention upon the fourth Command, *Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day.* Corrupt nature is apt to neglect the worſhip of God, and ſlag in it: This Command therefore which concerns his worſhip, he fortifies with ſeveral reaſons.

Nor let any neglect worſhip, becauſe they cannot find their hearts ſpiritual in it. The further we are from God, the more carnal ſhall we be. No man can expect heat by a diſtance from the Sun beams, or other means of warmth. Though God commanded a *circumciſed heart* in the Jewiſh ſervices; yet he did not warrant a neglect of the outward Teſtimonies of Religion he had then appointed; he expected according to his Command, that they ſhould offer the Sacrifices & practiſe the Legal Purifications he had commanded; he would have them diligently obſerved, tho' he had declared that he impoſed them only for a time. And our *Saviour* ordered the practice of thoſe poſitive Rites as long as the Law remained unrepealed, as in the Caſe of the *Leper**. 'Tis an injuſtice to refuſe the offering our ſelves to God according to the manner he hath in his Wiſdom preſcribed and required.

* Mark 14. v. 4.

If ſpiritual worſhip be required by God, then

2. It informs us, *that diligence in outward worſhip is not to be reſted in**. Men may attend all their days on worſhip, with a juiceleſs heart and unquickned frame, and think to compenſate the neglect of the manner with abundance of the matter of ſervice. Outward expreſſions are but the Badges and Livery of ſervice, not the ſervice it ſelf. As the ſtrength of ſin lies in the inward frame of the heart; ſo the ſtrength of worſhip in the inward complexion and temper of the Soul. What do a thouſand ſervices avail, without cutting the throat of our carnal affections? What are loud Prayers, but as ſounding Braſs and tinkling Cymbals, without Divine Charity? A *Phariſaical* diligence in outward forms without inward Spirit, had no better a title vouchſafed by our Saviour, than that of hypocritical. God deſires not Sacrifices, nor delights in burnt Offerings: Shadows are not to be offered inſtead of ſubſtance. God required the heart of man for it ſelf; but commanded outward Ceremonies, as ſubſervient to inward worſhip, and goads and ſpurs unto it: They were never appointed as the ſubſtance of Religion, but auxiliaries to it. What value had the Offering of the Human Nature of Chriſt been of, if he had not had a Divine Nature to qualifie him to be the Prieſt? And what is the Oblation of our Bodies, without a Prieſtly act of the Spirit in the preſentation of it? Could the *Iſraelites* have called themſelves Worſhipers of God according to his Order, if they had brought a thouſand Lambs that had died in a Ditch, or been killed at home? They were to be brought living to the Altar; the Blood ſhed at the foot of it: A thouſand Sacrifices killed without, had not been ſo valuable as one brought alive to the place of Offering: One ſound Sacrifice is better than a thouſand rotten ones. As God took no pleaſure in the Blood of Beaſts without its relation to the *Antitype*; ſo he takes no pleaſure in the outward Rites of worſhip, without Faith in the Redeemer. To offer a Body with a ſapleſs Spirit, is a Sacriledge of the ſame nature with that of the *Iſraelites* when they offered dead Beaſts. A man without ſpiritual worſhip is *dead* whiles he worſhips, though by his diligence in the externals of it, he may like the *Angel of the Church of* Sardis, *have a name to live**. What ſecurity can we expect from a multitude of dead ſervices? What weak ſhields are they againſt the holy Eye, and revenging Wrath of God? What man, but one out of his wits, would ſollicite a dead man to be his Advocate or Champion?

* Rev. 3. 1.

Diligence in outward worſhip is not to be reſted in.

Uſe II. Shall be for *Examination: Let us try our ſelves concerning the manner of our worſhip.* We are now in the end of the World, and the dregs of time; wherein the *Apoſtle* predicts, there may be much of a *form, and little of the power of Godlineſs**: And therefore it ſtands us in hand to ſearch into our ſelves, whether it be not thus with us? Whether there be as much reverence in our Spirits, as there may be devotion in our countenances and outward carriages.

* 2 Tim. 3. v. 1, 5.

1. *How therefore are our hearts prepared to worſhip?* Is our diligence greater, to put our hearts in an adoring poſture, than our bodies in a decent garb? Or are we content to have a muddy Heart, ſo we may have a dreſt Carcaſs? To have a Spirit a Cage of unclean Birds, while we wipe the filth from the outſide of the Platter, is no better than a *Phariſaical* devotion, and deſerves no better a name, than that of a whited Sepulcher.

Do we take opportunities to excite and quicken our Spirits to the performance, and cry aloud with *David, awake, awake, my glory?* Are not our hearts aſleep when Chriſt knocks; when we hear the voice of God, *ſeek my face*; Do we anſwer him with warm reſolutions, *thy face Lord we will ſeek**? Do we comply with ſpiritual motions, and ſtrike whiles the Iron is hot? Is there not more of reluctancy, than readineſs? Is there a quick riſing of the Soul in reverence to the motion, as *Eglon* to *Ehud*; or a ſullen hanging the head at the firſt approach of it? Or if our hearts ſeem to be engaged, and on fire; What are the motives that quicken that fire? Is it only the Blaſt of a natural Conſcience; fear of Hell, deſires of Heaven as abſtracted from God? Or is it an affection to God; an obedient will to pleaſe him; longings to enjoy him, as a holy and ſanctifying God in his Ordinances, as well as a bleſſed and glorified God in Heaven?

* Pſal. 27. 8

* Daille *melange. des Sermons* Ser. 2.

What do we expect in our approaches to him? That which may make Divine Impreſſions upon us, and more exactly conform us to the Divine Nature? Or do we deſign nothing but an empty formality, a rowling eye, and a filling the Air with a few words, without any openings of heart to receive the incomes, which according to the nature of the duty might be conveyed to us? Can this be a ſpiritual worſhip? The Soul then *cloſely waits* upon him, when its *expectation is only from him*, *Pſal.* 62. 6. Are our hearts ſeaſoned with a ſenſe of ſin; a ſight of our ſpiritual wants; raiſed notions of God; glowing affections to him; ſtrong appetite after a ſpiritual fulneſs? Do we rouze up our ſleepy Spirits, and make a Covenant with all that is within us to attend upon him? So much as we want of this, ſo much we come ſhort of a ſpiritual worſhip: In *Pſal.* 57. 7. *My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed. David* would fix his heart, before he would engage in a praiſing act of worſhip: He appeals to God about it, and that with doubling the expreſſion, as being certain of an inward preparedneſs. Can we make the ſame appeals in a fixation of Spirit?

2. *How are our hearts fixed upon him? How do they cleave to him in the duty?* Do we reſign our Spirits to God, and make them an intire *Holocauſt*, a whole burnt-offering in his worſhip? O do we not willingly admit carnal thoughts to mix themſelves with ſpiritual duties, and faſten our minds to the Creature, under pretences of directing them to the Creator? Do we not paſs a meer Complement on God, by ſome ſuperficial act of Devotion; while ſome covetous, envious, ambitious, voluptuous imagination may poſſeſs our minds? Do we not invert God's order, and worſhip a Luſt inſtead of God with our Spirit, that ſhould not have the leaſt ſervice, either from our Souls or Bodies, but with a ſpiritual diſdain be ſacrificed to the juſt indignation of God? How often do we fight againſt his will, while we cry hail Maſter; inſtead of Crucifying our own thoughts, Crucifying the Lord of our Lives; Our outward carriage plauſible, and our inward ſtark naught? Do we not often regard iniquity more than God in our hearts, in a time of worſhip? Roul ſome filthy imagination as a ſweet morſel under our tongues, and taſte more ſweetneſs in that, than in God? Do not our Spirits ſmell rank of Earth, while we offer to Heaven, and have we not hearts full of thick Clay, as their *hands were full of blood* *? When we ſacrifice, do we not wrap up our Souls in communion with ſome ſordid fancy, when we ſhould entwine our Spirits about an amiable God? While we have ſome fear of him, may we not have a love to ſomething elſe above him? This is to *worſhip*, or ſwear by the *Lord*, and by *Malchon* *. How often doth an Apiſh-fancy render a ſervice inwardly ridiculous, under a grave outward poſture; skipping to the Shop, Ware-houſe, Compting-houſe in the ſpace of a ſhort Prayer? And we are before God as a *Babel*, a confuſion of internal Languages; and this in thoſe parts of worſhip which are in the right uſe moſt agreeable to God; profitable for our ſelves; ruinous to the Kingdom of Sin and Satan, and means to bring us into a cloſer communion with the Divine Majeſty: Can this be a ſpiritual worſhip?

* Iſa. 1. 15.

* Zeph. 1. 5

3. *How do we act our Graces in worſhip?* Though the Inſtrument be ſtrung, if the ſtrings be not wound up, what melody can be the iſſue? All readineſs and alacrity diſcover a ſtrength of Nature, and a readineſs in Spirituals, diſcovers a ſpirituality in the heart. As unaffecting thoughts of God are not ſpiritual thoughts; ſo unaffecting addreſſes to God, are not ſpiritual addreſſes. Well then, what awakenings, and elevations of Faith and Love have we? What ſtrong outflowings of our Souls to him? What indignation againſt Sin? What admirations of redeeming Grace? How low have we brought our corruptions to the foot-ſtool of Chriſt, to be made his conquered Enemies? How ſtraitly have we claſp our Faith about the Croſs and the Throne of Chriſt, to become his intimate Spouſe? Do we in hearing hang upon the Lips of Chriſt; in prayer take hold of God, and will not let him go; in confeſſions rent the Caul of our hearts, and indite our Souls before him with a deep humility? Do we act more by a ſoring love than a drooping fear? So far as our Spirits are ſervile, ſo far they are legal and carnal; ſo much as they are free and ſpontaneous, ſo much they are Evangelical and Spiritual. As men under the *Law* are ſubject to the conſtraint of *Bondage* * *all their life-time*, in all their worſhip; ſo under the Goſpel they are under a conſtraint of Love *: How then are believing affections exerciſed, which are always accompanied with holy fear, a fear of his goodneſs that admits us into his preſence, and a fear to offend him in our act of worſhip? So much as we have of forced or feeble affection, ſo much we have of carnality.

* Heb. 2. 15

* 2 Cor. 5. v. 14.

4. *How do we find our hearts after worſhip?* By an after carriage, we may judge of the ſpirituality of it.

1. *How are we as to inward ſtrength?* When a worſhip is ſpiritually performed, grace is more ſtrengthened, corruption more mortified: The Soul, like *Sampſon* after his awakening, goes out with a renewed ſtrength: As the inward man is renewed day by day, that is, every day; ſo it is renewed in every worſhip. Every ſhower makes the graſs and fruit grow in good ground where the root is good, and the weeds where the ground is naught: The more prepared the heart is to obedience in other duties after worſhip, the more evidence there is that it hath been ſpiritual in the exerciſe of it. 'Tis the end of God in every diſpenſation, as in that of *John Baptiſt*; To *make ready a People prepared for the Lord* *. When the heart is by worſhip prepared for freſh acts of obedience, and hath a more exact watchfulneſs againſt the incroachments of Sin. As carnal men after worſhip ſprout up in ſpiritual wickedneſs; ſo do ſpiritual worſhippers in ſpiritual graces: Spiritual fruits, are a ſign of a ſpiritual frame. When men are more prone to ſin after duty, 'tis a ſign there was but little communion with God in it, and a greater ſtrength of ſin, becauſe ſuch an act is contrary to the end of worſhip, which is the ſubduing of ſin. 'Tis a ſign the *Phyſick* hath wrought well, when the ſtomach hath a better appetite to its appointed food; and worſhip hath been well performed, when we have a ſtronger inclination to other acts well pleaſing to God, and a more ſenſible diſtate of thoſe temptations we too much reliſht before. 'Tis a ſign of a good Concoction, when there is a greater ſtrength in the vitals of Religion, a more eager deſire to know God. When *Moſes* had been praying to God, and prevailed with him, he puts up a higher requeſt, to *behold his Glory* *. When the appetite ſtands ſtrong to fuller diſcoveries of God, it is a ſign there hath been a ſpiritual converſe with him.

* Lev. 1. 1

* Exod. 33. 13, 18.

2. *How is it eſpecially as to Humility?* The *Phariſees* Worſhip was without diſpute, carnal; and we find them not more humble after all their devotions, but over-grown with more weeds of Spiritual Pride; they performed them as their righteouſneſs. What men dare plead before God in *his day*, they plead before him in their hearts, in *their day*; but this men will do at the day of Judgment; *we have propheſied in thy name*, &c. *Matth.* 7. 11. They ſhew what tincture their ſervices left upon their Spirits: That which excludes them from any acceptation at the laſt day, excludes them from any eſtimation of being ſpiritual in this day. The carnal worſhipers charge God with injuſtice in not rewarding them, and claim an acceptation as a compenſation due to them,

them, *Iſa.*58.3. *Wherefore have we afflicted our Souls, and thou takeſt no knowledge?* A ſpiritual Worſhiper looks upon his Duties with ſhame, as well as he doth upon his Sins with confuſion, and implores the mercy of God for the one as well as the other. In the *Pſalm* 143.*v.*2. the Prophet *David* after his ſupplications, begs of God not to enter into Judgment with him, and acknowledges any anſwer that God ſhould give him, as a fruit of his faithfulneſs to his promiſe, and not the merit of his worſhip. *In thy faithfulneſs* Pſal.143.2. *anſwer me*, &c. Whatſoever ſprings from a gracious Principle, and is the breath of the Spirit, leaves a Man more humble; whereas that which proceeds from a ſtock of Nature, hath the true blood of Nature running in the veins of it, *viz.* That *Pride* which is naturally derived from *Adam*. The breathing of the Divine Spirit is in every thing to conform us to our Redeemer; that being the main work of his Office, is his work in every particular Chriſtian act influenced by him. Now Jeſus Chriſt in all his actions was an exact Pattern of Humility. After the *Inſtitution* and *Celebration* of the *Supper*, a ſpecial act of Worſhip in the Church; tho' he had a ſenſe of all the Authority his Father had given him, yet he *humbles himſelf to waſh his Diſciples feet* *: And after * John 13. v.2,3,4. his ſublime Prayer, *John* 17. *He humbles himſelf to the death, and offers himſelf* to his Murderers, becauſe of his Fathers pleaſure, *John* 18.1. *When he had ſpoken thoſe words, he went over the Brook* Kedron *into the Garden*. What is the end of God in appointing Worſhip, is the end of a ſpiritual heart in offering it; not his own exaltation, but Gods glory: Glorifying the name of God, is the fruit of that Evangelical worſhip the Gentiles were in time to give to God, *Pſal.*86.9. *All Nations which thou haſt made, ſhall come and worſhip before thee, O Lord, and ſhall glorifie thy Name*. Let us examine then what debaſing our ſelves there is in a ſenſe of our own vileneſs, and diſtance from ſo glorious a ſpirit. Self-denial is the heart of all Goſpel-grace. Evangelical Spiritual worſhip cannot be without the ingredient of the main Evangelical Principle.

3. *What delight is there after it?* What pleaſure is there, and what is the Object of that pleaſure? Is it Communion we have had with God, or a Fluency in our ſelves? Is it ſomething which hath touched our hearts, or tickled our fancies? As the ſtrength of ſin is known by the delightful thoughts of it after the commiſſion, ſo is the ſpirituality of duty, by the object of our delightful remembrance after the performance. It was a ſign *David* was ſpiritual in the Worſhip of God in the Tabernacle, when he enjoyed it, becauſe he longed for the ſpiritual part of it, when he was exil'd from it: His deſires were not only for Liberty to re-viſit the Tabernacle, but to ſee the *power and glory of God in the Sanctuary*, as he *Pſal.63.2. had ſeen it before* *: His deſires for it could not have been ſo ardent, if his reflection upon what had paſt had not been delightful; nor could his Soul be poured out in him *for the want* of ſuch opportunities, if the remembrance of the converſe he had had with God, * Pſal.42.4. had not been accompanied with a delighful reliſh *.

Let us examine what delight we find in our ſpirits after Worſhip.

Uſe III. Is of *Comfort*. And 'tis very comfortable to conſider, that the ſmalleſt Worſhip with *the Heart and Spirit*, flowing from a Principle of Grace, is more acceptable than the moſt pompous veneration; yea, if the oblation were as precious as the whole Circuit of Heaven and Earth without it. That God, that values a Cup of cold Water given to any as his Diſciple, will value a ſincere ſervice above a coſtly Sacrifice. God hath his eye upon them that honour his nature; he would not *ſeek ſuch to worſhip him*, if he did not intend to accept ſuch a worſhip from them: When we therefore invoke him, and praiſe him, which are the prime parts of Religion, he will receive it as a ſweet ſavour from us, and overlook infirmities mixed with the graces.

The great matter of *diſcomfort*, and that which makes us queſtion the ſpirituality of Worſhip, is the *many ſtarts of our Spirits, and rovings to other things*.

For *anſwer* to which,

1. *'Tis to be confeſt, that theſe ſtarts are natural to us*. Who is free from them? We bear in our own boſom a neſt of turbulent thoughts, which like buſie Gnats will be buzzing about us, while we are in our moſt inward and ſpiritual converſes. Many wild Beaſts lurk in a Mans heart, as in a cloſe and covert Wood, and ſcarce diſcover themſelves, but at our ſolemn Worſhip.

No Duty ſo holy, no Worſhip ſo ſpiritual, that can wholly priviledge us from them; they will jog us in our moſt weighty employments, that, as God ſaid to *Cain*, ſin lies at the door, and enters in, and makes a riot in our Souls. As it is ſaid of wicked Men, *they cannot ſleep* for multitude of thoughts *, ſo it *Eccl.5.12. may be of many a good Man, he cannot worſhip for multitude of thoughts. There will be ſtarts, and more in our Religious than Natural Imployments; 'tis natural to Man. Some therefore think, the Bells tied to *Aarons* Garments between the *Pomegranates*, were to warn the People, and recal their fugitive Minds to the preſent Service, when they heard the ſound of them, upon the leaſt motion of the High Prieſt. The *Sacrifice* of *Abraham*, the Father of the Faithful, was not exempt from the *Fowls* pecking at it. *Zachariah* himſelf was drowſie in the midſt of his Viſions, which being more amazing, might cauſe a heavenly intentneſs *, *Zach.*4.1. *The Angel that talked with me, came* *Gen.15.12 *again and awaked me, as a Man is awaked out of ſleep*. He had been rouzed up before, but he was ready to drop down again; his heart was gone, till the Angel jogged him. We may complain of ſuch imaginations, as *Jeremiah* doth of the Enemies of the Jews *, *Lam.4.19. *Our Perſecuters are ſwifter than Eagles*; they light upon us with as much ſpeed, as Eagles upon a Carcaſs; they purſue us upon the Mountain of Divine Inſtitution, and they lay wait for us in the Wilderneſs, in our retired addreſſes to God.

And this will be ſo while,

1. *There is natural Corruption in us*. There are in a Godly Man two contrary Principles, Fleſh and Spirit, which endeavour to hinder one anothers acts, and are always ſtirring upon the offenſive or defenſive part *. There is a body of death continually exhaling * Gal.5.17. its noyſom vapours: 'Tis a body of Death in our Worſhip, as well as in our Natures, it ſnaps our reſolutions aſunder *; it hinders us in the doing good, *Rom.7.19 and contradicts our Wills in the ſtirring up evil: This corruption being ſeated in all the faculties, and a conſtant Domeſtick in them, has the greater opportunity to trouble us, ſince it is by thoſe faculties that we ſpiritually tranſact with God; and it ſtirs more in the time of Religious Exerciſes, tho' it be in part mortified: As a wounded Beaſt tho' tired, will rage and ſtrive to its utmoſt, when the Enemy is about to fetch a blow at it. All Duties of Worſhip tend to the wounding of Corruption; and it is no wonder to feel the ſtriving of ſin, to defend it ſelf, and offend us, when we have our Arms in our hands to mortifie it, that the blow may be diverted which is directed againſt it.

The Apoſtles had aſpiring thoughts; and being perſwaded of an earthly Kingdom, expected a Grandeur in it: And tho' we find ſome appearance of it at other times, as when they were caſting out Devils, and gave an account of it to their Maſter, he gives them a kind of a check *, intimating that there was *Luk.10.20 ſome kind of evil in their rejoycing upon that account. Yet this never ſwell'd ſo high, as to break out into a quarrel who ſhould be greateſt, until they had the moſt

moſt ſolemn Ordinance, the Lord's Supper, to quell it *. Our corruption is like Lime, which diſcovers not its fire by any ſmoke or heat, till you caſt Water, the Enemy of fire, upon it: Neither doth our natural corruption rage ſo much, as when we are uſing means to quench and deſtroy it.

*Luke 22. v. 24.

2. *While there is a Devil, and we in his Precinct.* As he accuſeth us to God, ſo he diſturbs us in our ſelves: He is a bold Spirit, and loves to intrude himſelf when we are converſing with God: We read, that when the Angels preſented themſelves before God, *Satan* comes among them *. Motions from *Satan* will thruſt themſelves in with our moſt raiſed and Evangelical frames: He loves to take off the edge of our Spirits from God: He acts but after the old rate: He from the firſt envied God an obedience from Man, and envied Man the felicity of communion with God: He is unwilling God ſhould have the honour of Worſhip, and that we ſhould have the fruit of it: He hath himſelf loſt it, and therefore is unwilling we ſhould enjoy it; and being ſubtil, he knows how to make impreſſions upon us ſuitable to our inbred corruptions, and aſſault us in the weakeſt part: He knows all the Avenues to get within us, (as he did in the temptation of *Eve*) and being a Spirit, he wants not a power to dart them immediately upon our fancy; and being a Spirit, and therefore active and nimble, he can ſhoot thoſe darts faſter than our weakneſs can beat them off: He is diligent alſo, and watcheth for his Prey, and ſeeks to devour our Services as well as our Souls, and ſnatch our beſt Morſels from us: We know he mixed himſelf with our *Saviours* retirements in the Wilderneſs, and endeavoured to Fly-blow his holy converſe with his Father in the preparation to his Mediatory work.

* Job 1. 6.

Satan is God's Ape, and imitates the Spirit in the Office of a Remembrancer: As the Spirit brings good thoughts and divine promiſes to mind, to quicken our Worſhip, ſo the Devil brings evil things to mind, and endeavours to faſten them in our Souls to diſturb us: And tho' all the fooliſh ſtarts we have in Worſhip are not purely his iſſue, yet being of kin to him, he claps his hands, and ſets them on like ſo many Maſtives to tear the Service in pieces.

And both thoſe diſtractions which ariſe from our own *corruption*, and from *Satan*, are moſt rife in *Worſhip*, when we are under ſome preſſing affliction. This ſeems to be *David*'s Caſe, *Pſal.* 86. when in *v.* 11. he prays God to *unite his heart to fear* and worſhip *his Name*; he ſeems to be under ſome affliction, or fear of his Enemies: Oh free me from thoſe diſtractions of Spirit, and thoſe paſſions which ariſe in my Soul, upon conſidering the deſigns of my Enemies againſt me, and preſs upon me in my addreſſes to thee, and attendances on thee. *Job* alſo in his affliction complains, *Job* 17. 11. *That his purpoſes were broken off:* He could not make an even thread of thoughts and reſolutions; they were frequently ſnapt aſunder, like rotten Yarn when one is winding it up.

Good Men and Spiritual Worſhipers have lain under this trouble: Tho' they are a ſign of weakneſs of grace, or ſome obſtructions in the acting of ſtrong grace, yet they are not always evidences of a want of grace: What ariſeth from our own *Corruption*, is to be matter of Humiliation and Reſiſtance; what ariſeth from *Satan*, ſhould edge our minds to a noble conqueſt of them. If the Apoſtle did comfort himſelf with his diſapproving of what roſe from the natural ſpring of ſin within him, with his conſent to the Law, and diſſent from his Luſt, and charges it not upon himſelf, but upon the ſin that dwelt in him, with which he had broken off the former League, and was reſolved never to enter into Amity with it; by the ſame reaſon we may comfort our ſelves, if ſuch thoughts are undelighted in, and alienate not our hearts from the worſhip of God by all their buſie intruſions to interrupt us.

2. *Theſe diſtractions (not allowed) may be occaſions by an holy improvement to make our hearts more ſpiritual after Worſhip, though they diſturb us in it*, by anſwering thoſe ends for which we may ſuppoſe God permits them to invade us. And that is,

1. *When they are occaſions to humble us.*

(1.) *For our carriage in the particular Worſhip.* There is nothing ſo dangerous as Spiritual Pride; it deprived Devils and Men of the preſence of God, and will hinder us of the influence of God. If we had had raiſed and uninterrupted motions in Worſhip, we ſhould be apt to be lifted up; and the Devil ſtands ready to tempt us to Self-confidence. You know how it was with *Paul* *, his *buffetings* were occaſions to render him more ſpiritual than his *raptures*, becauſe more humble. God ſuffers thoſe wandrings, ſtarts and diſtractions, to prevent our ſpiritual Pride, which is as a Worm at the root of Spiritual Worſhip, and minds us of the duſty frame of our Spirits, how eaſily they are blown away; as he ſends ſickneſs to put us in mind of the ſhortneſs of our breath, and the eaſineſs to loſe it. God would make us aſhamed of our ſelves in his preſence, that we may own, that what is good in any duty, is meerly from his Grace and Spirit, and not from our ſelves. That with *Paul* we may cry out, *by Grace we are what we are*, and by Grace we do what we do: We may be hereby made ſenſible, that God can always find ſomething in our exacteſt Worſhip, as a ground of denying us the ſucceſsful fruit of it. If we cannot ſtand upon our Duties for Salvation, what can we bottom upon in our ſelves? If therefore they are occaſions to make us out of love with any Righteouſneſs of our own, to make us break our hearts for them, becauſe we cannot keep them out; If we mourn for them as our ſins, and count them our great afflictions, we have attained that brokenneſs which is a choice ingredient in a ſpiritual Sacrifice: Tho' we have been diſturbed by them, yet we are not robbed of the ſucceſs; we may behold an anſwer of our Worſhip in our Humiliation, in ſpite of all of them.

* 2 Cor. 12. from v. 1. to v. 7.

(2.) *For the baſeneſs of our Nature.* Theſe unſteady motions help us to diſcern that heap of vermin that breeds in our Nature. Would any Man think he had ſuch an averſeneſs to his Creator and Benefactor, ſuch an unſuitableneſs to him, ſuch an eſtrangedneſs from him, were it not for his inſpection into his diſtracted frames? God ſuffers this to hang over us as a Rod of Correction, to diſcover and fetch out the folly of our hearts. Could we imagine our Natures ſo highly contrary to that God who is ſo infinitely amiable, ſo deſirable an Object? Or that there ſhould be ſo much folly and madneſs in the heart, as to draw back from God in thoſe Services, which God hath appointed as Pipes through which to communicate his grace, to convey himſelf, his love and goodneſs, to the Creature? If therefore we have a deep ſenſe of, and ſtrong reflections upon our baſe Nature, and bewail that maſs of averſeneſs which lies there, and that fulneſs of irreverence towards the God of our Mercies, the Object of our Worſhip, 'tis a bleſſed improvement of our wandrings and diverſions. Certainly if any *Iſraelite* had brought a lame and rotten Lamb to be Sacrificed to God, and afterward had bewailed it, and laid open his heart to God in a ſenſible and humble confeſſion of it, that Repentance had been a better Sacrifice, and more acceptable in the ſight of God, than if he had brought a ſound and a living Offering.

(2.) *When they are occaſions to make us prize Duties of Worſhip*: When we argue, as rationally we may, that they are of ſingular uſe; ſince our corrupt Hearts and a Malicious Devil doth chiefly endeavour to hinder us from them: And that we find we have not

thoſe

thoſe gadding Thoughts when we are upon worldly Buſineſs, or upon any ſinful deſign which may diſhonour God and wound our Souls: This is a ſign Sin and Satan diſlike Worſhip; for he is too ſubtle a Spirit to oppoſe that which would further his Kingdom. As it is an Argument, The Scripture is the Word of God, becauſe the Wickedneſs of the World doth ſo much oppoſe it; ſo it is a Ground to believe the profitableneſs and excellency of Worſhip, becauſe *Satan* and our own *unruly Hearts* do ſo much interrupt us in it: If therefore we make this uſe of our croſs ſteps in Worſhip, to have a greater value for ſuch Duties, more affections to them, and deſires to be frequent in them: Our Hearts are growing ſpiritual, under the weights that would depreſs them to carnality.

(3.) *When we take a riſe from hence, to have heavenly Admirations of the graciouſneſs of God.* That he ſhould pity and pardon ſo many ſlight addreſſes to him, and give any gracious returns to us. Tho' Men have fooliſh ranging every Day, and in every Duty; yet free Grace is ſo tender as not to puniſh them, *Gen.* 8. 21. *And the Lord ſmelt a ſweet ſavour; and the Lord ſaid in his Heart, I will not curſe the Ground for Man's ſake, for the imagination of Man's Heart is evil from his Youth.* 'Tis obſervable, that this was juſt after a Sacrifice which *Noah* offer'd to God, v. 20. But probably not without Infirmities common to humane Nature, which may be grounded upon the Reaſon God gives; that tho' he had deſtroyed the Earth before, becauſe of the *evil of Man's Imaginations*, Gen. 6. 5. He ſtill found evil Imaginations; He doth not ſay in the heart of *Cham*, or others of *Noah's* Family; but in Man's Heart, including *Noah* alſo; who had both the Judgments of God upon the former World, and the Mercy of God in his own Preſervation before his Eyes; yet God ſaw evil imaginations rooted in the Nature of Man; and tho' it were ſo, yet he would be merciful: If therefore we can, after finding our Hearts ſo vagrant in Worſhip, have real frames of thankfulneſs that God hath ſpared us; and be heightned in our Admirations at Gods giving us any Fruit of ſuch a diſtracted Worſhip; we take advantage from them, to be raiſed into an Evangelical Frame, which conſiſts in the humble acknowledgments of the Grace of God. When *David* takes a review of thoſe Tumultuous Paſſions which had ruffled his Mind, and poſſeſſed him with unbe- *Pſ. 116. 11. lieving Notions of God in the Perſons of his *Prophets* *; how high doth his Soul mount in aſtoniſhment and * verſe 12. thankfulneſs to God for his *Mercy* *? Notwithſtanding his diſtruſt, God did graciouſly perform his promiſe, and anſwer his deſire; Then it is, *What ſhall I render to the Lord?* His Heart was more affected for it, becauſe it had been ſo paſſionate in former Diſtruſts. 'Tis indeed a ground of wondring at the patience of the Spirit of God, that he ſhould guide our Hearts when they are ſo apt to ſtart out; as it is the patience of a Maſter to guide the hand of his Scholar, while he mixes his Writing with many Blots. 'Tis not one or two infirmities the *Spirit helps* us in, *Ro. 8. 26. and helps over, but *many* *. 'Tis a ſign of a ſpiritual Heart, when he can take a riſe to bleſs God for the renewing and blowing up his Affections, in the midſt of ſo many incurſions from *Satan* to the contrary, and the readineſs of the Heart too much to comply with them.

(4.) *When we take occaſion from thence to prize the mediation of Chriſt.* The more Diſtractions jog us, the more need we ſhould ſee of going out to a Saviour by Faith. One part of our Saviour's Office is to ſtand between us and the infirmities of our Worſhip: As he is an *Advocate*, he preſents our Services, *1 Joh. 2. 1. and pleads for them and us *; for the ſins of our Duties, as well as for our other ſins. Jeſus Chriſt is an High-prieſt, appointed by God to take away the *iniquities of our Holy Things*, which was typified by *Aaron's Plate* upon his Mitre *. Were there no im- *Exod. 28. perfections, were there no creeping up of thoſe Frogs 36, 38. into our Minds, we would think our worſhip might merit acceptance with God upon its own Account: But if we behold our own weakneſs, that not a tear, a groan, a ſigh is ſo pure, but muſt have Chriſt to make it entertainable; that there is no Worſhip without thoſe Blemiſhes; and upon this, throw all our Services into the Arms of Chriſt for acceptance, and ſolicite him to put his Merits in the front, to make our Ciphers appear valuable; 'tis a ſpiritual act, the deſign of God in the Goſpel being to advance the Honour and Mediation of his Son. That is a ſpiritual and evangelical Act, which anſwers the evangelical Deſign. The deſign of Satan and our own Corruption is defeated, when thoſe Interruptions make us run ſwifter, and take faſter hold on the *High-prieſt*, who is to preſent our Worſhip to God, and our own Souls receive comfort thereby. Chriſt had Temptations offered to him by the Devil in his Wilderneſs Retirement; that from an experimental Knowledge, he might be able more *compaſſionately to ſuccour us* *; *Heb. 2. 18. we have ſuch aſſaults in our retir'd Worſhip eſpecially, that we may be able more highly to value him and his Mediation.

3. *Let us not therefore be diſcouraged by thoſe Interruptions and Starts of our Hearts.*

(1.) *If we find in our ſelves a ſtrong reſiſtance of them.* The Fleſh will be luſting; that cannot be hindred; yet if we do not fulfil the Luſts of it, riſe up at its command and go about its Work, we may be ſaid to walk in the Spirit *: We *walk in the Spirit*, if we * Gal. 5. 16. *fulfil not the Luſts of the Fleſh*, tho' there be a luſting of the Fleſh againſt the Spirit: So we worſhip in the Spirit, tho' there be carnal Thoughts ariſing if we do not fulfil them; tho' the ſtirring of them diſcovers ſome contrariety in us to God, yet the reſiſtance manifeſts, that there is a Principle of contrariety in us to them; that as there is ſomething of Fleſh that luſts againſt the Spirit, ſo there is ſomething of Spirit in worſhip which luſts againſt the Fleſh: We muſt take heed of omitting Worſhip, becauſe of ſuch In-rodes; and lying down in the mire of a total neglect. If our Spirits are made more lively and vigorous againſt them; If thoſe cold Vapours which have riſen from our Hearts, make us like a ſpring in the midſt of the cold Earth, more warm: There is in this caſe more reaſon for us to bleſs God, than to be diſcouraged. God looks upon it as the Diſeaſe, not the wilfulneſs of our Nature; as the weakneſs of the Fleſh, not the willingneſs of the Spirit. If we would ſhut the Door upon them, it ſeems they are unwelcome Company: Men do not uſe to lock their Doors upon thoſe they love; If they break in and diſturb us with their Impertinences, we need not be diſcomforted, unleſs we give them a ſhare in our affections, and turn our back upon God to entertain them: If their preſence makes us ſad, their flight would make us joyful.

(2.) *If we find our ſelves excited to a ſtricter watch over our Hearts againſt them.* As Travellers will be careful when they come to Places where they have been robb'd before, that they be not ſo eaſily ſurprized again. We ſhould not only lament when we have had ſuch fooliſh Imaginations in Worſhip breaking in upon us, but alſo bleſs God that we have had no more, ſince we have Hearts ſo fruitful of Weeds. We ſhould give God the Glory when we find our Hearts preſerved from theſe Intruders, and not boaſt of our ſelves, but return him our Praiſe for the Watch and Guard he kept over us to preſerve us from ſuch Thieves.

Let us not be diſcomforted; for as the greatneſs of our ſins upon our turning to God is no hindrance to our Juſtification, becauſe it doth not depend upon our Converſion as the meritorious Cauſe, but upon

the infinite value of our Saviour's Satisfaction, which reaches the greateſt Sins as well as the leaſt; ſo the multitude of our bewail'd Diſtractions in Worſhip are not a hindrance to our Acceptation, becauſe of the uncontroulable Power of Chriſts Interceſſion.

Uſe III. is for *Exhortation.* Since Spiritual Worſhip is due to God, and the Father ſeeks ſuch to Worſhip him, how much ſhould we endeavour to ſatisfie the deſire and order of God, and act *conformable to to the Law of our Creation*, and the *love of Redemption?* Our end muſt be the ſame in Worſhip which was God's end in Creation and Redemption; to glorifie his Name, ſet forth his Perfections, and be rendred fit as Creatures and Redeemed Ones to partake of that Grace which is the Fruit of Worſhip. An Evangelical Diſpenſation requires a Spiritual Homage; to neglect therefore either the Matter or Manner of Goſpel Duties, is to put a ſlight upon Goſpel Priviledges. The manner of Duty is ever of more value than the matter; the *Scarlet dye* is more precious than the Cloath tinctured with it. God reſpects more the *diſpoſition of the Sacrificer*, than the *multitude of the Sacrifices* *. The Solemn Feaſts appointed by God, were but *Dung* as managed by the Jews, *Mal.* 2. 3. The Heart is often welcome without the Body, but the Body never grateful without the Heart; The inward acts of the Spirit require nothing from without to conſtitute them good in themſelves; but the outward acts of Devotion require inward acts to render them ſavoury to God. As the Goodneſs of outward acts conſiſts not in the acts themſelves, ſo the acceptableneſs of them reſults not from the acts themſelves, but from the inward frame, animating and quickning thoſe acts, as Blood and Spirits running thro' the Veins of a Duty to make it a living Service in the ſight of God. Imperfections in Worſhip hinder not God's Acceptation of it, if the Heart ſpirited by Grace be there to make it a ſweet Savour. The ſtench of burning Fleſh and Fat in the Legal Sacrifices might render them noyſom to the outward Senſes; but God ſmelt a ſweet Savour in them, as they reſpected Chriſt. When the Heart and Spirit are offered up to God, it may be a ſavoury Duty, tho' attended with unſavoury Imperfections. But a thouſand Sacrifices without a ſtamp of Faith, a thouſand Spiritual Duties with an Habitual Carnality, are no better than ſtench with God.

* Μεῖλλον τὸ διαμένειν πρὸς τὸ τῆν ψυχὴν τῶν θυομένων ποιεῖν. Porphyr. de Abſtinentia.

The Heart muſt be purged, as well as the Temple was by our Saviour, of the Thieves that would rob God of his due Worſhip. Antiquity had ſome Temples, wherein it was a crime to bring any Gold; therefore thoſe that came to Worſhip laid their Gold aſide, before they went into the Temple. We ſhould lay aſide our worldly and trading thoughts before we addreſs to Worſhip, *Iſa.* 26. 9. *With my Spirit within me will I ſeek thee early.* Let not our Minds be gadding Abroad, and exil'd from God and themſelves. It will be thus when the *deſire of our Soul is to his Name and the remembrance of him*, v. 8. When he hath given ſo great and admirable a Gift, as that of his Son, in whom are all things neceſſary to Salvation, Righteouſneſs, Peace and pardon of Sin, we ſhould manage the Remembrance of his Name in Worſhip with the cloſeſt unitedneſs of Heart, and the moſt Spiritual Affections. The Motion of the Spirit is the firſt act in Religion, to this we are obliged in every act: The Devil requires the Spirit of his Votaries; ſhould God have a leſs Dedication than the Devil?

Motives to back this Exhortation.

1. *Not to give God our Spirit is a great Sin.* 'Tis a mockery of God, not Worſhip, Contempt, not Adoration, whatever our outward Fervency or Proteſtations may be *. Every Alienation of our Hearts from him is a real Scorn put upon him: The Acts of the Soul are real, and more the Acts of the Man than the acts of the Body; becauſe they are the acts of the choiceſt part of Man, and of that which is the firſt Spring of all bodily Motions; 'tis the λόγος ἐνδιάθετος the Internal Speech whereby we muſt ſpeak with God: To give him therefore only an external Form of Worſhip without the Life of it, is a taking his Name in vain: We mock him, when we mind not what we are ſpeaking to him, or what he is ſpeaking to us; when the motions of our Hearts are contrary to the Motions of our Tongues; when we do any thing before him ſlovenly, impudently or raſhly. As in a Lutiniſt, it is abſurd to ſing one Tune and play another; ſo it is a foul thing to tell God one thing with our Lips, and think another thing with our Hearts; 'tis a ſin like that the Apoſtle chargeth the Heathens with, *Rom.* 1. 28. *They like not to retain God in their Knowledge*; their Stomachs are ſick while they are upon any Duty, and never leave working, till they have thrown up all the ſpiritual part of Worſhip, and rid themſelves of the thoughts of God, which are as unwelcom and troubleſom Gueſts to them: When Men behave themſelves in the ſight of God, as if God were not God; they do not only defame him, but deny him, and violate the unchangeable Perfections of the Divine Nature.

* *Non valet proteſtatio contra factum*, is a Rule in the Civil Law.

(1.) 'T*is againſt the Majeſty of God.* When we have not awful Thoughts of that great Majeſty to whom we addreſs; when our Souls cleave not to him, when we petition him in Prayer, or when he gives out his Orders in his Word. 'Tis a contempt of the Majeſty of a Prince, if whiles he is ſpeaking to us, we liſten not to him with Reverence and Attention, but turn our backs on him, to play with one of his Hounds, or talk with a Beggar; or while we ſpeak to him, to rake in a Dunghil. *Solomon* adviſeth us to *keep our Foot when we go to the Houſe of God* *. Our Affections ſhould be ſteady, and not ſlip away again; why? (v. 2.) *Becauſe God is in Heaven*, &c. He is a God of Majeſty; Earthly dirty Frames are unſuitable to the God of Heaven; low ſpirits are unſuitable to the moſt high. We would not bring our mean Servants or dirty Dogs in a Princes Preſence-Chamber; yet we bring not only our worldly, but our prophane Affections into God's Preſence: We give in this caſe, thoſe Services to God, which our Governour would think unworthy of him *. The more Excellent and Glorious God is, the greater Contempt of him it is to ſuffer ſuch fooliſh Affections to be Competitors with him for our Hearts: 'Tis a ſcorn put upon him to Converſe with a Creature while we are dealing with him; but a greater to converſe in our Thoughts and Fancies with ſome ſordid Luſt, which is moſt hateful to him: And the more aggravation it attracts, in that we are to apprehend him the moſt glorious Object ſitting upon his Throne in time of VVorſhip, and our ſelves ſtanding as vile Creatures before him, ſupplicating for our Lives, and the Conveyances of Grace and Mercy to our Souls: As if a grand Mutineer, inſtead of humble begging the Pardon of his offended Prince, ſhould preſent his Petition not only ſcribbled and blotted, but beſmeared with ſome loathſom Excrement. 'Tis unbecoming the Majeſty both of God, and the VVorſhip it ſelf, to preſent him with a Picture inſtead of Subſtance, and bring a VVorld of naſty Affections in our Hearts, and ridiculous Toys in our Heads before him, and VVorſhip with indiſpoſed and heedleſs Souls.

* *Eccl.* 5. 1.

* *Mal.* 1. 8.

Mal. 1. 14. He is a great *King*, therefore addreſs to him with Fear and Reverence.

(2.) '*Tis againſt the Life of God.* Is a *dead Worſhip* proportioned to a *Living God?* The ſeparation of heavenly Affections from our Souls before God, makes them as much a Carcaſs in his ſight, as the divorce of the Soul makes the Body a Carcaſs; VVhen the Affections are ſeparated, VVorſhip is no

longer

longer Worſhip, but a dead offering, a liveleſs bulk; for the Eſſence and Spirit of Worſhip is departed: Tho' the Soul be preſent with the Body in a way of information, yet it is not preſent in a way of affection, and this is the worſt; for it is not the ſeparation of the Soul from informing, that doth ſeparate a man from God, but the removal of our affections from him. If a man pretend an application to God, and ſleep and ſnore all the time; without queſtion ſuch a one did not worſhip: In a careleſs worſhip, the heart is morally dead while the eyes are open: *The heart of the Spouſe* * *awaked* whiles her eyes ſlept, and our hearts on the contrary ſleep while our eyes awake.

* Cant. 5. 2.

Our bleſſed Saviour hath died to *purge our Conſciences from dead works* and frames, that we may ſerve the *living God**; to ſerve God as a God of Life. *David*'s Soul cried and *fainted* for God under this conſideration*: But to preſent our Bodies without our Spirits, is ſuch an uſage of God, that implies he is a dead Image, not worthy of any but a dead and heartleſs ſervice: Like one of thoſe *Idols* the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks of *, that have *eyes and ſee not, ears and hear not*, no life in it: Though it be not an objective Idolatry, becauſe the worſhip is directed to the true God; yet I may call it a ſubjective Idolatry, in regard of the frame, fit only to be preſented to ſome ſenſleſs ſtock. We intimate God to be no better than an Idol, and to have no more knowledge of us, and inſight into us, than an Idol can have: If we did believe him to be the living God, we durſt not come before him with ſervices ſo unſuitable to him, and reproaches of him.

* Heb. 9. 14

* Pſal. 42. 2.

* Pſ. 115. 5.

(3.) *'Tis againſt the Infiniteneſs of God.* We ſhould worſhip God with thoſe boundleſs affections which bear upon them a Shadow or Image of his Infiniteneſs; ſuch are the deſires of the Soul which know no limits, but ſtart out beyond whatſoever enjoyment the heart of man poſſeſſes. No creeping Creature was to be offered to God in Sacrifice; but ſuch as had legs to run, or wings to fly: For us to come before God with a light creeping frame, is to worſhip him with the loweſt finite affections; as though any thing, though never ſo mean or torn, might ſatisfie an Infinite Being; as though a poor ſhallow Creature could give enough to God without giving him the heart, when indeed we cannot give him a worſhip proportionable to his Infiniteneſs, did our hearts ſwell as large as Heaven in our deſires for him in every act of our duties.

(4.) *'Tis againſt the Spirituality of God.* God being a Spirit, calls for a worſhip in ſpirit; to withold this from him, implies him to be ſome groſs corporeal matter: As a *Spirit, he looks for the heart*; a wreſtling heart in Prayer; a trembling heart in the Word*: To bring nothing but the Body when we come to a Spiritual God to beg ſpiritual benefits, to wait for ſpiritual communications, which can only be diſpenſed to us in a ſpiritual manner, is unſuitable to the Spiritual Nature of God: A meer carnal ſervice implicitely denies his ſpirituality, which requires of us higher engagements tham meer corporeal ones.

* Iſa. 66. 2.

Worſhip ſhould be rational, not an imaginative ſervice, wherein is required the activity of our nobleſt faculties; and our fancy ought to have no ſhare in it, but in ſubſerviency to the more ſpiritual part of our Soul.

(5.) *'Tis againſt the Supremacy of God.* As God is *one*, the only Soveraign; ſo our hearts ſhould be one, cleaving wholly to him, and undivided from him: In pretending to deal with him, we acknowledge his Deity and Soveraignty; but in with-holding our choiceſt faculties and affections from him, and the ſtarting of our minds to vain Objects, we intimate their equality with God, and their right as well as his to our hearts and affections: 'Tis as if a Princeſs ſhould commit Adultery with ſome baſe Scullion, while ſhe is before her Husband; which would be a plain denial of his ſole right to her. It intimates that other things are ſuperiot to God; they are true Soveraigns that ingroſs our hearts. If a Man were addreſſing himſelf to a Prince, and ſhould in an inſtant turn his back upon him, upon a beck or nod from ſome inconſiderable perſon; is it not an evidence, that that perſon that invited him away, hath a greater Soveraignty over him, than that Prince to whom he was applying himſelf? And do we not diſcard Gods abſolute Dominion over us, when at the leaſt beck of a corrupt inclination, we can diſpoſe of our hearts to it, and alienate them from God? As they in *Ezek.* 33. 32. left the ſervice of God for the ſervice of their *Covetouſneſs*; which evidenced that they owned the Authority of ſin, more than the Authority of God: This is not to ſerve God as our Lord and Abſolute Maſter, but to make God ſerve our turn, and ſubmit his Soveraignty to the Supremacy of ſome unworthy affection. The Creature is preferred before the Creator, when the heart runs moſt upon it in time of Religious Worſhip, and our own carnal Intereſt ſwallows up the affections that are due to God: 'Tis *an Idol ſet up in the heart* * in his ſolemn preſence, and attracts that Devotion to it ſelf, which we only owe to our Soveraign Lord; and the more baſe and contemptible that is to which the Spirit is devoted, the more contempt there is of Gods Dominion. *Judas* his kiſs with a *Hail Maſter*, was no act of worſhip, or an owning his Maſters Authority; but a deſigning the ſatisfaction of his Covetouſneſs in the betraying of him.

* Ezek. 14. v. 4.

(6.) *'Tis againſt the Wiſdom of God.* God as a God of order, has put earthly things in ſubordination to heavenly; and we by this unworthy carriage invert this order, and put heavenly things in ſubordination to earthly; in placing mean and low things in our hearts, and bringing them ſo placed into Gods preſence, which his Wiſdom at the Creation put under our feet. A ſervice without ſpiritual affections, is a *Sacrifice of Fools*, *Eceleſ.* 5. 1. which have loſt their Brains and Underſtandings: A fooliſh Spirit is very unſuitable to an infinitely wiſe God: Well may God ſay of ſuch a one, as *Achiſh* of *David*, who ſeemed mad; *Why have you brought this Fellow to play the Mad-man in my preſence? Shall this Fellow come into my Houſe?* 2 *Sam.* 21. 15.

(7.) *'Tis againſt the Omniſciency of God.* To carry it fair without, and impertinently within, is as tho' God had not an all-ſeeing Eye that could pierce into the heart, and underſtand every motion of the inward faculties; as though God were eaſily cheated with an outward fawning ſervice, like an Apothecaries Box with a guilded title, that may be full of Cobwebs within: What is ſuch a carriage, but a deſign to deceive God; when with *Herod* we pretend to *worſhip* Chriſt, and intend to *murder* all the motions of Chriſt in our Souls? A heedleſs Spirit, an eſtrangement of our Souls, a giving the Reins to them to run out from the preſence of God to ſee every Reed ſhaken with the Wind, is to deny him to be Searcher of hearts, and the Diſcerner of ſecret thoughts; as though he could not look through us to the darkneſs and remoteneſs of our minds, but were an ignorant God, who might be put off with the worſt as well as the beſt in our Flock. If we did really believe there were a God of infinite Knowledge, who ſaw our frames, and whether we came dreſt with *Wedding-garments* ſuitable to the duties we are about to perform; ſhould we be ſo gariſh, and put him off with ſuch trivial ſtuff, without any reverence of his Majeſty?

(8.) *'Tis againſt the Holineſs of God.* To alienate our Spirits, is to offend him while we pretend to worſhip him; though we may be mighty officious in the external part, yet our baſe and carnal affections make all our worſhip but as a heap of Dung; and who would not look upon it as an affront, to lay Dung before a Prince's Throne? *Prov.* 21. 27. *The Sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination: How much more when he brings it with a wicked mind?* A putrified Carcaſs under the Law, had not been ſo great an affront to the Holineſs of God, as a frothy unmelted heart, and a wanton fancy in a time of worſhip. God is ſo holy, that if we could offer the worſhip of Angels, and the quinteſcence of our Souls in his ſervice, it would be beneath his infinite purity: How unworthy then are they of him, when they are preſented not only without the ſenſe of our uncleanneſs, but ſullied with the fumes and exhalations of our corrupt affections, which are as ſo many Plague-ſpots upon our duties, contrary to the unſpotted Purity of the Divine Nature? Is not this an unworthy conceit of God, and injurious to his Infinite Holineſs?

(9.) *'Tis againſt the Love and Kindneſs of God.* 'Tis a condeſcenſion in God to admit a piece of Earth to offer up a duty to him, when he hath *Miriads of Angels* to attend him in his Court and celebrate his Praiſe: To admit Man to be an Attendant on him, and a Partner with Angels, is a high favour. 'Tis not a ſingle mercy, but a heap of mercies to be admitted into the preſence of God, *Pſal.* 5.7. *I will come into thy houſe in the multitude of thy mercies.* When the bleſſed God is ſo kind as to give us acceſs to his Majeſty, do we not undervalue his kindneſs when we deal uncivilly with him, and deny him the choiceſt part of our ſelves? 'Tis a contempt of his Soveraignty, as our Spirits are due to him by nature; a contempt of his Goodneſs, as our Spirits are due to him by gratitude: How abuſive a carriage is it to make uſe of his mercy to encourage our impudence, that ſhould excite our fear and reverence? How unworthy would it be for an indigent Debtor to bring to his indulgent Creditor, an empty Purſe inſtead of Payment? When God holds out his Golden Scepter to encourage our approaches to him; ſtands ready to give us the pardon of ſin and full felicity, the beſt things he hath; is it a fit requital of his kindneſs, to give him a formal outſide only, a ſhadow of Religion; to have the heart overſwayed with other thoughts and affections; as if all his proffers were ſo contemptible, as to deſerve only a ſlight at our hands? 'Tis a contempt of the love and kindneſs of God.

(10.) *'Tis againſt the Sufficiency and Fulneſs of God.* When we give God our Bodies, and the Creature our Spirits, it intimates a conceit, that there is more content to be had in the Creature than in God bleſſed for ever; that the Waters in the *Ciſtern* are ſweeter than thoſe in the *Fountain:* Is not this a practical giving God the Lye, and denying thoſe promiſes wherein he hath declared the ſatisfaction he can give to the Spirit, as he is the God of the Spirits of all fleſh?

If we did imagine the excellency and lovelineſs of God were worthy to be the ultimate Object of our affections, the heart would attend more cloſely upon him, and be terminated in him; did we believe God to be all-ſufficient, full of grace and goodneſs, a tender Father, not willing to forſake his own; willing, as well as able to ſupply their wants; the heart would not ſo lamely attend upon him, and would not upon every impertinency be diverted from him. There is much of a wrong notion of God, and a predominancy of the World above him in the heart, when we can more ſavourly reliſh the thoughts of low inferior things than heavenly, and let our Spirits upon every trifling occaſion be fugitives from him: 'Tis a Teſtimony that we make not God our chiefeſt good. If apprehenſions of his excellency did poſſeſs our Souls, they would be faſtned on him, glued to him; we ſhould not liſten to that rabble of fooliſh thoughts that ſteal our hearts ſo often from him. Were our breathings after God, as ſtrong as the pantings of the Hart after the Water-brooks, we ſhould be like that Creature not diverted in our Courſe by every Puddle. Were God the predominant ſatisfactory Object in our Eye, he would carry our whole Soul along with him.

When our Spirits readily retreat from God in Worſhip upon every giddy motion, 'tis a kind of Repentance that ever we did come near him, and implies, that there is a fuller ſatisfaction, and more attractive excellency in that which doth ſo eaſily divert us, than in that God to whoſe Worſhip we did pretend to addreſs our ſelves: 'Tis as if, when we were petitioning a Prince, we ſhould immediately turn about, and make requeſt to one of his Guard; as though ſo mean a perſon were more able to give us the Boon we want, than the Soveraign is.

2 Conſideration by way of *Motive. To have our Spirits off from God in Worſhip, is a bad ſign.* It was not ſo in Innocence. The heart of *Adam* could cleave to God; the Law of God was engraven upon him; he could apply himſelf to the fulfilling of it without any twinkling; there was no folly and vanity in his mind, no independency in his thoughts, no duty was his burden; for there was in him a proneneſs to, and delight in all the duties of Worſhip: 'Tis the Fall hath diſtempered us; and the more unweildineſs there is in our Spirits, the more carnal our affections are in Worſhip, the more evidence there is of the ſtrength of that revolted ſtate.

(1.) *It argues much corruption in the heart.* As by the eructations of the ſtomach, we may judge of the windineſs and foulneſs of it; ſo by the inordinate motions of our minds and hearts, we may judge of the weakneſs of its complexion. A ſtrength of ſin is evidenced by the eruptions and ebullitions of it in Worſhip, when they are more ſudden, numerous, and vigorous than the motions of grace. When the heart is apt like Tinder to catch fire from *Satan*, 'tis a ſign of much combuſtible matter ſuitable to his temptation. Were not corruption ſtrong, the Soul could not turn ſo eaſily from God when it is in his preſence, and hath advantageous opportunity to create a fear and awe of God in it: Such baſe fruit could not ſprout up ſo ſuddenly, were there not much ſap and juice in the root of ſin.

What communion with a living root can be evidenced without exerciſes of an inward life? That Spirit which is a Well of Living Waters in a gracious heart, will be eſpecially ſpringing up when it is before God.

(2.) It ſhews *much affection to earthly things, and little to heavenly.* There muſt needs be an inordinate affection to earthly things, when upon every ſlight ſolicitation we can part with God, and turn the back upon a ſervice glorious for him, and advantageous for our ſelves, to wed our hearts to ſome idle fancy that ſignifies nothing. How can we be ſaid to entertain God in our affections, when we give him not the precedency in our underſtandings, but let every trifle juſtle the ſenſe of God out of our minds? Were our hearts fully determined to ſpiritual things, ſuch vanities could not ſeat themſelves in our underſtandings, and divide our Spirits from God. Were our hearts ballanced with a love to God, the World could never ſteal our hearts ſo much from his Worſhip, but his Worſhip would draw our hearts to it.

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It ſhews a baſe neutrality in the greateſt concernments; a *halting between God and Baal*; a contrariety between Affection and Conſcience, when natural Conſcience preſſes a Man to duties of Worſhip, and his other affections pull him back, draw him to carnal objects, and make him ſlight that whereby he may honour God. God argues the prophaneſs of the *Jews* hearts from the wickedneſs they brought into his Houſe, and acted there, *Jer.* 23. *Tea in my houſe*, that is, my Worſhip; *I found their wickedneſs*, ſaith the Lord. Carnality in worſhip is a kind of an Idolatrous frame; when the heart is renewed, *Idols* are caſt to the *Moles* and the *Batts*, Iſa. 2. 20.

(3.) It ſhews *much hypocriſie to have our Spirits off from God.* The Mouth ſpeaks, and the carriage pretends what the heart doth not think; there is a diſſent of the heart from the pretence of the body.

Inſtability is a ſure ſign of Hypocriſie. *Double thoughts* argue *a double heart.* The wicked are compared to *Chaff* *, for the uncertain and various motions of their minds, by the leaſt wind of fancy. The leaſt motion of a carnal Object diverts the Spirit from God, as the ſcent of Carrion doth the Raven from the flight it was ſet upon.

* Pſal. 1. 4.

The People of God are called God's Spouſe, and God calls himſelf their Husband; whereby is noted, the moſt intimate union of the Soul with God, and that there ought to be the higheſt love and affection to him, and faithfulneſs in his Worſhip; but when the heart doth ſtart from him in Worſhip, it is a ſign of the unſtedfaſtneſs of it with God, and a diſreliſh of any communion with him: It is as God complains of the *Iſraelites*, a going a whoring after our own imaginations.

As grace reſpects God as the object of Worſhip, ſo it looks moſt upon God in approaching to him. Where there is a likeneſs and love, there is a deſire of converſe and intimacy; if there be no ſpiritual entwining about God in our Worſhip, it is a ſign there is no likeneſs to him, no true ſenſe of him, no renewed Image of God in us: Every living Image will move ſtrongly to joyn it ſelf with its Original Copy, and be glad with *Jacob*, to ſit ſteadily in thoſe Chariots that ſhall convey him to his beloved *Joſeph*.

Motive 3. Conſider *the danger of a Carnal Worſhip.*

(1.) *We loſe the Comfort of Worſhip.* The Soul is a great Gainer when it offers a Spiritual Worſhip, and as great a loſer when it is unfaithful with God. Treachery and Perfidiouſneſs hinder commerce among Men; ſo doth Hypocriſie in its own nature, communion with God. God never promiſed any thing to the Carcaſs but to the Spirit of Worſhip. God hath no obligation upon him by any word of his, to reward us with himſelf, when we perform it not to himſelf: When we give an outſide Worſhip, we have only the outſide of an Ordinance: We can expect no kernel, when we give God only the ſhell: He that only licks the outſide of the Glaſs, can never be refreſhed with the rich Cordial encloſed within. A cold and lazy formality, will make God to withdraw the light of his countenance, and not ſhine with any delightful communications upon our Souls; but if we come before him with a livelineſs of affections, and ſteadineſs of heart, he will draw the veil, and cauſe his glory to diſplay it ſelf before us, An humble praying Chriſtian, and a warm affectionate Chriſtian in Worſhip, will ſoon find a God who is delighted with ſuch frames, and cannot long with-hold himſelf from the Soul: When our hearts are enflamed with love to him in Worſhip, 'tis a preparation to ſome act of love on his part, whereby he intends further to gratifie us. When *John* was *in the Spirit on the Lords day*, that is, in ſpiritual employment, and meditation, and other duties, he had that great *Revelation* of what ſhould happen to the Church in all Ages *; his being in the Spirit, intimates his ordinary courſe on that day, and not any extraordinary act in him, tho' it was followed with an extraordinary diſcovery of God to him: When he was thus engaged, *he heard a voice behind him.*

* Rev. 1. 10.

God doth not require of us Spirituality in Worſhip to advantage himſelf, but that we might be prepared to be advantaged by him. If we have a clear and well diſpoſed eye, 'tis not a benefit to the Sun, but fits us to receive benefits from his beams. Worſhip is an act that perfects our own Souls; they are then moſt widened by Spiritual frames, to receive the influence of Divine Bleſſings, as an eye moſt opened receives the fruit of the Suns light, better than the eye that is ſhut. The communications of God are more or leſs, according as our ſpiritual frames are more or leſs in our Worſhip: God will not give his Bleſſings to unſuitable hearts. What a naſty Veſſel is a carnal heart for a ſpiritual communication? The chief end of every duty enjoyned by God, is to have communion with him; and therefore it is called, a drawing near to God: 'Tis impoſſible therefore, that the outward part of any duty can anſwer the end of God in his Inſtitution. 'Tis not a bodily appearance or geſture, whereby Men can have communion with God, but by the impreſſions of the heart, and reflections of the heart upon God: Without this, all the rich ſtreams of grace will run beſides us, and the growth of the Soul be hindered and impaired. A *diligent hand makes rich*, ſaith the Wiſe man; a diligent heart in ſpiritual Worſhip, brings in rich Incomes to the humble and ſpiritual Soul.

(2.) *It renders the Worſhip not only unacceptable, but abominable to God.* It makes our Gold to become Droſs; it ſoyls our Duties, and beſpots our Souls. A carnal and unſteady frame ſhews an indifferency of Spirit at beſt; and *luke-warmneſs* is as ungrateful to God, as heavy and nauſeous Meat is to the ſtomach, he *ſpues them out of his mouth* *. As our gracious God doth over-look infirmities where intentions are good, and endeavours ſerious and ſtrong; ſo he loaths the ſervices where the frames are ſtark naught, *Pſal.* 66. 18. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear my Prayer.* Luke-warm and indifferent Services ſtink in the Noſtrils of God. The heart ſeems to loath God, when it ſtarts from him upon every occaſion, when it is unwilling to employ it ſelf about, and ſtick cloſe to him: And can God be pleaſed with ſuch a frame? The more of the heart and ſpirit is in any ſervice, the more real goodneſs there is in it, and the more ſavory it is to God; the leſs of the heart and ſpirit, the leſs of goodneſs, and the more nauſeous to God, who loves Righteouſneſs and *Truth in the inward parts* *. And therefore infinite Goodneſs and Holineſs, cannot but hate Worſhip preſented to him with deceitful, carnal and flitting affections; they muſt be more nauſeous to God, than a putrified Carcaſs can be to Man: They are the prophanings of that which ſhould be the habitation of the Spirit: They make the Spirit, the Seat of Duty, a filthy Dunghil; and are as loathſome to God, as Money-changers in the Temple were to our Saviour.

* Rev. 3. 16.

* Pſal 51. 9.

We ſee the evil of carnal frames, and the neceſſity and benefit of ſpiritual frames: For further help in this laſt, let us practiſe theſe following *directions.*

Direction 1. *Keep up ſpiritual frames out of Worſhip.* To avoid low affections, we muſt keep our hearts as much as we can in a ſettled elevation. If we admit unworthy diſpoſitions at one time, we ſhall not eaſily be rid of them at another *: As he that would not be bitten with Gnats in the Night, muſt keep his Windows ſhut in the Day; when they are once entred, 'tis not eaſie to expel them: In which reſpect, one adviſeth, to be ſuch out of worſhip as we would be in worſhip. If we mix ſpiritual affe-

* *Fitzherbert* poſ. reſig. 1. 2. cap. § 12.

ctions with our worldly employments, worldly affections will not mingle themſelves ſo eaſily with our heavenly engagements. If our hearts be ſpiritual in our outward calling, they will ſcarce be carnal in our Religious Service. If *we walk in the Spirit, we* * Gal.5.16. *ſhall not fulfil the luſts of the Fleſh* *. A ſpiritual walk in the day, will hinder carnal luſtings in worſhip. The Fire was to be kept alive upon the Altar when Sacrifices were not offered, from morning till night, from night till morning, as well as in the very time of Sacrifice. A ſpiritual life and vigour out of worſhip, would render it at its ſeaſon ſweet and eaſie, and preſerve a ſpontaneity and preparedneſs to it, and make it both natural and pleaſant to us.

Any thing that doth unhinge and diſcompoſe our Spirits, is inconſiſtent with Religious Services, which are to be performed with the greateſt ſedateneſs and gravity. All irregular paſſions diſturb the ſerenity of * Eph.4. v.26,27. the Spirit, and open the door for *Satan* *. Saith the Apoſtle, *Let not the Sun go down upon your wrath, neither give place to the Devil.* Where wrath breaks the Lock, the Devil will quickly be over the Threſhold; and tho' they be allayed, yet they leave the heart ſometime after, like the Sea rowling and ſwelling after the Storm is ceaſed.

Mixture with ill company, leaves a tincture upon us in Worſhip. *Ephraims* allying himſelf with the *Gentiles*, bred an indifferency in Religion, *Hoſ.* 7. 8. Ephraim *hath mixed himſelf with the People*: Ephraim *is a Cake not turn'd*: It will make our hearts, and conſequently our ſervices, half Dough, as well as half bak'd: Theſe, and the like, make the holy Spirit withdraw himſelf, and then the Soul lies like a wind-bound Veſſel and can make no way. When the Sun departs from us, it carries its beams away with it; then doth *Darkneſs ſpread it ſelf over the Earth,* * Pſal.104. v.20. *and the Beaſts of the Foreſts creep out* *. When the Spirit withdraws awhile from a good Man, it carries away, (tho' not habitual, yet) much of the exciting and aſſiſting grace; and then carnal diſpoſitions perk up themſelves from the boſom of natural corruption. To be ſpiritual in Worſhip, we muſt bar the door at other times againſt that which is contrary to it: As he that would not be infected with a contagious diſeaſe, carries ſome Preſervative about with him, and inures himſelf to good ſcents.

To this end, be much in ſecret ejaculations to God, theſe are the pureſt flights of the Soul, that have more of fervor and leſs of carnality; they preſerve a livelineſs in the Spirit, and make it more fit to perform ſolemn ſtated Worſhip with greater freedom and activity: A conſtant uſe of this would make our whole lives, lives of Worſhip. As frequent ſinful acts ſtrengthen habits of ſin; ſo frequent Religious acts ſtrengthen habits of grace.

Direction 2. *Excite and exerciſe particularly a love to God, and dependence on him.*

Love is a commanding affection, an uniting grace; it draws all the faculties of the Soul to one Center. The Soul that loves God, when it hath to do with him, is bound to the beloved Object; it can mind nothing elſe during ſuch impreſſions. When the affection is ſet to the Worſhip of God, every thing the Soul hath will be beſtowed upon it: As *David's* diſpoſition *was to the Temple*, 1 *Chron.* 29. 3. Carnal frames, like the Fowls, will be lighting upon the Sacrifice, but not when it is enflam'd; tho' the ſcent of the fleſh invite them, yet the heat of the fire drives them to their diſtance. A flaming love will ſinge the Flies that endeavour to interrupt and diſturb us. The happineſs of Heaven conſiſts in a full attraction of the Soul to God, by his glorious influence upon it; There will be ſuch a diffuſion of his goodneſs throughout the Souls of the Bleſſed, as will unite the affections perfectly to him: Theſe affections which are ſcattered here, will be there gathered into one flame, moving to him, and centring in him: Therefore the more of a heavenly frame poſſeſſes our affections here, the more ſettled and uniform will our hearts be in all their motions to God, and operations about him.

Excite a dependence on him, *Prov.* 16. 3. *Commit thy works to the Lord, and thy thoughts ſhall be eſtabliſhed.* Let us go out in Gods ſtrength, and not in our own; vain is the help of Man in any thing, and vain is the help of the heart: 'Tis through God only we can do valiantly in ſpiritual concerns as well as temporal; the want of this makes but ſlight impreſſions upon the Spirit.

Direction 3. *Nouriſh right conceptions of the Majeſty of God in your minds.* Let us conſider, that we are drawing to God; the moſt amiable Object, the beſt of Beings, worthy of infinite honour, and highly meriting the higheſt affections we can give; a God that made the World by a Word; that upholds the great frame of Heaven and Earth; a Majeſty above the conceptions of Angels; who uſes not his power to ſtrike us to our deſerved puniſhment, but his love and bounty to allure us; a God that gave all the Creatures to ſerve us, and can in a trice make them as much our Enemies as he hath now made them our Servants. Let us view him in his greatneſs, and in his goodneſs, that our hearts may have a true value of the Worſhip of ſo great a Majeſty, and count it the moſt worthy employment with all diligence to attend upon him. When we have a fear of God, it will make our Worſhip ſerious; when we have a joy in God, it will make our Worſhip durable. Our affections will be raiſed, when we repreſent God in the moſt reverential, endearing, and obliging circumſtances. We honour the Majeſty of God, when we conſider him with due reverence according to the greatneſs and perfection of his works; and in this reverence of his Majeſty, doth Worſhip chiefly conſiſt. Low thoughts of God will make low frames in us before him: If we thought God an infinite glorious Spirit, how would our hearts be lower than our knees in his preſence? How humbly, how believingly pleading is the *Pſalmiſt*, when he conſiders God to be without compariſon in the Heavens; *to whom none of the Sons of the mighty can be likened*; when there was none like to him in ſtrength or faithfulneſs round about *? We ſhould have alſo * Pſal. 89. deep impreſſions of the Omniſcience of God; and v.6,7,8. remember we have to deal with a God that ſearcheth the heart and trieth the reins; to whom the moſt ſecret temper is as viſible, as the loudeſt words are audible; that tho' Man judges by outward expreſſions, God judges by inward affections. As the Law of God regulates the inward frames of the heart; ſo the eye of God pitches upon the inward intentions of the Soul. If God were viſibly preſent with us, ſhould we not approach to him with ſtrong affections; ſummon our Spirits to attend upon him; behave our ſelves modeſtly before him? Let us conſider, he is as really preſent with us, as if he were viſible to us; let us therefore preſerve a ſtrong ſenſe of the preſence of God. No Man but one out of his wits, when he were in the preſence of a Prince, and making a Speech to him, would break off at every period, and run after the catching of Butter-flies. Remember in all Worſhip you are before the Lord, to whom all things are open and naked.

Direction 4. *Let us take heed of inordinate deſires after the World.* As the World ſteals away a Mans heart from the Word, ſo it doth from all other worſhip; *it chokes the Word* *; it ſtifles all the ſpiri- *Mat.13.27 tual breathings after God in every duty: The edge of the Soul is blunted by it, and made too dull for ſuch ſublime exerciſes. The Apoſtles rule in Prayer, when

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he joyns *Sobriety* with *watching unto Prayer*, is of concern in all Worſhip, Sobriety in the purſuit and uſe of all worldly things. A Man drunk with worldly fumes cannot watch, cannot be heavenly, affectionate, ſpiritual in Service. There is a magnetick force in the Earth, to hinder our flights to Heaven: Birds, when they take their firſt flights from the Earth, have more flutterings of their Wings, than when they are mounted further in the Air, and got more without the Sphere of the Earths attractiveneſs; the Motion of their Wings is more ſteady, that you can ſcarce perceive them ſtir; they move like a Ship with a full Gale. The World is a clog upon the Soul, and a bar to ſpiritual Frames: 'Tis as hard to elevate the Heart to God in the midſt of a hurry of worldly Affairs, as it is difficult to meditate when we are near a great noiſe of Waters falling from a Precipice, or in the midſt of a Volley of Muskets. Thick claiy Affections bemire the Heart, and make it unfit for ſuch high flights it is to take in Worſhip: Therefore get your Hearts clear from worldly Thoughts and Deſires, if you would be more ſpiritual in Worſhip.

5. *Let us be deeply ſenſible of our preſent wants, and the ſupplies we may meet with in Worſhip.* Cold Affections to the things we would have, will grow cooler: Weakneſs of deſire for the Communications in Worſhip, will freez our Hearts at the time of Worſhip, and make way for vain and fooliſh Diverſions. A Beggar that is ready to periſh, and knows he is next door to ruine, will not ſlightly and dully beg an Alms; and will not be diverted from his importunity by every ſlight call, or the moving of an Atom in the Air. Is it Pardon we would have? Let us apprehend the blackneſs of ſin with the aggravations of it, as it reſpects God; Let us be deeply ſenſible of the want of Pardon and worth of Mercy, and get our Affections into ſuch a frame, as a condemned Man would do: Let us conſider, that as we are now at the Throne of God's Grace, we ſhall ſhortly be at the Bar of God's Juſtice; and if the Soul ſhould be forlorn there, how fixedly and earneſtly would it plead for Mercy? Let us endeavour to ſtir up the ſame Affections now, which we have ſeen ſome dying Men have, and which we ſuppoſe deſpairing Souls would have done at God's Tribunal. * We muſt be ſenſible that the Life or Death of our Souls depends upon Worſhip. Would we not be aſhamed to be ridiculous in our Carriage while we are eating; and ſhall we not be aſhamed to be cold or gariſh before God, when the Salvation of our Souls, as well as the Honour of God is concerned? If we did ſee the heaps of Sins, the Eternity of Puniſhment due to them; If we did ſee an Angry and Offended Judge; If we did ſee the Riches of Mercy, the glorious out-goings of God in the Sanctuary, the bleſſed Doles he gives out to Men when they ſpiritually attend upon him; both the one and the other would make us perform our Duties humbly, ſincerely, earneſtly and affectionately, and wait upon him with our whole Souls, to have Miſery averted and Mercy beſtowed. Let our ſenſe of this be encouraged by the Conſideration of our Saviour preſenting his Merits; With what affection doth he preſent his Merits, his Blood ſhed upon the Croſs now in Heaven? And ſhall our Hearts be cold and frozen, flitting and unſteady, when his Affections are ſo much concerned? Chriſt doth not preſent any Man's Caſe and Duties without a Senſe of his wants, and ſhall we have none of our own?

*Guli. Paris Rhetor. Divin. c. 26. p. 350.

Let me add this; Let us affect our Hearts with a Senſe of what ſupplies we have met with in former Worſhip. The delightful remembrance of what converſe we have had with God in former Worſhip, would ſpiritualize our Hearts for the preſent Worſhip. Had *Peter* had a view of Chriſt's Glory in the Mount, freſh in his Thoughts, he would not ſo eaſily have turned his back upon his Maſter: Nor would the Iſraelites have been at leiſure for their Idolatry, had they preſerved the ſenſe of the Majeſty of God diſcovered in his late Thunders from Mount *Sinai*.

6. *If any thing intrudes that may choke the Worſhip, caſt it ſpeedily out.* We cannot hinder Satan and our own Corruption from preſenting Coolers to us, but we may hinder the ſucceſs of them: We cannot hinder the Gnats from buzing about us, when we are in our Buſineſs, but we may prevent them from ſettling upon us. A Man that is running on a conſiderable Errand, will ſhun all unneceſſary Diſcourſe that may make him forget or loyter in his Buſineſs. What tho' there may be ſomething offered that is good in it ſelf; yet if it hath a tendency to deſpoil God of his Honour, and our ſelves of the ſpiritual intentneſs in Worſhip, ſend it away. Thoſe that weed a Field of Corn, examine not the Nature and particular Vertues of the Weeds, but conſider only how they choke the Corn, to which the native Juyce of the Soil is deſign'd. Conſider what you are about; and if any thing interpoſe that may divert you, or cool your Affections in your preſent Worſhip, caſt it out.

7. *As to private Worſhip, let us lay hold of the moſt melting Opportunities and Frames.* When we find our Hearts in a more than ordinary Spiritual Frame, let us look upon it as a Call from God to attend him. Such Impreſſions and Motions are God's Voice, inviting us into Communion with him in ſome particular Act of Worſhip, and promiſing us ſome ſucceſs in it. When the Pſalmiſt had a ſecret Motion to *ſeek God's face*, and complied with it *, the iſſue is the encouragement of his Heart, which breaks out into an Exhortation to others to be of good Courage, and wait on the Lord, *v.* 13, 14. *Wait on the Lord, be of good Courage, and he ſhall ſtrengthen thy Heart, wait I ſay on the Lord.* *Pſ. 27. 8.

* One blow will do more on the Iron when it is hot, than a hundred when it is cold. Melted Metals may be ſtampt with any impreſſion; but once hardned, will with difficulty be brought into the Figure we intend. *Reynolds.

8. *Let us examine our ſelves at the end of every Act of Worſhip, and chide our ſelves for any carnality we perceive in them.* Let us take a review of them, and examine the reaſon, Why art thou ſo Low and Carnal, O my Soul? As *David* did of his diſquietedneſs, *Pſal.* 42. 5. *Why art thou caſt down, O my Soul, and why art thou diſquited within me?* If any unworthy Frames have ſurprized us in Worſhip, let us ſeek them out after Worſhip; call them to the Bar; make an exact Scrutiny into the Cauſes of them, that we may prevent their Incurſions another time; let our Pulſes beat quick by way of Anger and Indignation againſt them: This would be a repairing what hath been amiſs; otherwiſe they may grow, and clog an after Worſhip, more than they did a former. Daily Examination is an Antidote againſt the Temptations of the following Day, and conſtant Examination of our ſelves after Duty, is a Preſervative againſt vain Encroachments in following Duties; and upon the finding them out, let us apply the Blood of Chriſt by Faith for our Cure, and draw ſtrength from the Death of Chriſt for the Conqueſt of them, and let us alſo be humbled for them. God lifts up the humble: When we are humbled for our Carnal Frames in one Duty, we ſhall find our ſelves by the Grace of God more elevated in the next.

A DISCOURSE UPON THE Eternity of GOD.

Pſalm XC. 2.

Before the Mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadſt formed the Earth and the World; even from Everlaſting to Everlaſting, thou art God.

THE Title of this Pſalm is, *A Prayer*; the Author *Moſes*. Some think not only this, but the ten following Pſalms were compoſed by him. The Title wherewith he is dignified, is, *The Man of God*, as alſo in *Deut.* 33. 1. One inſpir'd by him to be his Interpreter, and deliver his Oracles; One particularly directed by him: * One who as a Servant, did diligently employ himſelf in his Maſters Buſineſs, and acted for the Glory of God; *He was the Miniſter of the Old-Teſtament, and the Prophet the New.

* *Coccei.* in loc.

* *Auſtin.* in loc.

There are two parts of this Pſalm.

1. *A Complaint of the frailty of Man's Life in general*, ver. 3, 4, 5, 6. And then, *A particular Complaint of the Condition of the Church*, ver. 8, 9, 10.

Pareus in loc.

2. *A Prayer*, v. 12.

But before he ſpeaks of the ſhortneſs of Humane Life, he fortifies them by the conſideration of the Refuge they had, and ſhould find in God, *ver.* 1. *Lord thou haſt been our dwelling place in all Generations.*

We have had no ſettled abode in the Earth, ſince the time of *Abraham*'s being called out from *Ur* of the *Chaldees*: We have had *Canaan* in a promiſe, we have it not yet in Poſſeſſion; We have been expoſed to the Cruelties of an oppreſſing Enemy, and the Incommodities of a deſert Wilderneſs; we have wanted the Fruits of the Earth, but not the Dews of Heaven. *Thou haſt been our dwelling-place in all Generations. Abraham* was under thy Conduct; *Iſaac* and *Jacob* under thy Care: Their Poſterity were multiplied by thee, and that under their Oppreſſions. Thou haſt been our Shield againſt Dangers, our Security in the times of Trouble: When we were purſued to the Red-ſea, it was not a Creature delivered us; and when we feared the pinching of our Bowels in the Deſert, it was no Creature rain'd Manna upon us. Thou haſt been our dwelling place; Thou haſt kept open Houſe for us, ſheltered us againſt Storms, and preſerved us from miſchief, as a Houſe doth an Inhabitant from Wind and Weather; and that not in one or two, but in all Generations: Some think an alluſion is here made to the Ark, to which they were to have recourſe in all Emergencies. Our refuge and defence hath not been from created things; not from the Ark, but from the God of the Ark.

Obſerve,

1. *God is a perpetual Refuge and Security to his People.* His Providence is not confined to one Generation; 'tis not one Age only that taſtes of his Bounty and Compaſſion: His eye never yet ſlept, nor hath he ſuffered the little Ship of his Church to be ſwallowed up, tho' it hath been toſt upon the Waves: He hath always been an Haven to preſerve us, a Houſe to ſecure us; He hath always had Compaſſions to pity us, and Power to protect us; He hath had a Face to ſhine, when the World hath had an angry Countenance to frown; * He brought *Enoch*, home by an extraordinary tranſlation from a brutiſh World; and when he was reſolved to reckon with Men for their brutiſh Lives, he lodged *Noah*, the Phœnix of the World, in an Ark, and kept him alive as a Spark in the midſt of many Waters, whereby to rekindle a Church in the World. In all Generations he is a dwelling place, to ſecure his People here, or entertain them above.

* *Theod.* in loc.

His Providence is not wearied, nor his Care fainting: He never wanted Will to relieve us, *For he hath been our Refuge*; Nor ever can want Power to ſupport us, *For he is a God from Everlaſting to everlaſting.* The Church never wanted a Pilot to ſteer her, and a Rock to ſhelter her, and daſh in pieces the Waves which threaten her.

2. *How worthy is it to remember former Benefits, when we come to beg for new?* Never were the Records of God's Mercies ſo exactly reviſed, as when his People have ſtood in need of new Editions of his Power. How neceſſary are our wants to ſtir us up to pay the Rent of Thankfulneſs in Arrear? He renders himſelf doubly unworthy of the Mercies he wants, that doth not greatefully acknowledge the Mercies he hath received. God ſcarce promiſed any deliverance to the Iſraelites, and they in their Diſtreſs ſcarce prayed for any Deliverance, but that from *Ægypt* was mentioned on both ſides; by God to encourage them, and by them to acknowledge their Confidence in him. The greater our Dangers, the more we ſhould call to mind God's former Kindneſs. We are not only thankfully to acknowledge the Mercies beſtow'd upon our Perſons, or in our Age, but thoſe of former times. Thou haſt been our dwelling place *in all Generations.*

Moſes was not living in the former Generations, yet he appropriates the former Mercies to the preſent Age. Mercies as well as Generations proceed out of the Loyns of thoſe that have gone before. All Mankind are but one *Adam*; the whole Church but one Body.

In the Second Verſe he backs his former Conſideration.

1. *By the greatneſs of his Power in forming the World.*

2. *By the boundleſneſs of his Duration*; [*From everlaſting to everlaſting.*] As thou haſt been our dwelling place, and expended upon us the ſtrength of thy Power, and Riches of thy Love; ſo we have no reaſon to doubt the Continuance on thy part, if we be not wanting on our parts: For the vaſt Mountains and fruitful Earth are the Works of thy Hands; and there is leſs Power requiſite for our relief, than there was for their Creation: And tho' ſo much ſtrength hath been upon various occaſions manifeſted, yet thy

Arm

Arm is not weakned; for *from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God* *.

* אל ſtrong. * *Amyrald.* in loc.

* Thou haſt always been God, and no time can be aſſigned as the beginning of thy Being: The Mountains are not of ſo long a ſtanding as thy ſelf; they are the Effects of thy Power, and therefore cannot be equal to thy Duration; ſince they are effects, they ſuppoſe a precedency of their Cauſe. If we would look back, we can reach no further than the beginning of the Creation, and account the Years from the firſt foundation of the World; but after that we muſt loſe our ſelves in the Abyſs of *Eternity*; we have no Clew to guide our thoughts; we can ſee no bounds in thy Eternity: But as for Man, he traverſeth the World a few days, and by thy order pronounced concerning all Men, returns to the Duſt, and moulders into the Grave.

By Mountains ſome underſtand Angels, as being Creatures of a more elevated Nature: By Earth, they underſtand humane Nature, the Earth being the Habitation of Men. There is no need to divert in this place, from the Letter to ſuch a Senſe. The Deſcription ſeems to be Poetical, and amounts to this; He neither began with the beginning of Time, nor will expire with the end of it *: He did not begin when he made himſelf known to our Fathers, but his Being did precede the Creation of the World, before any created Being was formed, and any time ſettled.

* Ἀναρχόν τινα καὶ ἀτελεύτητον, *Theodoret* in loc.

Before the Mountains were brought forth, or before they were begotten or born; the word being uſed in thoſe ſenſes in Scripture, before they ſtood up higher than the reſt of the earthy Maſs God had created. It ſeems that Mountains were not caſually caſt up by the force of the Deluge, ſoftning the ground, and driving ſeveral parcels of it together to grow up into a maſſy Body, as the Sea doth the Sand in ſeveral places, but they were at firſt formed by God.

The Eternity of God is here deſcribed.

1. *In his Priority* [*before the World.*]

2. *In the extenſion of his duration.* [*From everlaſting to everlaſting, thou art God.*] He was before the World, yet he neither began nor ends: He is not a Temporary, but an Eternal God; it takes in both parts of Eternity, what was before the Creation of the World, and what is after: Tho' the Eternity of God be one permanent ſtate without ſucceſſion, yet the Spirit of God ſuiting himſelf to the weakneſs of our conception, divides it into two parts, one paſt before the foundation of the World, another to come after the deſtruction of the World; as he did exiſt before all Ages, and as he will exiſt after all Ages.

Many Truths lie coucht in the *verſe*.

1. *The World hath a beginning of Being.* It was not from Eternity, it was once nothing; had it been of a very long duration, ſome Records would have remained of ſome memorable actions done of a longer date than any extant.

2. *The World owes its Being to the creating Power of God.* [*Thou hadſt formed it*] out of Nothing into Being, *Thou*, that is God; it could not ſpring into Being of it ſelf; it was nothing; it muſt have a Former.

3. *God was in being before the World.* The Cauſe muſt be before the Effect; that Word which gives Being muſt be before that which receives Being.

4. *This Being was from Eternity.* [*From Everlaſting.*]

5. *This Being ſhall endure to Eternity.* [*To Everlaſting.*]

6. *There is but one God, one Eternal.* [*From everlaſting to everlaſting, thou art God.*] None elſe but one hath the Property of Eternity; the Gods of the Heathen cannot lay claim to it.

Doct. *God is of an eternal duration.* The Eternity of God is the foundation of the ſtability of the Covenant, the great comfort of a Chriſtian. The deſign of God in Scripture, is to ſet forth his dealing with Men in the way of a Covenant. The Priority of God before all things begins the Bible: *In the beginning God created.* His Covenant can have no foundation, but in his duration before and after the World: And *Moſes* here mentions his Eternity; not only with reſpect to the Eſſence of God, but to his federal Providence: As he is the dwelling place of his People in all Generations. The duration of God for ever, is more ſpoken of in Scripture than his Eternity *à parte ante*, tho' that is the foundation of all the comfort we can take from his Immortality: If he had a beginning, he might have an end; and ſo all our happineſs, hope and being, would expire with him; but the Scripture ſometimes takes notice of his being without beginning, as well as without end. * *Thou art from everlaſting.* * *Bleſſed be God from everlaſting to everlaſting:* * *I was ſet up from everlaſting.* If his Wiſdom were from everlaſting, himſelf was from everlaſting: Whether we underſtand it of Chriſt the Son of God, or of the Eſſential Wiſdom of God, 'tis all one to the preſent purpoſe. The Wiſdom of God ſuppoſeth the Eſſence of God, as habits in Creatures ſuppoſe the being of ſome power or faculty as their Subject. The Wiſdom of God ſuppoſeth Mind and Underſtanding, Eſſence and Subſtance.

Gen. 1. 1.

Calv. in loc.

* Pſal 93. 2. * Pſ. 41. 13. * Pro. 8. 23.

The notion of *Eternity* is difficult, as *Auſtin* ſaid of Time: * *If no Man will ask me the queſtion what Time is, I know well enough what it is: But if any ask me what it is, I know not how to explain it.* So may I ſay of Eternity; 'tis eaſie in the word pronounced, but hardly underſtood, and more hardly expreſt; 'tis better expreſt by negative than poſitive words.

* *Conſul.* lib. 11. *Confeſ.* 15.

Tho' we cannot comprehend *Eternity*, yet we may comprehend that there is an Eternity; as tho' we cannot comprehend the Eſſence of God, what he is, yet we may comprehend that he is; we may underſtand the notion of his Exiſtence, tho' we cannot underſtand the infiniteneſs of his nature; Yet we may better underſtand Eternity than Infiniteneſs; we can better conceive a time with the addition of numberleſs days and years, than imagine a Being without bounds; whence the Apoſtle joyns his Eternity with his Power; *His Eternal Power and Godhead*; becauſe next to the Power of God apprehended in the Creature, we come neceſſarily by reaſoning to acknowledge the Eternity of God. He that hath an incomprehenſible Power, muſt needs have an Eternity of Nature: His Power is moſt ſenſible in the Creatures to the eye of Man, and his Eternity eaſily from thence deducible by the reaſon of Man.

Rom. 1. 20.

Eternity is a perpetual duration, which hath neither beginning nor end: Time hath both. Thoſe things we ſay are in time, that have beginning, grow up by degrees, have ſucceſſion of parts: Eternity is contrary to Time, and is therefore a permanent and immutable State; a perfect poſſeſſion of life without any variation: It comprehends in it ſelf all Years, all Ages, all periods of Ages: It never begins! it endures after every duration of Time, and never ceaſeth; it doth as much out-run Time, as it went before the beginning of it: Time ſuppoſeth ſomething before it, but there can be nothing before Eternity, it were not then Eternity. Time hath a continual ſucceſſion; the former time paſſeth away, and another ſucceeds; the laſt year is not this year, nor this year the next. We muſt conceive of Eternity contrary to the notion of Time; as the nature of Time conſiſts in the ſucceſſion of parts, ſo the *nature of Eternity* is an infinite immutable duration *. Eternity and Time differ as the Sea and Rivers; the Sea never changes place, and is always one Water; but the

* *Moulin. Coo.* 1. *Ser.* 2. p. 52.

the Rivers glide along, and are ſwallowed up in the Sea; ſo is Time by Eternity.

A thing is ſaid to be *eternal*, or *everlaſting* rather in Scripture.

2. *When it is of a long duration, tho' it will have an end*; When it hath no meaſures of Time determined to it; ſo Circumciſion is ſaid to be in the Fleſh for an *everlaſting Covenant* *; not purely everlaſting, but ſo long as that adminiſtration of the Covenant ſhould endure. * Gen. 17. v. 14.

And ſo when a Servant would not leave his Maſter, but would have his ear bored; 'tis ſaid, he ſhould be a Servant *for ever* *; *i. e.* till the *Jubilee*, which was every fiftieth year: So the Meat-offering they were to offer, is ſaid to be *Perpetual* *. *Canaan* is ſaid to be given to *Abraham* for an *everlaſting* poſſeſſion *: When as the *Jews* are expelled from *Canaan*, which is given a Prey to the barbarous Nations. Indeed Circumciſion was not everlaſting; yet the ſubſtance of the Covenant whereof this was a ſign, *viz.* That God would be the God of Believers, endures for ever; and that Circumciſion of the heart, which was ſignified by Circumciſion of the fleſh, ſhall remain for ever in the Kingdom of Glory: It was not ſo much the laſting of the ſign, as of the thing ſignified by it, and the Covenant ſealed by it: The ſign had its abolition, ſo that the Apoſtle is ſo peremptory in it, that he aſſerts, that if any went about to eſtabliſh it, he excluded himſelf from a participation of Chriſt *. The Sacrifices were to be perpetual, in regard of the thing ſignified by them, *viz.* the death of Chriſt, which was to endure in the efficacy of it: And the Paſſover was to be for ever *, in regard of the Redemption ſignified by it, which was to be of everlaſting remembrance. *Canaan* was to be an everlaſting poſſeſſion, in regard of the glory of Heaven typified, to be for ever conferr'd upon the ſpiritual Seed of *Abraham*. * Deut. 15. v. 17. * Lev. 6. 20. * Gen. 17. 8. * Gal. 5. 2. * Exod. 12. v. 24.

3. *When a thing hath no end, tho' it hath a beginning.* So Angels and Souls are everlaſting; tho' their Being ſhall never ceaſe, yet there was a time when their Being began; they were nothing before they were ſomething, tho' they ſhall never be nothing again, but ſhall live in endleſs happineſs or miſery.

But *that properly is eternal, that hath neither beginning nor end*; And thus Eternity is a Property of God. In this Doctrine I ſhall ſhew,

1. *How God is eternal, or in what reſpects Eternity is his Property.*

2. *That he is eternal, and muſt needs be ſo.*

3. *That Eternity is only proper to God, and not common to him with any Creature.*

4. The *Uſe*.

1. *How God is eternal, or in what reſpects he is ſo.* *Eternity* is a Negative Attribute, and is a denying of God any meaſures of Time, as Immenſity is a denying of him any bounds of place; As Immenſity is the diffuſion of his Eſſence, ſo Eternity is the duration of his Eſſence: And when we ſay God is eternal, we exclude from him all poſſibility of beginning and ending, all flux and change: As the Eſſence of God cannot be bounded by any place, ſo it is not to be limited by any time; as it is his Immenſity to be every where, ſo it is his Eternity to be always *. As created things are ſaid to be ſomewhere in regard of place, and to be preſent, paſt, or future, in regard of Time, ſo the Creator in regard of Place is every where; in regard of Time is *ſemper*: * His duration is as endleſs as his eſſence is boundleſs; he always was, and always will be, and will no more have an End than he had a Beginning; and this is an excellency belonging to the Supream Being: * As his Eſſence comprehends all Beings, and exceeds them, and his Immenſity ſurmounts all Places; ſo his Eternity comprehends all Times, all Durations, and infinitely excels them. * *Gaſſend.* * *Crellius* de Deo cap. 18. p. 41. * *Lingend.* Tom. 2. p. 496.

1. *God is without Beginning.*

* *In the Beginning God created the World*: God was then before the beginning of it; and what point can be ſet wherein God began, if he were before the beginning of created things? God was without beginning, tho' all other things had Time and Beginning from him. As Unity is before all Numbers, ſo is God before all his Creatures. *Abraham* called upon the Name of the *everlaſting* God; * The eternal God: 'Tis oppoſed to the Heathen Gods, which were but of *Yeſterday*, new Coyn'd, and ſo new; but the Eternal God, was before the World was made. In that ſenſe it is to be underſtood, * *The Myſtery which was kept ſecret ſince the World began, but now is made manifeſt; and by the Scriptures of the Prophets, according to the Command of the everlaſting God, made known to all Nations for the Obedience of Faith.* The Goſpel is not preached by the Command of a new and temporary God, but of that God that was before all Ages; tho' the manifeſtation of it be in time, yet the purpoſe and reſolve of it was from Eternity. * Gen. 1. 1. * Gen. 21. v. 33. אל שלם * Rom. 16. v. 26.

If there were *Decrees* before the foundation of the World, there was a *Decreer* before the foundation of the World; before the foundation of the World he lov'd Chriſt as a Mediator: * A fore-ordination of him was *before the foundation* of the World; a choice of Men, & therefore a chooſer *before the foundation* of the World; a *Grace given in Chriſt before the World began* *, and therefore a Donor of that Grace. From thoſe places, ſaith *Crellius*, it appears that God was before the foundation of the World, but they do not aſſert an abſolute Eternity *; but to be before all Creatures, is equivalent to his Being from Eternity. Time began with the foundation of the World, but God being before Time, could have no beginning in Time: Before the beginning of the Creation, and the beginning of Time, there could be nothing but Eternity; nothing but what was uncreated, that is, nothing but what was *without beginning*. To be in time, is, to have a beginning; to be before all Time, is never to have a beginning, but always to be: For as between the Creator and Creatures there is no Medium; ſo between Time and Eternity, there is no Medium. 'Tis as eaſily deduced, that he that was before all Creatures is Eternal, as he that made all Creatures is God: If he had a beginning, he muſt have it from another, or from himſelf; if from another, that from whom he received his Being would be better than he, ſo more a God than he. He cannot be God, that is not Supream; he cannot be Supream, that owes his Being to the Power of another: He would not be ſaid *only* to have Immortality as he is, * if he had it dependent upon another; nor could he have a beginning from himſelf; if he had given beginning to himſelf, then he was once nothing, there was a time when he was not; if he was not, how could he be the Cauſe of himſelf? 'Tis impoſſible for any to give a Beginning and Being to it ſelf: If it acts, it muſt exiſt; and ſo exiſt, before it exiſted: A thing would exiſt as a Cauſe, before it exiſted as an Effect. He that is not, cannot be the Cauſe that he is; If therefore God doth exiſt, and hath not his Being from another, he muſt exiſt from Eternity: Therefore when we ſay God is of, and from himſelf, we mean not that God gave Being to himſelf; but it is negatively to be underſtood, that he hath no cauſe of Exiſtence without himſelf. * John 17. v. 24. * Eph. 1. 4. 2 Tim. 1. 9. * *Coccei* Sum. p. 48. Theol. *Gerhard* Exeges, cap. 86. 4. p. 266. * 1 Tim. 6. 16.

Whatſoever Number of Millions of Millions of Years we can imagine before the Creation of the World, yet God was infinitely before thoſe; he is therefore called the Ancient of Days *, as being before all Days and Time, and eminently containing in himſelf all Times and Ages: Tho' indeed God cannot properly be called ancient, that will teſtifie that he is decaying, and ſhortly will not be; no more than he can be called young, which would ſignifie * Dan. 7. 9.

that

that he was not long before. All created things are new and freſh; but no Creature can find out any beginning of God: 'Tis impoſſible there ſhould be any beginning of him.

2. *God is without End.* He always was, always is, and always will be what he is: He remains always the ſame in Being; ſo far from any *change*, that *no ſhadow* of it can touch him *: He will continue in Being, as long as he hath already enjoy'd it; and if we could add never ſo many Millions of years together, we are ſtill as far from an End, as from a Beginning; for *the Lord ſhall indure for ever* *: As it is impoſſible he ſhould not be, being from all Eternity; ſo it is impoſſible that he ſhould not be to all Eternity. The Scripture is moſt plentiful in Teſtimonies of this Eternity of God, *à parte poſt*, or after the Creation of the World: He is ſaid to *live for ever.* * *The Earth ſhall periſh, but God ſhall endure for ever, and his years ſhall have no end.* Plants and Animals grow up from ſmall beginnings; arrive to their full growth and decline again, and have always remarkable alterations in their nature; But there is no declination in God by all the Revolutions of Time: Hence ſome think the incorruptibility of the Deity was ſignified by the *Shittim*, or *Cedar-wood*, whereof the Ark was made, it being of an incorruptible nature *.

*James 1.17

*Pſal. 9.7.

* Rev. 4. v. 9, 10. Pſ. 102. 27.

*Exod. 25. v. 10.

That which had no beginning of duration, can never have an end, or any interruptions in it. Since God never depended upon any, what ſhould make him ceaſe to be what eternally he hath been, or put a ſtop to the continuance of his perfections? He cannot will his own deſtruction, that is againſt univerſal nature in all things to ceaſe from Being, if they can preſerve themſelves. He cannot deſert his own Being, becauſe he cannot but love himſelf as the beſt and chiefeſt good. The reaſon that any thing decays, is either its own native weakneſs, or ſuperior Power of ſomething contrary to it: * There is no weakneſs in the nature of God that can introduce any Corruption, becauſe he is infinitely ſimple without any mixture: Nor can he be over-powered by any thing elſe; a weaker cannot hurt him, and a ſtronger than he there cannot be: Nor can he be outwitted or circumvented, becauſe of his infinite Wiſdom: As he received his Being from none, ſo he cannot be deprived of it by any: As he doth neceſſarily exiſt, ſo he doth neceſſarily always exiſt. This indeed is the Property of God; nothing ſo proper to him, as always to be. Whatſoever perfection any Being hath, if it be *not eternal*, it is not *divine*. God *only* is immortal *; he only is ſo by a neceſſity of nature: Angels, Souls and Bodies too, after the Reſurrection ſhall be immortal; not by nature, but by grant; they are ſubject to return to nothing, if that Word that raiſed them from nothing ſhould ſpeak them into nothing again: 'Tis as eaſie with God to ſtrip them of it, as to inveſt them with it; nay, it is impoſſible but that they ſhould periſh, if God ſhould withdraw his Power from preſerving them, which he exerted in creating them: But God is immoveably fixed in his own Being; that as none gave him his Life, ſo none can deprive him of his Life, or the leaſt particle of it; not a jot of the happineſs and life, which God infinitely poſſeſſes, can be loſt: It will be as durable to everlaſting, as it hath been poſſeſſed from everlaſting.

* *Creſſius* de Deo c. 18. p. 41.

*1 Tim. 6. v. 16. *Daille* in loc.

3. *There is no Succeſſion in God.* God is without ſucceſſion or change; 'tis a part or property of Eternity to be without Succeſſion; *From everlaſting to everlaſting he is God*, i. e. the ſame. God doth not only always remain in Being, but he always remains the ſame in that Being, * *Thou art the ſame.* The Being of Creatures is ſucceſſive; the Being of God is permanent, and remains intire with all its perfections, unchanged in an infinite duration: Indeed the firſt notion of Eternity is to be without beginning and end, which notes to us the duration of a Being in regard of its Exiſtence; but to have no ſucceſſion, nothing firſt or laſt, notes rather the perfection of a Being in regard of its Eſſence.

*Pſal. 102. v. 27.

The Creatures are in a perpetual Flux; ſomething is acquired, or ſomething loſt every day. A Man is the ſame in regard of Exiſtence when he is a Man, as he was when he was a Child; but there is a new ſucceſſion of quantities and qualities in him; every day he acquires ſomething till he comes to his maturity; every day he loſeth ſomething till he comes to his Period. A Man is not the ſame at night that he was in the morning; ſomething is expir'd, and ſomething is added; every day there is a change in his Age, a change in his Subſtance, a change in his Accidents: But God hath his whole Being in one and the ſame point, or moment of Eternity; He receives nothing as an Addition to what he was before; He loſeth nothing of what he was before, He is always the ſame excellency and perfection in the ſame infiniteneſs as ever; His *years do not fail* *, his years do not come and go as others do; there is not this day, to morrow, or yeſterday with him: as nothing is paſt or future with him in regard of Knowledge, but all things are preſent; ſo nothing is paſt or future in regard of his Eſſence; He is not in his Eſſence this day what he was not before, or will be the next day and year what he is not now *; All his perfections are moſt perfect in him every moment, before all Ages, after all Ages: As he hath his whole Eſſence undivided in every place, as well as in immenſe ſpace; ſo he hath all his Being in one moment of time, as well as in infinite intervals of time. * Some illuſtrate the difference between Eternity and Time, by the ſimilitude of a Tree, or a Rock ſtanding upon the ſide of a River, or Shore of the Sea; the Tree ſtands always the ſame and unmoved, while the waters of the River glide along at the foot; The Flux is in the River, but the Tree acquires nothing but a diverſe reſpect and relation of preſence to the various parts of the River as they flow; The waters of the River preſs on, and puſh forward one another, and what the River had this minute, it hath not the ſame the next: So are all ſublunary things in a continual Flux. And tho' the Angels have no ſubſtantial change, yet they have an accidental; for the actions of the Angels this day, are not the ſame individual actions which they performed yeſterday: But in God there is no change, He always remains the ſame.

*Heb. 1. 12.

* *Leſſius* de perfect. divin. lib. 4. cap. 1.

* *Gamacheus* in Aquin. part. 1. Qu. 10. c. 1.

* Of a Creature it may be ſaid, He was, or he is, or he ſhall be: Of God it cannot be ſaid, but only he is: He is what he always was; and he is what he always will be; whereas a Creature is what he was not, and will be what he is not now. As it may be ſaid of the flame of a Candle, 'tis flame; but it is not the ſame individual flame as was before, nor is it the ſame that will be preſently after; there is a continual diſſolution of it into Air, and a continual ſupply for the Generation of more; While it continues, it may be ſaid there is a flame; yet not intirely one, but in a ſucceſſion of parts: So of a Man it may be ſaid, he is in a ſucceſſion of parts; but he is not the ſame that he was, and will not be the ſame that he is: But God is the ſame without any ſucceſſion of part, and of time: Of him it may be ſaid, He is: He is no more now than he was, and he ſhall be no more hereafter than he is. * God poſſeſſes a firm and abſolute Being, always conſtant to himſelf; He ſees all things ſliding under him in a continual Variation; He beholds the Revolutions in the World without any change of his moſt glorious and immoveable Nature; All other things paſs from

* *Gaſſend.* Tom. 1. Phyſic. § 1. l. 2. c. 7. p. 223.

* *Daille* Mc: lange de Sermon. p. 252.

one ſtate to another; from their Original, to their Eclipſe and Deſtruction: But God poſſeſſes his Being in one indiviſible Point, having neither beginning, end, nor middle.

1. *There is no ſucceſſion in the Knowledge of God.* The variety of Succeſſions and Changes in the World, make not ſucceſſion of new Objects in the Divine Mind; for all things are preſent to him from Eternity in regard of his Knowledge, tho' they are not actually preſent in the World in regard of their Exiſtence: He doth not know one thing now, and another anon: He ſees all things at once; *Known unto* *Acts 15.18 *God are all things from the beginning of the World**. But in their true order of Succeſſion, as they lye in the Eternal Counſel of God, to be brought forth in time. Tho' there be a Succeſſion and order of things as they are wrought, yet there is no Succeſſion in God in regard of his knowledge of them. God knows the things that ſhall be wrought, and the order of them in their being brought upon the Stage of the World; yet both the things and the order he knows by one act. Tho' all things be preſent with God, yet they are preſent in him in the order of their appearance in the World, and not ſo preſent with him as if they ſhould be wrought at once. The Death of Chriſt was to precede his Reſurrection in order of time; there is a Succeſſion in this; both at once are known by God, yet the act of his Knowledge is not exerciſed about Chriſt as dying, and riſing at the ſame time; ſo that there is Succeſſion in things, when there is no Succeſſion in Gods knowledge of them. Since God knows time, he knows all things as they are in time: He doth not know all things to be at once, tho' he knows at once what is, has been, and will be. All things are paſt, preſent, and to come in regard of their Exiſtence; but there is not paſt, preſent and to come in regard of God's *Pariſienſis Knowledge of them; * becauſe he ſees and knows not by any other, but by himſelf; He is his own Light by which he ſees, his own Glaſs wherein he ſees; beholding himſelf, he beholds all things.

2. *There is no ſucceſſion in the Decrees of God.* He doth not decree this now, which he decreed not before; for as his Works were known from the beginning of the World, ſo his Works were decreed from the beginning of the World; as they are known at once, ſo they are decreed at once; there is a ſucceſſion in the execution of them, firſt Grace, then Glory; but the purpoſe of God for the beſtowing of both, *Eph. 1.4. was in one and the ſame moment of Eternity. * *He choſe us before the foundation of the World, that we ſhould be holy.* The choice of Chriſt, and the choice of ſome in him to be holy, and to be happy, were before the foundation of the World. 'Tis by the eternal Counſel of God, all things appear in time; they appear in their order according to the Counſel and Will of God from eternity. The Redemption of the World is after the Creation of the World; but the Decree whereby the World was created, and whereby it was redeemed, was from Eternity.

4. *God is his own Eternity.* He is not eternal by grant, and the diſpoil of any other, but by Nature *Calov. *Socinian.* Exiſtentia durans. and Eſſence. *The Eternity of God, is nothing elſe but the Duration of God; and the Duration of God, is nothing elſe but his Exiſtence enduring. If *Eternity* were any thing diſtinct from God, and not of the Eſſence of God; then there would be ſomething which was not God, neceſſary to perfect God. As Immortality is the great Perfection of a rational Creature, ſo eternity is the choice Perfection of God, yea, the gloſs and luſtre of all others. Every Perfection would be imperfect, if it were not always a Perfection.

God is eſſentially whatſoever he is; and there is nothing in God but his Eſſence; Duration, or Continuance in being in Creatures, differs from their Being; for they might exiſt but for one inſtant; in which caſe they may be ſaid to have Being, but not Duration, becauſe all Duration includes *prius, & poſterius.* All Creatures may ceaſe from Being, if it be the pleaſure of God; they are not therefore durable by their Eſſence, and therefore are not their own duration, no more than they are their own Exiſtence. And tho' ſome Creatures, as Angels, and Souls may be called Everlaſting, as a perpetual Life is communicated to them by God; yet they can never be called their own Eternity; becauſe ſuch a duration is not ſimply neceſſary, nor eſſential to them, but accidental, depending upon the pleaſure of another; there is nothing in their Nature that can hinder them from loſing it, if God, from whom they received it, ſhould deſign to take it away: But as God is his own neceſſity of exiſting, ſo he is his own duration in exiſting: *As he doth neceſſarily exiſt by himſelf, * Gaſſend. ſo he will always neceſſarily exiſt by himſelf.

5. Hence *all the Perfections of God are Eternal.* In regard of the Divine Eternity, all things in God are Eternity, his Power, Mercy, Wiſdom, Juſtice, Knowledge. God himſelf were not Eternal, if any of his Perfections which are eſſential to him were not eternal alſo; He had not elſe been a perfect God from all eternity, and ſo his whole ſelf had not been Eternal. If any thing belonging to the Nature of a thing be wanting, it cannot be ſaid to be that thing which it ought to be. If any thing requiſite to the Nature of God had been wanting one moment, he could not have been ſaid to be an eternal God.

The ſecond thing, *God is eternal.* The Spirit of God in Scripture condeſcends to our Capacities in ſignifying the Eternity of God by *Days* and *Years*, which are terms belonging to time, whereby we meaſure it: * But we muſt no more conceive that *Pſ. 102.27 God is bounded, or meaſured by time, and hath ſucceſſion of Days becauſe of thoſe Expreſſions, than we can conclude him to have a Body, becauſe Members are aſcribed to him in Scripture, to help our Conceptions of his glorious Nature and Operations.

Tho' Years are aſcribed to him; yet they are ſuch as cannot be numbred, cannot be finiſhed, ſince there is no proportion between the Duration of God, and the Years of Men. *The number of his Years cannot be ſearched out; for he makes ſmall the drops of Water; they pour down Rain according to the Vapour thereof**. The numbers of the drops of Rain which *Job 36.26. have fallen in all parts of the Earth ſince the Creation of the World, if ſubſtracted from the number of the Years of God, would be found a ſmall quantity, a meer nothing to the Years of God. As all the Nations in the World compar'd with God, are but as the *drop of a Bucket, worſe than nothing, than vanity*; So all the Ages of the World, if compared with God, amount not to ſo much as the one hundred thouſandth part of a Minute: The Minutes from the Creation may be numbred, but the Years of the duration of God being infinite, are without meaſure. Iſa. 40.15.

As *one day* is to the Life of Man, ſo are a thouſand Years to the Life of God *: The Holy Ghoſt expreſſeth himſelf to the capacity of Man, to give us ſome Notion of an infinite Duration, by a reſemblance ſuited to the capacity of Man. If a thouſand Years be but as a Day to the Life of God, then as a Year is to the Life of Man, ſo are three hundred ſixty five thouſand Years to the Life of God! And as ſeventy Years are to the Life of Man, ſo are twenty five Millions four hundred and fifty thouſand Years to the Life of God: Yet ſtill, ſince there is no proportion between Time and Eternity, we muſt dart our thoughts beyond all thoſe; *For Years and Days * Pſ. 90.5. Amyrald Trin. p. 44. *Daille, Vent. Sermons, Ser. I. ſur. 102. Pſ. 27. p. 21.

meaſure

measure only the duration of created Things, and of those only that are Material and Corporeal, subject to the Motion of the Heavens, which makes Days and Years.

Sometimes this Eternity is expreſt by parts, as looking backward and forward; by the differences of time, *paſt*, *preſent* and *to come*, * *which was, and is, and is to come.* Tho' this might be ſpoken of any thing in being, tho' but for an Hour; it was the laſt Minute, it is now, and it will be the next Minute; yet the Holy Ghoſt would declare ſomething proper to God, as including all parts of time; He always was, is now, and always ſhall be: It might always be ſaid of him, he was, and it may always be ſaid of him, he will be: There is no time when he began, no time when he ſhall ceaſe. It cannot be ſaid of a Creature, he always was, he always is what he was, and he always will be what he is: But God always is what he was, and always will be what he is; ſo that it is a very ſignificant Expreſſion of the Eternity of God as can be ſuited to our Capacities.

*Rev. 1. 8. Rev. 4. 8. Crellius *weakens this Argument*, De Deo. c. 18. p. 42.

1. *His eternity is evident by the Name God gives himſelf.* * *And God ſaid unto* Moſes, *I AM THAT I AM; thus ſhalt thou ſay to the Children of* Iſrael, *I AM hath ſent me unto you.* This is the Name whereby he is diſtinguiſhed from all Creatures; *I am*, is his proper Name: This Deſcription being in the Preſent Tenſe, ſhews that his Eſſence knows no paſt, nor future: If it were, *he was*, it would intimate he were not now what he once was; if it were, *he will be*, it would intimate he were not yet what he will be. But, *I am*; I am the only Being, the Root of all Beings; he is therefore at the greateſt diſtance from not Being, and that is Eternal. So that [*is*] ſignifies his Eternity, as well as his Perfection and Immutability: As *I am* ſpeaks the want of no Bleſſedneſs, ſo it ſpeaks the want of no Duration; and therefore the French where-ever they find this word *Jehovah* in the Scripture, which we tranſlate *Lord*, and *Lord Eternal*, render it the *Eternal*. I am always and immutably the ſame. The Eternity of God is oppoſed to the Volubility of Time, which is extended into paſt, preſent and to come. Our time is but a ſmall drop, as Sand to all the Atoms and ſmall Particles of which the world is made; but God is an unbounded Sea of Being; *I am that I am*, i. e. an infinite Life. I have not that now, which I had not formerly; I ſhall not afterwards have that which I have not now; *I am* that in every moment which I was, and will be in all moments of time; Nothing can be added to me, nothing can be detracted from me: There is nothing ſuperior to him, which can detract from him; nothing deſirable that can be added to him. * Now if there were any beginning and end of God, any ſucceſſion in him, he could not be *I am*: For in regard of what was paſt he would not be, in regard of what was to come he is not yet: And upon this account, a Heathen argues well, Of all Creatures it may be ſaid, they were, or they will be; but of God it cannot be ſaid any thing elſe, but *eſt*, God *is*, becauſe he fills an eternal Duration: A Creature cannot be ſaid to be, if it be not yet, nor if it be not now, but hath been *.

*Ex. 3. 14.

*Theſ. Salmur. p. 1. p. 145. Theſ. 14.

Plutarch.

* Perer. *in* Exod. 3. Diſput. 13.

God only can be called, *I am*; all Creatures have more of not Being than Being; for every Creature was nothing from Eternity, before it was made ſomething in time; and if it be corruptible in its whole Nature, it will be nothing to Eternity after it hath been ſomething in time; and if it be not corruptible in its Nature, as the Angels; or in every part of its Nature, as Man in regard of his Soul; yet it hath not properly a Being, becauſe it is dependent upon the pleaſure of God, to continue it, or deprive it of it; and while it is, it is mutable, and all mutability is a mixture of not Being: If God therefore be properly *I am*, i. e. Being, it follows that he always was; for if he were not always, he muſt (as was argued before) be produced by ſome other, or by himſelf: By another he could not, then he had not been God, but a Creature; nor by himſelf, for then as producing, he muſt be before himſelf, as produced; he had been before he was: And he always will be, for being *I am*, having all Being in himſelf, and the fountain of all Being to every thing elſe, how can he ever have his Name changed to *I am not?*

2. *God hath Life in himſelf*, John 5. 26. *The Father hath Life in himſelf*: He is the *living God*, therefore *ſtedfaſt for ever* *: He hath Life by his Eſſence, not by Participation: He is a Sun to give Light and Life to all Creatures, but receives not Light or Life from any thing; & therefore he hath an unlimited Life, not a drop of Life but a fountain, not a ſpark of a limited Life, but a Life tranſcending all bounds: He hath Life in himſelf: All Creatures have their Life in him and from him. He that hath Life in himſelf doth neceſſarily exiſt, and could never be made to exiſt; for then he had not Life in himſelf, but in that which made him to exiſt, and gave him Life: What doth neceſſarily exiſt therefore, exiſts from Eternity; what hath Being of it ſelf, could never be produced in time, could not want Being one moment, becauſe it hath Being from its Eſſence without influence of any efficient Cauſe. * When God pronounced his Name, *I am that I am*, Angels and Men were in Being; the World had been created above two thouſand four hundred Years; *Moſes* to whom he then ſpeaks, was in Being; yet God only *is*, becauſe he only hath the fountain of Being in himſelf, but all that they were, was a rivulet from him; He hath from nothing elſe, that he doth ſubſiſt; every thing elſe hath its ſubſiſtence from him as their Root, as the Beam from the Sun, as the Rivers and Fountains from the Sea. All Life is ſeated in God, as in its proper Throne; in its moſt perfect Purity. God is Life; 'tis in him originally, radically, therefore eternally: He is a pure Act, nothing but Vigor and Act; He hath by his Nature that Life, which others have by his Grant; whence the *Apoſtle* ſaith *, not only that he is Immortal, but he hath *Immortality* in a full Poſſeſſion; Fee-ſimple, not depending upon the Will of another, but containing all things within himſelf. He that hath Life in himſelf, and is from himſelf, cannot but be: He always was, becauſe he received his Being from no other, and none can take away that Being which was not given by another *. If there were any ſpace before he did exiſt, then there were ſomething which made him to exiſt; Life would not then be in him, but in that which produced him into Being; he could not then be God, but that other which gave him Being, would be God. And to ſay, God ſprung into Being by chance, when we ſee nothing in the World that is brought forth by Chance, but hath ſome cauſe of its Exiſtence, would be vain; for ſince God is a Being, Chance which is nothing, could not bring forth ſomething; and by the ſame reaſon that he ſprung up by Chance, he might totally vaniſh by Chance. What a ſtrange Notion of a GOD would this be, ſuch a God that had no Life in himſelf, but from Chance?

*Dan. 6. 26.

*Peta. *Theol. Dog. Tom.* 1. *l.* 1. *c.* 6. § 6, 7.

* 1 Tim. 6. 16.

*Antyr. *de Trin. p.* 481.

Since he had life in himſelf, and that there was no cauſe of his Exiſtence; he can have no cauſe of his limitation, and can no more be determined to a time, than he can to a place. What hath life in it ſelf, hath life without bounds, and can never deſert

it, nor be deprived of it: So that he lives neceſſarily, and it is abſolutely impoſſible that he ſhould not live; whereas all other things *live*, and *move*, and have their *Being in him* *; and as they live by his Will, ſo they can return to nothing at his Word.

*Acts 17.28

3. *If God were not eternal, he were not immutable in his Nature.* 'Tis contrary to the nature of Immutability to be without Eternity; for whatſoever begins, is changed in its paſſing from not Being to Being: It began to be what it was not, and if it ends, it ceaſeth to be what it was; It cannot therefore be ſaid to be God, if there were either beginning or ending, or ſucceſſion in it, *Mal.* 3. 6. *I am the Lord, I change not*, Job 37. 23. (*Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out.*) God argues here, ſaith *Calvin*, from his unchangeable nature as *Jehovah*, to his immutability in his purpoſe: Had he not been eternal, there had been the greateſt change from nothing to ſomething: A change of the Eſſence, is greater than a change of purpoſe. God is a Sun glittering always in the ſame glory; No growing up in Youth; no paſſing on to Age: If he were not without ſucceſſion, ſtanding in one point of Eternity, there would be a change from paſt to preſent, from preſent to future. The Eternity of God is a Shield againſt all kind of mutability. If any thing ſprang up in the Eſſence of God that was not there before, he could not be ſaid to be either an eternal, or an unchanged Subſtance.

4. *God could not be an infinitely perfect Being, if he were not eternal.* A finite duration is inconſiſtent with infinite perfection. Whatſoever is contracted within the limits of Time, cannot ſwallow up all perfections in it ſelf. God hath an unſearchable perfection. * *Canſt thou by ſearching find out God; canſt thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?* He cannot be found out, he is infinite, becauſe he is incomprehenſible: Incomprehenſibility ariſeth from an infinite perfection, which cannot be fathom'd by the ſhort lines of Man's Underſtanding: His Eſſence, in regard of its diffuſion, and in regard of its duration, is incomprehenſible as well as his action: If God therefore had beginning, he could not be infinite; if not infinite, he did not poſſeſs the higheſt perfection, becauſe a perfection might be conceived beyond it: If his Being could fail, he were not perfect: Can that deſerve the name of the higheſt perfection, which is capable of corruption and diſſolution? To be finite and limited, is the greateſt imperfection, for it conſiſts in a denial of Being. He could not be the moſt bleſſed Being, if he were not always ſo, and ſhould not for ever remain to be ſo; and whatſoever perfections he had, would be ſowred by the thoughts, that in time they would ceaſe; and ſo could not be pure perfections, becauſe not permanent; but *He is bleſſed from everlaſting to everlaſting* *. Had he a beginning, he could not have all perfection without limitation; he would have been limited by that which gave him beginning; that which gave him Being would be God, and not himſelf, and ſo more perfect than he: But ſince God is the moſt Sovereign perfection, than which nothing can be imagined perfecter by the moſt capacious underſtanding, He is certainly *eternal*; being infinite, nothing can be added to him, nothing detracted from him.

* Job 11.7.

* Pſ. 41.13.

5. *God could not be Omnipotent, Almighty, if he were not Eternal.* The Title of *Almighty*, agrees not with a nature that had a beginning; whatſoever hath a beginning was once nothing, and when it was nothing could act nothing. Where there is no Being, there is no Power; neither doth the Title of *Almighty* agree with a periſhing nature: He can do nothing to purpoſe, that cannot preſerve himſelf againſt the outward force and violence of Enemies, or againſt the inward cauſes of corruption and diſſolution. No account is to be made of Man, becauſe *his breath is in his Noſtrils* *; Could a better account be made of God, if he were of the like condition? He could not properly be Almighty, that were not *always mighty*: If he be Omnipotent, nothing can impair him; He that hath all power, can have no hurt *; If he doth whatſoever he pleaſeth, nothing can make him miſerable, ſince miſery conſiſts in thoſe things which happen againſt our Will. The Almightineſs and Eternity of God are link'd together: *I am* Alpha *and* Omega, *the Beginning and the Ending, ſaith the Lord, which was, and which is, and which is to come, the Almighty* *: Almighty, becauſe Eternal, and Eternal, becauſe Almighty.

* Iſa. 2. 22.

* *Voet.* Natural. Theol. p. 340.

* Rev. 1. 8.

6. *God would not be the firſt Cauſe of all if he were not eternal*; But he is *the firſt*, and *the laſt*; the firſt cauſe of all things, the laſt end of all things *: That which is the firſt cannot begin to be, it were not then the firſt; it cannot ceaſe to be: Whatſoever is diſſolved, is diſſolved into that whereof it doth conſiſt, which was before it, and then it was not the *firſt*. * The World might not have been, it was once nothing; it muſt have ſome cauſe to call it out of nothing; Nothing hath no power to make it ſelf ſomething, there is a ſuperior Cauſe, by whoſe Will and Power it comes into Being, and ſo gives all the Creatures their diſtinct forms.

* Rev. 1. 8. *Ficin.* de Immort. l. 2 cap. 5.

* *Coccei* Sum. Theol.

This Power cannot but be eternal; it muſt be before the World; the *Founder* muſt be before the *Foundation* *; and his Exiſtence muſt be from Eternity, or we muſt ſay nothing did exiſt from Eternity: And if there were no Being from Eternity, there could not now be any Being in Time: What we ſee, and what we are, muſt ariſe from it ſelf or ſome other; it cannot from it ſelf: If any thing made it ſelf, it had a power to make it ſelf; it then had an active Power before it had a Being; It was ſomething in regard of Power, and was nothing in regard of Exiſtence at the ſame time: Suppoſe it had a Power to produce it ſelf, this power muſt be conferred upon it by another; and ſo the power of producing it ſelf, was not from it ſelf, but from another: But if the power of Being was from it ſelf, why did it not produce it ſelf before? Why was it one moment out of Being, * if there be any exiſtence of things? 'tis neceſſary that that, which was the *firſt Cauſe*, ſhould *exiſt from Eternity*. VVhatſoever was the immediate cauſe of the VVorld, yet the firſt and chief Cauſe wherein we muſt reſt, muſt have nothing before it; if it had any thing before it, it were not the *firſt*; He therefore that is the firſt Cauſe muſt be without beginning, nothing muſt be before him: If he had a beginning from ſome other, he could not be the firſt Principle and Author of all things; If he be the firſt Cauſe of all things, he muſt give himſelf a beginning, or be from Eternity; He could not give himſelf a beginning; whatſoever begins in Time was nothing before, and when it was nothing it could do nothing; it could not give it ſelf any thing, for then it gave what it had not, and did what it could not. If he made himſelf in time, why did he not make himſelf before? What hindred him? It was either becauſe he could not, or becauſe he would not! If he could not, he always wanted power, and always would unleſs it were beſtowed upon him, and then he could not be ſaid to be from himſelf? If he would not make himſelf before, then he might have made himſelf when he would: How had he the power of willing and nilling without a Being? Nothing cannot will or nill, Nothing hath no faculties: So that it is neceſſary to grant ſome Eternal Being, or run into inextricable Labyrinths and Mazes. If we deny ſome Eternal Being, we muſt deny all Being; our own Being, the Being of every thing about us; unconceiveable abſurdities will ariſe.

* *Crellius* de Deo cap. 18. p. 43

* *Petav.* Theol. Dogmat. Tom. I. l. 1. c. 10, 11.

So

So then, if God were the Cauſe of all things, He did exiſt before all things, and that from Eternity.

The third thing is, *Eternity is only proper to God and not communicable* *. 'Tis as great a madneſs to aſcribe Eternity to the Creature, as to deprive the Lord of the Creature of Eternity. 'Tis ſo proper to God, that when the Apoſtle would prove the Deity of Chriſt, he proves it by his Immutability and Eternity, as well as his Creating Power: * *Thou art the ſame, and thy years ſhall not fail.* The argument had no ſtrength, if Eternity belonged eſſentially to any but God; and therefore he is ſaid *only* to have *Immortality* *: All other things receive their Being from him, and can be deprived of their Being by him: All things depend on him, he of none: All other things are like Clothes, which would conſume if God preſerved them not. Immortality is appropriated to God, *i. e.* an *independent Immortality*. Angels and Souls have an Immortality, but by donation from God, not by their own Eſſence; dependent upon their Creator, not neceſſary in their own Nature: God might have annihilated them, after he had created them; ſo that their duration cannot properly be called an Eternity, it being extrinſical to them, and depending upon the will of their Creator, by whom they may be extinguiſh'd: It is not an abſolute and neceſſary, but a precarious Immortality. Whatſoever is not God, is Temporary: Whatſoever is Eternal, is God.

'Tis a contradiction to ſay a Creature can be Eternal: As nothing Eternal is created, ſo nothing created is Eternal. What is diſtinct from the nature of God cannot be Eternal, Eternity being the Eſſence of God. Every Creature in the notion of a Creature, ſpeaks a dependence on ſome Cauſe, and therefore cannot be Eternal. * As it is repugnant to the nature of God not to be Eternal; ſo it is repugnant to the nature of a Creature to be Eternal; for then a Creature would be equal to the Creator, and the Creator or the Cauſe, would not be before the Creature or Effect.

It would be all one to admit many Gods, as many Eternals; and all one to ſay God can be created, as to ſay a Creature can be uncreated, which is to be Eternal.

1. *Creation is a producing ſomething from nothing.* What was once nothing, cannot therefore be Eternal; not Being was Eternal; therefore its Being could not be Eternal, for it ſhould be then before it was, and would be ſomething when it was nothing. 'Tis the nature of a Creature to be nothing before it was created; what was nothing before it was, cannot be equal with God in an Eternity of Duration.

2. *There is no Creature but is mutable*, therefore not eternal. As it had a change from nothing to ſomething, ſo it may be changed from being to not being. If the Creature were not mutable it would be moſt perfect, and ſo would not be a Creature, but God; for God only is moſt perfect: 'Tis as much the Eſſence of a Creature to be mutable, as it is the Eſſence of God to be immutable: Mutability and Eternity are utterly inconſiſtent.

3. *No Creature is infinite*, therefore not eternal. To be infinite in Duration is all one, as to be infinite in Eſſence *: 'Tis as reaſonable to conceive a Creature immenſe, filling all places at once, as eternal, extended to all Ages; becauſe neither can be without Infiniteneſs, which is the Property of the Deity. A Creature may as well be without bounds of Place, as limitations of Time.

4. *No effect of an intellectual free Agent, can be equal in duration to its Cauſe.* The Production of natural Agents are as ancient often as themſelves; the Sun produceth a beam as old in Time as it ſelf; but who ever heard of a piece of wiſe Workmanſhip as old as the wiſe Artificer? God produced a Creature, not neceſſarily and naturally, as the Sun doth a Beam, but freely, as an intelligent Agent. The Sun was not neceſſary; it might be, or not be, according to the pleaſure of God. * A free act of the Will is neceſſary to precede in order of Time, as the Cauſe of ſuch effects as are purely voluntary. Thoſe Cauſes that act as ſoon as they exiſt, act naturally, neceſſarily, not freely, and cannot ceaſe from acting.

But ſuppoſe a Creature might have exiſted by the Will of God from Eternity; yet, as ſome think, it could not be ſaid abſolutely, and in its own nature, to be eternal; becauſe Eternity was not of the Eſſence of it. The Creature could not be its own duration; for tho' it were from Eternity, it might not have been from Eternity; becauſe its Exiſtence depended upon the free Will of God, who might have choſe, whether he would have created it or no.

God only is Eternal, the *firſt* and the *laſt*, the *beginning* and the *end*; who, as he ſubſiſted before any Creature had a Being, ſo he will eternally ſubſiſt if all Creatures were reduced to nothing.

IV. *Uſe.*

1. *Information.*

1. If God be of an eternal duration, then *Chriſt is God*: Eternity is the Property of God, but it is aſcribed to Chriſt; *He is before all things* *; i.e. all created things: He is therefore no Creature; and if no Creature, eternal. *All things were created by him*, both in Heaven and in Earth, Angels as well as Men *, whether they be Thrones or Dominions. If all things were his Creatures, then he is no Creature; if he were, all things were not created by him, or he muſt create himſelf.

He hath no difference of Time; *for he is the ſame yeſterday, to day, and for ever* *; The ſame, with the Name of God, *I AM*, which ſignifies his Eternity: He is no more to day than he was yeſterday, nor will be any other to morrow than he is to day; And therefore *Melchiſedeck*, whoſe Deſcent, Birth and Death, Father and Mother, Beginning and End of days, are not upon Record, was a Type of the Exiſtence of Chriſt without difference of Time. * *Having neither Beginning of Days nor End of Life, but made like the Son of God.* The ſuppreſſion of his Birth and Death, was intended by the Holy Ghoſt, as a Type of the excellency of Chriſt's Perſon, in regard of his Eternity, and the duration of his Charge in regard of his Prieſthood. As there was an appearance of an Eternity in the ſuppreſſion of the Race of *Melchiſedeck*, ſo there is a true Eternity in the Son of God. How could the Eternity of the Son of God be expreſt by any reſemblance ſo well, as by ſuch a ſuppreſſion of the *Beginning* and *End* of this great Perſon, different from the Cuſtom of the Spirit of God in the Old Teſtament, who often Records the Generations and Ends of holy Men; and why might not this, which was a kind of a ſhadow of Eternity, be a repreſentation of the true Eternity of Chriſt, as well as the reſtoration of *Iſaac* to his Father without death, is ſaid to be a figure of the Reſurrection of Chriſt after a real death? *Melchiſedeck* is only mentioned once (without any Record of his extraction) in his appearance to *Abraham* after his victory, as if he came from Heaven only for that action, and inſtantly diſappeared again, as if he had been an eternal Perſon.

And Chriſt himſelf hints his one Eternity, * *I came forth from the Father, and am come into the World, again I leave the World and go to the Father.* He goes to the Father as he came from the Father; He goes to the Father *for everlaſting*, ſo he came from the Father *from everlaſting*; there is the ſame duration in coming forth from the Father, as in returning to the Father. But more plainly; * He ſpeaks of

* *Bapt.*

* Heb. 1. v. 10, 11, 12

* 1 Tim. 6. v. 16.

* *Leſſius de Perfect. l. 4. c. 2.*

* *Leſſius de Perfect. l. 4. c. 2.*

* *Crellius de Deo c. 18. p. 43.*

* Col. 1. 17.

* Col. 1. 16.

* Heb. 13. 8. Rev. 1. 8. *He which is, and which was, and which is to come.*

* Heb. 7. 3.

* *Meſtræat. in loc.*

* John 16. v. 28.

* John 17. 5.

of a Glory that he *had with the Father before the World was*, when there was no Creature in Being; this is an actual glory, and not only in Decree: For a decreed glory Believers had, and why may not every one of them ſay the ſame words, *Father glorifie me with that glory which I had with thee before the World was*, if it were only a glory in decree? Nay, it may be ſaid of every Man, he was before the World was, becauſe he was ſo in decree. Chriſt ſpeaks of ſomething peculiar to him, a glory in actual poſſeſſion before the World was; glorifie me, embrace, honour me as thy Son, whereas I have now been in the eyes of the World handled diſgracefully as a Servant: If it were only in decree, why is not the like expreſſion uſed of others in Scripture as well as of Chriſt? Why did he not uſe the ſame words for his Diſciples that were then with him, who had a glory in decree? His Eternity is alſo mentioned in the Old Teſtament: * *The Lord poſſeſſed me in the beginning of his way before his Works of old.* If he were the work of God, he exiſted before himſelf, if he exiſted before all the VVorks of God; 'tis not ſo properly meant of the eſſential VViſdom of God, ſince the diſcourſe runs in the name of a *Perſon*; and ſeveral paſſages there are which belong not ſo much to the eſſential VViſdom of God, as *v.* 13. *The evil way and the froward mouth do I hate*; which belongs rather to the holineſs of God, than to the eſſential VViſdom of God, beſides it is diſtinguiſh'd from *Jehovah*, as poſſeſſed by him, *and rejoycing before him.* Yet plainer, * *Out of thee*, i.e. Bethlehem, *ſhall he come forth to be Ruler in* Iſrael, *whoſe goings forth have been from of old, from everlaſting* מימי עולם from the Ways of Eternity. There are two goings forth of Chriſt deſcribed, one from *Bethlehem* in the days of his Incarnation, and another from *Eternity.* The Holy Ghoſt adds after his prediction of his Incarnation, his going out from everlaſting, that none ſhould doubt of his Deity: If this going out from everlaſting were only in the purpoſe of God, it might be ſaid of *David*, and of every Creature. And in *Iſa.* 9. He is particularly called the *Everlaſting*, or Eternal Father: Not the Father in the Trinity, but a Father to us; yet Eternal, the Father of Eternity. As he is the mighty God, ſo he is the everlaſting Father: Can ſuch a Title be aſcribed to any, whoſe Being depends upon the VVill of another, and may be daſht out at the pleaſure of a Superior?

* Pro. 8. 22.

* Mica. 5. 2.

As the Eternity of God is the ground of all Religion, ſo the Eternity of Chriſt is the ground of the Chriſtian Religion. Could our Sins be perfectly expiated, had he not an eternal Divinity to anſwer for the offences committed againſt an eternal God? Temporary ſufferings had been of little validity, without an infiniteneſs and eternity in his Perſon to add weight to his paſſion.

2. *If God be eternal, he knows all things as preſent.* * All things are preſent to him in his Eternity; for this is the notion of Eternity, to be without ſucceſſion. If Eternity be one indiviſible point, and is not diffuſed into preceding and ſucceeding parts, then that which is known in it or by it, is perceived without any ſucceſſion; for knowledge is as the ſubſtance of the perſon knowing; if that hath various actions and diſtinct from it ſelf, then it underſtands things in differences of time as time preſents them to view: But ſince God's Being depends not upon the revolutions of time, ſo neither doth his Knowledge; it exceeds all motions of Years and Days, comprehends infinite ſpaces of paſt and future. God conſiders all things in his Eternity in one ſimple knowledge; as if they were now acted before him: * *Known unto God are all his Works from the beginning of the World* ἀπ' αἰῶνος *à ſeculo*; from Eternity. God's knowledge is co-eternal with him: If he knows that in time which he did not know from eternity, he would not be eternally perfect, ſince knowledge is the perfection of an intelligent nature.

* Petav.

* Act. 15. 18.

3. *How bold and fooliſh is it for a mortal Creature, to cenſure the Counſels and Actions of an eternal God, or be too curious in his inquiſitions?* 'Tis by the conſideration of the unſearchable number of the years of God that *Elihu* checks too bold enquiries: *Who hath enjoyned him his way, or who can ſay, thou haſt wrought iniquity? Behold, God is great, and we know him not, neither can the number of his years be ſearched out.* Eternity ſets God above our Enquiries and Cenſures. Infants of a day old are not able to underſtand the acts of wiſe and gray Heads: Shall we, that are of ſo ſhort a Being and Underſtanding as yeſterday, preſume to meaſure the motions of Eternity by our ſcanty Intellects? We that cannot foreſee an unexpected accident which falls in to blaſt a well laid deſign, and run a Ship many Leagues back from the intended Harbour; We cannot underſtand the reaſon of things we ſee done in time, the motions of the Sea, the generation of Rain, the nature of Light, the Sympathies and Antipathies of the Creatures; and ſhall we dare to cenſure the actions of an eternal God, ſo infinitely beyond our reach? The Counſels of a boundleſs Being are not to be ſcann'd by the Brain of a ſilly Worm, that hath breathed but a few minutes in the World: Since Eternity cannot be comprehended in time, 'tis not to be judged by a Creature of time; *Let us remember to magnifie his Works which we behold*, becauſe he is eternal, which is the exhortation of *Elihu*, backt by this Doctrine of *God's eternity* *; and not accuſe any work of him who is the Ancient of Days, or preſume to direct him, of whoſe Eternity we come infinitely ſhort. When ever therefore any unworthy notion of the Counſels and Works of God is ſuggeſted to us by *Satan*, or our own corrupt hearts; let us look backward to God's eternal and our own ſhort duration, and ſilence our ſelves with the ſame queſtion wherewith God put a ſtop to the reaſoning of *Job*; * *Where waſt thou, when I laid the foundations of the Earth?* and reprove our ſelves for our curioſity; ſince we are of ſo ſhort a ſtanding, and were nothing when the eternal God laid the firſt Stone of the World.

* Job 36. 26. compared with the 23.

* Job 36. 24.

* Job 38. 4.

4. *What a folly and boldneſs is there in ſin, ſince an eternal God is offended thereby?* All ſin is aggravated by God's Eternity: The blackneſs of the Heathen Idolatry was in changing the glory of the *incorruptible God* *, erecting reſemblances of him contrary to his Immortal nature; as if the eternal God, whoſe Life is as unlimited as Eternity, were like thoſe Creatures whoſe Beings are meaſured by the ſhort Ell of Time, which are of a corruptible nature, and daily paſſing on to Corruption: They could not really deprive God of his Glory and Immortality, but they did in Eſtimation. There is in the nature of every ſin a tendency to reduce God to a not Being. He that thinks unworthily of God, or acts unworthily towards him, doth (as much as in him lies) ſully and deſtroy theſe two perfections of his, Immutability and Eternity: 'Tis a carriage, as if he were as contemptible as a Creature that were but of yeſterday, and ſhall not remain in being to morrow. He that would put an end to God's glory by darkning it, would put an end to God's life by deſtroying it. He that ſhould love a Beaſt with as great an affection as he loves a Man, contemns a rational Nature; and he that loves a periſhing thing with the ſame affection he ſhould love an everlaſting God, contemns his Eternity; He debaſeth the duration of God below that of the World: The low valuation of God ſpeaks him in his eſteem, no better than withering Graſs, or a Gourd, which laſts for

* Rom. 1. v. 23.

a Night; and the Creature which poſſeſſes his affection, to be a Good that laſts for ever. How fooliſh then is every ſin, that tends to deſtroy a Being that cannot deſtroy or deſert himſelf; a Being, without whoſe Eternity the Sinner himſelf could not have had the capacity of a Being, to affront him? How baſe is that which would not let the Works of God remain in their eſtabliſhed poſture? How much more baſe in not enduring the Fountain and Glory of all Beings, that would not only put an end to the Beauty of the World, but the Eternity of God?

5. *How dreadful is it to lie under the ſtroke of an eternal God?* His Eternity is as great a terror to him that hates him, as it is a comfort to him that loves him; becauſe he is the *living God*, *an everlaſting King*, *the Nations ſhall not be able to abide his Indignation**. Tho' God be leaſt in their Thoughts, and is made light of in the World; yet the Thoughts of God's Eternity, when he comes to judge the World, ſhall make the Slighters of him tremble: That the Judge and Puniſher lives for ever, is the greateſt grievance to a Soul in Miſery, and adds an unconceivable weight to it, above what the infiniteneſs of God's executive Power could do without that duration: His Eternity makes the Puniſhment more dreadful than his Power; His Power makes it ſharp, but his Eternity renders it perpetual; ever to endure, is the Sting at the end of every Laſh.

*Jer. 10. 10

And how ſad is it, to think that God lays his Eternity to pawn for the Puniſhment of obſtinate Sinners, and engageth it by an Oath, that he will *whet his glittering Sword*, that his *Hand ſhall take hold of Judgment*, that he will *render Vengeance to his Enemies, and a Reward to them that hate him*; a Reward proportioned to the greatneſs of their Offences, and the Glory of an Eternal God? * *I lift up my Hand to Heaven, and ſay, I live for ever*, i. e. as ſurely as I live for ever, I will whet my glittering Sword. As none can convey good with a perpetuity, ſo none can convey evil with ſuch a laſtingneſs as God. 'Tis a great loſs to loſe a Ship richly fraught in the bottom of the Sea, never to be caſt upon the Shore; But how much greater is it, to loſe eternally a Sovereign God, which we were capable of eternally enjoying, and undergo an Evil as durable as that God we ſlighted, and were in a poſſibility of avoiding? The Miſeries of Men after this Life are not eaſed, but ſharpened by the Life and Eternity of God.

* Deu. 32. 40, 41.

The Second Uſe is of *Comfort*. What foundation of Comfort can we have in any of God's Attributes, were it not for his Infiniteneſs and Eternity; tho' he be *Merciful*, *Good*, *Wiſe*, *Faithful?* What ſupport could there be, if they were Perfections belonging to a corruptible God? What hopes of a Reſurrection to Happineſs can we have, or of the duration of it; if that God that promiſed it, were not Immortal to continue it, as well as powerful to effect it? His Power were not Almighty, if his Duration were not Eternal.

1. *If God be eternal, his Covenant will be ſo.* 'Tis founded upon the *Eternity* of God; the Oath whereby he confirms it, is, by his *Life*: Since there is none greater than himſelf, he ſwears by himſelf,* or by his own Life, which he engageth together with his Eternity for the full Performance; ſo that if he lives for ever, the Covenant ſhall not be diſannull'd, 'tis an *immutable Counſel* *: The Immutability of his Counſel follows the Immutability of his Nature. Immutability and Eternity, go Hand in Hand together. The promiſe of Eternal Life, is as antient as God himſelf, in regard of the purpoſe of the Promiſe, or in regard of the promiſe made to Chriſt for us: **Eternal Life which God promiſed before the World began.* As it hath an *ante-eternity*, ſo it hath a *poſt-eternity*: Therefore the Goſpel, which is the new Covenant publiſh'd, is term'd, the *everlaſting Goſpel**; which can no more be altered and periſh, than God can change and vaniſh into nothing: He can as little morally deny his Truth, as he can naturally deſert his Life. The Covenant is there repreſented in a Green Colour, to note its perpetual Verdure. The Rain-bow, the Emblem of the Covenant, *about the Throne, was like to an Emrald*, a Stone of a green Colour *; whereas the natural Rain-bow hath many Colours; this but one, to ſignifie its Eternity.

*Heb. 6. 13.

* Heb. 6. 16, 17.

* Tit. 1. 2.

* Rev. 14. 6.

* Rev. 4. 3.

2. If God be eternal, *he being our God in Covenant, is an eternal Good and Poſſeſſion. This God is our God for ever and ever*; * *He is a dwelling place in all Generations.* We ſhall traverſe the World a while, and then arrive at the bleſſings *Jacob* wiſhed for *Joſeph**; The bleſſings of the *everlaſting Hills.* If an Eſtate of a thouſand pound *per Annum*, render a Man's Life comfortable for a ſhort time, how much more may the Soul be ſwallowed up with Joy in the enjoyment of the Creator, whoſe Years never fail, who lives for ever to be enjoyed, and can keep us in life for ever to enjoy him? Death indeed will ſeize upon us by God's irreverſible Order, but the immortal Creator will make him diſgorge his Morſel, and land us in a Glorious Immortality; our Souls at the Diſſolution, and our Bodies at the Reſurrection, after which they ſhall remain for ever, and imploy the extent of that boundleſs Eternity in the fruition of the Sovereign and Eternal God: For 'tis impoſſible that the Believer, who is united to the immortal God that is from everlaſting to everlaſting, can ever periſh; for being in Conjunction with him who is an ever-flowing Fountain of Life, he cannot ſuffer him to remain in the Jaws of Death. While God is eternal, and always the ſame; 'tis not poſſible that thoſe that partake of his ſpiritual Life, ſhould not alſo partake of his Eternal. 'Tis from the conſideration of the endleſneſs of the years of God that the Church comforts her ſelf, That her *Children ſhall continue, and their Seed be eſtabliſhed for ever**. And from the Eternity of God, *Habakkuk*, ch. 1. 12. concludes the eternity of Believers, *Art not thou from everlaſting, O Lord my God, my holy One? We ſhall not dye O Lord.* After they are retir'd from this World, they ſhall live for ever with God, without any change by the multitude of thoſe imaginable Years and Ages that ſhall run for ever. 'Tis that God that hath neither beginning nor end, that is our God; who hath not only Immortality in himſelf, but Immortality to give out to others. As he hath abundance of *Spirit* to quicken them *, ſo he hath abundance of Immortality to continue them. 'Tis only in the Conſideration of this a Man can with wiſdom ſay, *Soul take thy eaſe, thou haſt Goods laid up for many Years*; to ſay it of any other Poſſeſſion, is the greateſt folly in the Judgment of our Saviour *. *Mortality ſhall be ſwallowed up of Immortality*: *Rivers of pleaſure ſhall be for evermore.* Death is a Word never ſpoken there by any, never heard by any in that Poſſeſſion of Eternity; 'tis for ever put out as one of Chriſt's conquered Enemies.

* Pſal. 48. 14

* Gen. 49 ver. 26.

* Pſal. 102. 27, 28.

* Mal. 2. 15

* Luke 12. ver. 19.

The Happineſs depends upon the preſence of God, with whom Believers ſhall be for ever preſent. Happineſs cannot periſh as long as God lives: He is the firſt and the laſt; the firſt of all Delights, nothing before him; the laſt of all Pleaſures, nothing beyond him: A Paradiſe of Delights in every Point without a flaming Sword.

3. *The enjoyment of God will be as freſh and glorious after many Ages, as it was at firſt.* God is eternal, and Eternity knows no change; there will then be the fulleſt poſſeſſion without any decay in the

Object

Object enjoy'd. There can be nothing paſt, nothing future; Time neither adds to it, nor detracts from it: That infinite fulneſs of Perfection which flouriſheth in him now, will flouriſh eternally, without any diſcolouring of it in the leaſt by thoſe innumerable Ages that ſhall run to Eternity, much leſs any diſſpoyling him of them. *He is the ſame in his endleſs Duration.* * As God is, ſo will the Eternity of him be, without Succeſſion, without Diviſion: The fulneſs of Joy will be always preſent; without paſt to be thought of with regret for being gone; without future to be expected with tormenting Deſires. When we enjoy God, we enjoy him in his Eternity without any Flux; an entire Poſſeſſion of all together, without the paſſing away of Pleaſures that may be wiſhed to return, or expectation of future Joys which might be deſired to haſten. Time is Fluid, but Eternity is Stable, and after many Ages, the Joys will be as ſavoury and ſatisfying, as if they had been but that moment firſt taſted by our hungry Appetites. When the Glory of the Lord ſhall riſe upon you, it ſhall be ſo far from ever ſetting, that after millions of Years are expired, as numerous as the Sands on the Sea-ſhore, the Sun in the light of whoſe Countenance you ſhall live, ſhall be as bright as at the firſt appearance. He will be ſo far from ceaſing to flow, that he will flow as ſtrong, as full as at the firſt Communication of himſelf in Glory to the Creature. God therefore as ſitting upon his Throne of Grace, and acting according to his Covenant, is like a *Jaſper-ſtone*, which is of a green Colour, a Colour always delightful *; Becauſe God is always vigorous, and flouriſhing; a pure act of Life, ſparkling new and freſh Rays of Life and Light to the Creature, flouriſhing with a perpetual Spring, and contenting the moſt capacious Deſire; forming your Intereſt, Pleaſure and Satisfaction, with an infinite Variety, without any Change or Succeſſion: He will have variety to encreaſe Delights, and eternity to perpetuate them: This will be the fruit of the enjoyment of an Infinite, an Eternal God: He is not a Ciſtern but a Fountain, wherein Water is always living, and never putrifies.

*Pſ. 102.27

* Rev. 4.3.

4. If God be eternal, *Here is a ſtrong ground of Comfort againſt the Diſtreſſes of the Church, and the threats of the Churches Enemies.* God's abiding for ever, is the Plea *Jeremy* makes for his return to his forſaken Church. * *Thou, O Lord, remaineſt for ever, thy Throne from Generation to Generation.* The Church is weak; created things are eaſily cut off: What prop is there, but that God that lives for ever? What tho' *Jeruſalem* loſt its Bulwarks, the Temple were defaced, the Land waſted; yet the God of *Jeruſalem* ſits upon an eternal Throne, and from everlaſting to everlaſting there is no diminution of his Power. —— The Prophet intimates in this Complaint, that it is not agreeable to God's Eternity to forget his People to whom he hath from Eternity bore good Will. In the greateſt Confuſions, the Churches Eyes are to be fixed upon the Eternity of God's Throne, where he ſits as Governour of the World: No Creature can take any comfort in this Perfection, but the Church; other Creatures depend upon God, but the Church is united to him.

*Lam. 5.20.

The firſt diſcovery of the Name *I am*, which ſignifies the Divine Eternity as well as Immutability, was for the comfort of the oppreſt Iſraelites in *Ægypt* *; It was then publiſht from the ſecret place of the Almighty, as the only ſtrong Cordial to refreſh them: It hath not yet, it ſhall not ever loſe its vertue in any of the Miſeries that have, or ſhall ſucceſſively befal the Church. 'Tis a comfort as durable as the God, whoſe Name it is: He is ſtill, *I am*, and the ſame to the Church, as he was then to his *Iſrael*. His ſpiritual *Iſrael* have a greater right to the Glories of it, than the carnal *Iſrael* could have. No oppreſſion can be greater than theirs; what was a comfort ſuited to that Diſtreſs, hath the ſame ſuitableneſs to every other Oppreſſion. It was not a temporary Name, but a Name for ever; his *Memorial to all Generations*, * and reacheth to the Church of the Gentiles, with whom he treats as the God of *Abraham*, ratifying that Covenant by the Meſſiah, which he made with *Abraham*, the Father of the Faithful.

* Exod. 3. 14,15.

* Ver. 15.

The Churches Enemies are not to be fear'd; they may ſpring as the Graſs, but ſoon after do wither by their own inward Principles of Decay, or are cut down by the hand of God. * They may be Inſtruments of the Anger of God, but *they ſhall be ſcattered as the workers of Iniquity by the hand of the Lord, that is high for evermore*, v. 8. and is engaged by his Promiſe, to preſerve a Church in the World. They may threaten, but their Breath may vaniſh, aſſoon as their Threatnings are pronounc'd: for they carry their Breath in no ſurer a place than their own Noſtrils, upon which the Eternal God can put his Hand, and ſink them with all their Rage. *Do the Prophets* (and Inſtructors of the Church) *live for ever* *? No: Shall then the Adverſaries and Diſturbers of the Church live for ever? They ſhall vaniſh as a ſhadow, their Being depends upon the Eternal God of the Faithful, and the Everlaſting Judge of the Wicked. He that inhabits Eternity, is above them that inhabit Mortality, and muſt whether they will or not, ſay to Corruption, *Thou art my Father, and to the Worm, thou art my Mother, and my Siſter* *. When they will act with a Confidence, as if they were living Gods, he will not be mated, but evidence himſelf to be a living God above them. Why then ſhould mortal Men be fear'd in their frowns, when an immortal God hath promiſed protection in his Word, and lives for ever to perform it?

* Pſ. 92. 7, 8, 9.

*Zach. 1.5.

*Job 17.14.

5. Hence follows another Comfort; ſince God is eternal, *He hath as much Power, as Will to be as good as his Word.* His Promiſes are eſtabliſhed upon his Eternity, and this Perfection is a main ground of Truſt; * *Truſt in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlaſting ſtrength:* כִּי יְהוָה צוּר עֹלָמִים His Name is doubled, that Name *Iah*, and *Jehovah*, which was always the ſtrength of his People; and not a ſingle one, but the ſtrength or rock of Eternities; not a failing but an eternal Truth and Power; that as his Strength is Eternal, ſo our Truſt in him ſhould imitate his Eternity in its perpetuity; and therefore in the deſpondency of his People, as if God had forgot his Promiſes, and made no account of Them, or his Word, and were weary of doing good, he calls them to reflect on what they had heard of his Eternity, which is attended with immutability, who hath an infiniteneſs of Power to perform his Will, and an infiniteneſs of Underſtanding to judge of the right Seaſons of it. * His Wiſdom, Will, Truth, have always been, and will to Eternity be the ſame. He wants not Life, any more than Love, for ever to help us; ſince his Word is paſt, he will never fail us; ſince his Life continues, he can never be out of a capacity to relieve us; and therefore when ever we fooliſhly charge him by our diſtruſtful Thoughts, we forget his Love, which made the Promiſe, and his eternal Life, which can accompliſh it. As his Word is the bottom of our Truſt, and his Truth is the aſſurance of his ſincerity; ſo his Eternity is the aſſurance of his ability to perform. *His word ſtands for ever* *. A Man may be my Friend this Day, and be in another World to Morrow; and though he be never ſo ſincere in his Word, yet Death ſnaps his Life aſunder, and forbids the Execution. But as God cannot die,

* Iſa. 26.4.

* Iſa. 40. 27, 28.

* Iſa. 40.8.

ſo

ſo he cannot lie; becauſe he is the Eternity of *Iſrael*.
* 1Sam.15. v.29. * *The ſtrength of* Iſrael *will not lie, nor repent,* נצח perpetuity or *eternity of Iſrael.* Eternity implies Immutability; we could have no ground for our hopes, if we knew him not to be longer liv'd than our ſelves. The *Pſalmiſt* beats off our hands from truſt in Men, *becauſe their breath goes forth, they return to their earth, and in that day their thoughts*
* Pſal.146. v.3,4. *periſh* *. And if the God of *Jacob* were like them, what happineſs could we have in making him our help? As his Soveraignty in giving precepts had not been a ſtrong ground of Obedience, without conſidering him as an eternal Law-giver, who could maintain his Rights? So his kindneſs in making the promiſes, had not been a ſtrong ground of confidence, without conſidering him as an Eternal Promiſer, whoſe
* *Crellius de Deo, cap.18. p.44,45.* thoughts, and whoſe life, can never periſh. * And this may be one reaſon, why the Holy Ghoſt mentions ſo often the *poſt-eternity* of God, and ſo little his *ante-eternity*; becauſe that is the ſtrongeſt foundation of our Faith, and Hope, which reſpects chiefly that which is future, and not that which is paſt; yet indeed no aſſurance of his after-Eternity can be had, if his ante-Eternity be not certain. If he had a beginning, he may have an end: And if he had a change in his nature, he might have in his Counſels: But ſince all the reſolves of God are as himſelf is, Eternal, and all the Promiſes of God are the fruits of his Counſel, therefore they cannot be chang'd: If he ſhould change them for the better, he would not have been eternally Wiſe, to know what was beſt; If for the worſe, he had not been eternally Good or Juſt. Men may break their promiſes, becauſe they are made without foreſight; but God that inhabits Eternity, foreknows all things, that ſhall be done under the Sun, as if they had been then acting before him; and nothing can intervene, or work a change in his reſolves, becauſe the leaſt circumſtances were eternally foreſeen by him. Tho' there may be variations, and changes to our ſight, the Winds may tack about, and every hour new and croſs accidents happen; yet the eternal God, who is eternally true to his word, ſits at the Helm, and the Winds and the Waves obey him. And tho' he ſhould defer his promiſe a *thouſand years*, yet he is *not ſlack:*
* 2 Pet.3. v.8,9. For he defers it but a day to his Eternity; * And who would not with comfort ſtay a day in expectation of a conſiderable advantage?

3 Uſe is for *Exhortation.*

1. *To ſomething which concerns us in our ſelves.*

2. *To ſomething which concerns us with reſpect to God.*

1. *To ſomething which concerns us in our ſelves.*

1. *Let us be deeply affected with our ſins long ſince committed.* Tho' they are paſt with us, they are in regard of our Gods eternity preſent with him; there is no ſucceſſion in Eternity, as there is in Time: All things are before God at once; our ſins are before him, as if committed this moment, tho' committed long ago. As he is what he is in regard of duration, ſo he knows what he knows in regard of knowledge. As he is not more than he was, nor ſhall ~~not~~ be any more than he is; ſo he always knew what he knows, and ſhall not ceaſe to know, what he now knows. As himſelf, ſo his knowledge is one indiviſible point of Eternity. He knows nothing, but what he did know from Eternity; he ſhall know no more for the future, than he now knows. Our ſins being preſent with him in his Eternity, ſhould be preſent with us in our regard of remembrance of them, and ſorrow for them. What tho' many years are laps'd, much time run out, and our iniquities almoſt blotted out of our memory? yet ſince a thouſand years are in Gods ſight, and in regard of his Eternity but as a day;
* Pſal.90.4. * *A thouſand years in thy ſight are but as yeſterday, when it is paſt, and as a watch in the night*; they are before him: For ſuppoſe a Man were as old as the World, above five thouſand ſix hundred years; the ſins committed five thouſand years ago; are according to that rule, but as if they were committed five days ago; ſo that ſixty two years, are but as an hour and a half, and the ſins committed forty years ſince, are as if they were committed but this preſent hour. But if we will go further, and conſider them but as a Watch of the Night, about three hours (for the Night conſiſting of twelve hours, was divided into ſet Watches) then a thouſand years are but as three hours in the ſight of God; and then ſins committed ſixty years ago, are but as if they were committed within this five minutes.

Let none of us ſet light by the Iniquities committed many years ago, and imagine that length of time can wipe out their guilt; No, let us conſider them in relation to God's eternity, and excite an inward remorſe, as if they had been but the birth of this moment.

2. *Let the conſideration of God's Eternity abate our pride.* This is the deſign of the Verſes following the Text, the Eternity of God being ſo ſufficient to make us underſtand our own nothingneſs, which ought to be one great end of Man, eſpecially as fall'n. The Eternity of God ſhould make us as much diſeſteem our ſelves, as the excellency of God made *Job abhor himſelf* *. His excellency ſhould humble us under a ſenſe of our vanity, and his Eternity under a ſenſe of the ſhortneſs of our duration. If Man compares himſelf with other Creatures, he may be too ſenſible of his greatneſs; but if he compares himſelf with God, he cannot but be ſenſible of his baſeneſs. *Job42.5,6

1. *In regard of our impotence, to comprehend this Eternity of God.* How little do we know? How little can we know of Gods Eternity? We cannot fully conceive it, much leſs expreſs it; we have but a brutiſh underſtanding in all thoſe things, as *Agur* ſaid of himſelf *. *Prov.30.7

* What is Infinite and Eternal cannot be comprehended by finite and temporary Creatures; If it could, it would not be infinite and eternal: For to know a thing, is to know the Extent and Cauſe of it; 'Tis repugnant to Eternity to be known, becauſe it hath no limits, no cauſes; the moſt ſoaring underſtanding cannot have a proportionable underſtanding of it. What diſproportion is there between a drop of Water, and the Sea, in their greatneſs and motion? Yet by a drop, we may arrive to a knowledge of the nature of the Sea, which is a Maſs of drops joyn'd together. But the longeſt duration of Times cannot make us know what Eternity is, becauſe there is no proportion between Time and Eternity. The *years* of God are as numberleſs as his *thoughts* *, and our minds as far from reckoning the one as the other. If our underſtandings are too groſs, to comprehend the Majeſty of his infinite works, they are much more too ſhort to comprehend the infiniteneſs of his Eternity. * *Charron-trois vent. Livr. 1. chap.5. p.17, &c.* *Pſal.40.5

2. *In regard of the vaſt diſproportion of our duration to this duration of God.*

1. *We have more of not being than being.* We were nothing from an unbegun Eternity, and we might have been nothing to an endleſs Eternity, had not God call'd us into being; and if he pleaſe, we may be nothing by as ſhort an annihilating Word, as we were ſomething by a creating Word. As it is the Prerogative of God to be, *I am that I am*; ſo it is the property of a Creature to be, *I am not what I am*; *I am not* by my ſelf *what I am*, but by the Indulgence of another. I was nothing formerly, I may be nothing again, unleſs he that is, *I am*, make me to ſubſiſt what I now am. Nothing is as much

the Title of the Creature, as Being is the Title of God. Nothing is ſo holy as God, becauſe nothing hath Being as God. * *There is none holy as the Lord, for there is none beſides thee.* Mans life is an Image, a Dream, which are next to nothing; and if compar'd with God, worſe than nothing; a nullity as well as a vanity: Becauſe *with God only is the fountain of Life* *. The Creature is but a drop of Life from him, dependent on him. A drop of Water is a nothing, if compar'd with the vaſt conflux of Waters, and numberleſs drops in the Ocean.

*1Sam.2.2.

*Pſal.36.9.

How unworthy is it for duſt and aſhes kneaded together in time, to ſtrut againſt the *Father of Eternity?* Much more unworthy for that which is nothing, worſe than nothing, to quarrel with that which is only Being, and equal himſelf with him that inhabits Eternity.

2. *What Being we have, had a beginning.* After an unaccountable Eternity was run out, in the very dregs of Time, a few years ago we were created, and made of the baſeſt and vileſt droſs of the World, the ſlime and duſt of the Earth; made of that, wherewith Birds build their Neſts; made of that, which creeping things make their Habitation, and Beaſts trample upon: How monſtrous is Pride in ſuch a Creature, to aſpire, as if he were the Father of Eternity, and as Eternal as God, and ſo his own Eternity?

3. *What Being we have, is but of a ſhort duration in regard of our Life in this World.* Our life is in a conſtant change, and flux, we remain not the ſame an intire day: Youth quickly ſucceeds Child-hood, and Age as ſpeedily treads upon the heels of Youth; there is a continual defluxion of minutes, as there is of ſands in a glaſs. He is as a Watch wound up at the beginning of his Life, and from that time is running down, till he comes to the bottom; ſome part of our Lives is cut off every day, every minute. Life is but a moment, what is paſt cannot be recalled; what is future cannot be inſured: If we enjoy this moment, we have loſt that which is paſt, and ſhall preſently loſe this by the next that is to come.

The ſhort duration of Men is ſet out in Scripture by ſuch Creatures, as ſoon diſappear. A *Worm* *, that can ſcarce out-live a Winter. Graſs, that withers by the Summer Sun. Life is a *Flower* ſoon withering *; a *Vapour* ſoon vaniſhing *, a *Smoke* ſoon diſappearing *. The ſtrongeſt Man is but compacted duſt, the Fabrick muſt moulder, the higheſt Mountain falls and comes to nought. Time gives place to Eternity; we live now, and die to morrow. Not a Man ſince the World began, ever lived a day in Gods ſight: For no Man ever lived a *thouſand years.* The longeſt day of any Mans life, never amounted to twenty four hours in the account of divine Eternity: A life of ſo many hundred years, with the addition *he died*, makes up the greateſt part of the Hiſtory of the *Patriarchs* *. And ſince the life of Man hath been curtail'd, if any be in the World eighty years, he ſcarce properly lives ſixty of them, ſince the fourth part of Time is at leaſt conſumed in ſleep.

*Job 25.6

*Job 14.2.

*James 4. v. 14.

*Pſ. 102.3.

*Gen. 5.

A greater difference there is between the duration of God, and that of a Creature, than between the life of one for a minute, and the life of one that ſhould live as many years as the whole Globe of Heaven and Earth, if changed into *Papers*, could contain Figures. And this life, tho' but of a ſhort duration, according to the period God hath determined, is eaſily cut off; the Treaſure of Life is depoſited in a brittle Veſſel: A ſmall ſtone hitting againſt *Nebuchadnezars* Statue, will tumble it down into a poor and naſty Grave: A Grape-ſtone, the bone of a Fiſh, a ſmall Fly in the Throat, a moiſt damp, are enough to deſtroy an earthly Eternity, and reduce it to nothing.

What a Nothing then is our ſhortneſs, if compared with Gods Eternity? Our frailty, with Gods duration? How humble then ſhould periſhing Creatures be before an Eternal God, with whom *our days are as a hands breath, and our age as nothing* *? The Angels that have been of as long a duration as Heaven and Earth, tremble before him, the Heavens melt at his preſence; and ſhall we that are but of yeſterday, approach a Divine Eternity with unhumbled Souls, and offer the Calves of our Lips with the pride of Devils, and ſtand upon our terms with him, without falling upon our faces, with a ſenſe that we are but duſt and aſhes, and Creatures of Time? How eaſie is it to reaſon out Mans humility, but how hard is it to reaſon Man into it?

*Pſ.39.5.

3. *Let the conſideration of Gods Eternity take off our love and confidence from the World, and the things thereof.* The Eternity of God reproaches a purſuit of the World, as preferring a momentary pleaſure before an everlaſting God; as tho' a temporal World could be a better ſupply, than a God whoſe years never fail. Alas! what is this Earth, Men are ſo greedy of, and will get, tho' by blood and ſweat? What is this whole Earth, if we had the entire poſſeſſion of it, if compared with the vaſt Heavens, the Seat of Angels and bleſſed Spirits? 'Tis but as an Atom to the greateſt Mountain, or as a drop of dew to the immenſe Ocean. How fooliſh is it, to prefer a drop before the Sea, or an Atom before the World? The Earth is but a point to the Sun; the Sun with its whole Orb, but a little part of the Heavens, if compared with the whole Fabrick. If a Man had the poſſeſſion of all thoſe, there could be no compariſon between thoſe that have had a beginning, and ſhall have an end, and God who is without either of them. Yet, how many are there, that make nothing of the divine Eternity, and imagine an Eternity of nothing?

1. *The World hath been but of a ſhort ſtanding.* 'Tis not yet *ſix thouſand years* ſince the foundations of it were laid; and therefore it cannot have a boundleſs excellency, as that God, who hath been from everlaſting, doth poſſeſs. If *Adam* had liv'd to this day, and been as abſolute Lord of his Poſterity, as he was of the other Creatures, had it been a competent object to take up his heart; had he not been a Mad-man, to have preferred this little created pleaſure before an everlaſting uncreated God? A thing that had a dependent Beginning, before that which had an independent Eternity?

2. *The Beauties of the World are tranſitory and periſhing.* The whole World is nothing elſe but a fluid thing, the faſhion of it is a Pageantry, *paſſing away* *; tho' the glories of it might be conceived greater than they are, yet they are not conſiſtent, but tranſient; There cannot be an entire enjoyment of them, becauſe they grow up, and expire every moment, and ſlip away between our fingers, while we are uſing them. Have we not heard of Gods diſperſing the greateſt Empires like *Chaff before a Whirlwind*, or as Smoke out of a Chimney *, which tho' it appears as a compacted Cloud, as if it would choak the Sun, is quickly ſcattered into ſeveral parts of the Air, and becomes inviſible? Nettles have often been heirs to ſtately Palaces, as God threatens *Iſrael* *. We cannot promiſe our ſelves over night any thing the next day. A *Kingdom*, with the *glory* of a Throne, may be cut off in a *morning* *. The new Wine may be taken from the mouth, when the *Vintage* is ripe; the devouring *locuſt* may ſnatch away both the hopes of that, and the Harveſt *: They are therefore things which are not, and nothing cannot be a fit object for confidence or affection.

*1Cor.7.31

*Hoſ.13.3.

*Hoſ.9.6.

*Hoſ.10.15

*Joel 1.15.

*Prov.23.5 ction. * *Wilt thou ſet thy eyes upon that which is not? For riches certainly make themſelves wings.* They are not properly Beings, becauſe they are not ſtable, but flitting; They are not; becauſe they may not be the next moment to us what they are this; they are but Ciſterns, not Springs, and broken Ciſterns, not ſound and ſtable; no ſolidity in their ſubſtance, nor ſtability in their duration. What a fooliſh thing is it then, to prefer a tranſient felicity, a meer nullity before an eternal God? What a ſenſeleſs thing would it be in a Man, to prefer the Map of a Kingdom, which the hand of a Child can tear in pieces, before the Kingdom ſhadowed by it? How much more inexcuſable is it to value things, that are ſo far from being Eternal, that they are not ſo much as dusky reſemblances of an Eternity? Were the things of the World more glorious than they are, yet they are but as a counterfeit Sun in a Cloud, which comes ſhort of the true Sun in the Heavens both in glory and duration; and to eſteem them before God, is unconceivably baſer, than if a Man ſhould value a parti-colour'd bubble in the Air, before a durable Rock of Diamonds. The comforts of this World are as Candles that will end in a Snuff; whereas the felicity that flows from an eternal God, is like the Sun, that ſhines more and more to a perfect day.

3. *They cannot therefore be fit for a Soul, which was made to have an intereſt in Gods Eternity.* The Soul being of a perpetual nature, was made for the fruition of an eternal good; without ſuch a good it can never be perfect. *Perfection*, that noble thing, riſeth not from any thing in this World, nor is it a Title due to a Soul while in this World; 'tis then they are ſaid to be *made perfect*, when they arrive at that entire conjunction with the eternal God in *Heb.12.23 another life. * The Soul cannot be enobled by an acquaintance with theſe things, or eſtabliſh'd by a dependence on them, they cannot confer, what a rational nature ſhould deſire, or ſupply it with what it wants.

The Soul hath a reſemblance to God in a *poſt-Eternity*: Why ſhould it be drawn aſide by the blandiſhments of earthly things, to neglect its true eſtabliſhment, and lacquey after the Body, which is but the ſhadow of the Soul, and was made to follow it and ſerve it? But while it buſieth it ſelf altogether in the concerns of a periſhing Body, and ſeeks ſatisfaction in things that glide away, it becomes rather a Body than Soul, deſcends below its nature, reproacheth that God, who hath imprinted upon it an Image of his own Eternity, and loſeth the comfort of the everlaſtingneſs of its Creator. How ſhall the whole World, if our lives were as durable as that, be an happy Eternity to us, who have Souls, that ſhall ſurvive all the delights of it, which muſt fry in thoſe flames, that ſhall fire the whole frame of Nature at the general conflagration of the *2Pet.3.10 World *?

4. *Therefore let us provide for an happy intereſt in the Eternity of God.* Man is made for an eternal ſtate. The Soul hath ſuch a perfection in its nature, that it is fit for Eternity, and cannot diſplay all its operations but in Eternity: To an Eternity it muſt go, and live as long as God himſelf lives. Things of a ſhort duration, are not proportion'd to a Soul made for an eternal continuance; to ſee that it be a comfortable Eternity, is worth all our care. Man is a forecaſting Creature, conſiders not only the preſent, but the future too, in his proviſions for his family; and ſhall he diſgrace his nature, in caſting off all conſideration of a future eternity? Get poſſeſſion therefore of the eternal God: *A portion in this life* is the lot of thoſe, who ſhall be for ever * Pſ.17.14. miſerable. * But God, an *everlaſting portion*, is the lot of them that are deſign'd for happineſs. * *God is my portion for ever.* * Pſ.73.26.

Time is ſhort. * The whole time for which God deſign'd this building of the World is of a little compaſs; 'tis a Stage erected for rational Creatures to act their Parts upon for a few thouſand years; the greateſt part of which time is run out; and then ſhall Time, like a Rivulet, fall into the Sea of Eternity, from whence it ſprung. As Time is but a ſlip of Eternity, ſo it will end in Eternity; our advantages conſiſt in the preſent inſtant; what is paſt, never promiſed a return, and cannot be fetch'd back by all our Vows: What is future, we cannot promiſe our ſelves to enjoy; we may be ſnatch'd away before it comes. Every minute that paſſeth, ſpeaks the fewer remaining till the time of death. And as we are every hour further from our *beginning*, we are nearer our *end*. The Child born this day grows up, to grow nothing at laſt. In all Ages, there is *but a ſtep between us and Death*, as *David* ſaid of himſelf. * The little time that remains for the Devil till the day of Judgment, envenoms his wrath; he rageth, becauſe *his time is ſhort*. * The little time that remains between this moment and our death, ſhould quicken our diligence to inherit the endleſs and unchangeable Eternity of God. * 1Cor.7.29. * 1Sam.20. v.3. * Rev.12.12

5. *Often meditate on the Eternity of God.* The Holineſs, Power and Eternity of God, are the fundamental Articles of all Religion, upon which the whole body of it leans; His Holineſs for conformity to him, his Power and Eternity for the ſupport of Faith and Hope. The ſtrong and inceſſant cries of the four Beaſts, repreſenting that Chriſtian Church, are, *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come* *. Tho' his Power is intimated, yet the chiefeſt are his Holineſs, *three times* expreſt; and his Eternity which is repeated, *v. 9. who lives for ever and ever.* This ought to be the conſtant practice in the Church of the Gentiles, which this Book chiefly reſpects: The meditation of his converting Grace manifeſted to *Paul*, raviſht the Apoſtles heart, but not without the triumphant conſideration of his Immortality and Eternity, which are the principal parts of the Doxology. * *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, inviſible, only wiſe God, be honour and glory for ever and ever.* It could be no great tranſport to the Spirit, to conſider him glorious without conſidering him Immortal: The unconfinedneſs of his perfections, in regard of Time, preſents the Soul with matter of the greateſt complacency. The happineſs of our Souls depends upon his other Attributes, but the perpetuity of it upon his Eternity. Is it a comfort to view his immenſe Wiſdom, his overflowing Goodneſs, his tender Mercy, his unerring Truth? What comfort were there in any of thoſe, if it were a Wiſdom that could be baffled, a Goodneſs that could be dampt, a Mercy that can expire, and a Truth that can periſh with the Subject of it? Without Eternity, what were all his other Perfections, but as glorious, yet withering Flowers; a great, but a decaying Beauty? By a frequent meditation of Gods Eternity, we ſhould become more ſenſible of our own vanity, and the Worlds trifflingneſs: How nothing ſhould our ſelves; How nothing would all other things appear in our eyes? How coldly ſhould we deſire them? How feebly ſhould we place any truſt in them? Should we not think our ſelves worthy of contempt to dote upon a periſhing glory, to expect ſupport from an Arm of Fleſh, when there is an eternal Beauty to raviſh us, an eternal Arm to protect us? *Aſaph*, when he conſidered God *a Portion for ever*, thought nothing of the Glories of the Earth, or the Beauties of the created Heavens, worth his appetite or complacency, but *God*. * Beſides, an elevated frame of heart, * 1Tim.1. v.15,16,17. * Pſal.73. v.25,26.

heart, at the conſideration of God's Eternity, would batter down the ſtrong Holds and Engines of any temptation: A ſlight temptation will not know where to find and catch hold of a Soul high and hid in a meditation of it; and if it doth, there will not be wanting from hence preſervatives to reſiſt and conquer it. What tranſitory pleaſures will not the thoughts of God's Eternity ſtifle? When this work buſieth a Soul, 'tis too great to ſuffer it to deſcend, to liſten to a ſleeveleſs Errand from Hell or the World. The wanton allurements of the Fleſh will be put off with indignation. The proffers of the World will be ridiculous when they are caſt into the Ballance with the Eternity of God, which ſticking in our thoughts, we ſhall not be ſo eaſie a Prey for the Fowlers Gin.

Let us therefore often meditate upon this, but not in a bare ſpeculation without engaging our affections, and making every notion of the *Divine Eternity* end in a ſuitable impreſſion upon our hearts: This would be much like the Diſciples *gazing upon the Heavens* at the *aſcenſion* of their Maſter, while they forgat the practice of his Orders: * We may elſe find ſomething of the nature of God, and loſe our ſelves, not only in Eternity, but to Eternity.

*Acts 1.11.

2. And hence the ſecond part of the Exhortation is *to ſomething which concerns us with a reſpect to God.*

1. If God be eternal, *How worthy is he of our choiceſt affections, and ſtrongeſt deſires of communion with him?* Is not every thing to be valued according to the greatneſs of its Being? How then ſhould we love him, who is not only lovely in his nature, but eternally lovely, having from everlaſting all thoſe perfections centred in himſelf, which appear in time? If every thing be lovely, by how much the more it partakes of the nature of God who is the chief Good, how much more infinitely lovely is God, who is ſuperior to all other Goods, and eternally ſo? Not a God of a few minutes, months, years, or millions of years; not of the dregs of Time, or the top of Time, but of Eternity; above Time, unconceivably immenſe beyond Time: The loving him infinitely, perpetually, is an act of homage due to him for his eternal excellency: We may give him the one, ſince our Souls are immortal, tho' we cannot the other, becauſe they are finite: Since he encloſeth in himſelf all the excellencies of Heaven and Earth for ever, he ſhould have an affection, not only of Time in this World, but of Eternity in the future; and if we did not owe him a love for what we are by him, we owe him a love for what he is in himſelf; and more for what he is, than for what he is to us. He is more worthy of our affections, becauſe he is the *eternal God*, than becauſe he is our Creator; becauſe he is more excellent in his Nature than in his Tranſient actions: The beams of his goodneſs to us, are to direct our thoughts and affections to him; but his own eternal excellency, ought to be the ground and foundation of our affections to him. And truly, ſince nothing but God is eternal, nothing but God is worth the loving; and we do but a juſt right to our love, to pitch it upon that which can always poſſeſs us, and be poſſeſſed by us; upon an Object that cannot deceive our affection, and put it out of countenance by a diſſolution.

And if our happineſs conſiſts in being like to God, we ſhould imitate him in loving him as he loves himſelf, and as long as he loves himſelf: God cannot do more to himſelf than love himſelf; he can make no addition to his Eſſence, nor diminution from it. What ſhould we do leſs to an eternal Being, than to beſtow affections upon him, like his own to himſelf; ſince we can find nothing ſo durable as himſelf, for which we ſhould love it?

2. *He only is worthy of our beſt Service.* The *Antient of days* is to be ſerved before all that are younger than himſelf; Our beſt obedience is due to him as a God of unconfined excellency: Every thing that is excellent deſerves a veneration ſuitable to its excellency. As God is infinite, he hath right to a boundleſs ſervice; as he is eternal, he hath right to a perpetual ſervice: As Service is a debt of Juſtice upon the account of the excellency of his Nature, ſo a perpetual Service is as much a debt of Juſtice upon the account of his Eternity. If God be infinite and eternal, he merits an Honour and Comportment from his Creatures, ſuited to the unlimited perfection of his Nature, and the duration of his Being. How worthy is the *Pſalmiſts* reſolution? *I will ſing unto the Lord as long as I live, I will ſing praiſes to my God while I have any Being* *: 'Tis the uſe he makes of the *endleſs duration* of the Glory of God, and will extend to all other Service as well as Praiſe. To ſerve other things, or to ſerve our ſelves, is too vaſt a Service upon that which is nothing. In devoting our ſelves to God, we ſerve him that is, that was, ſo as that he never began; Is to come, ſo as that he never ſhall end; By whom all things are what they are; who hath both eternal knowledge to remember our Service, and eternal goodneſs to reward it.

* Pſal. 104. v. 33.

A DISCOURSE UPON THE Immutability of GOD.

Psalm CII. 26, 27.

They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old, as a Garment; as a Vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: But thou art the same, and thy Years shall have no end.

THIS Psalm contains a Complaint of a People press'd with great Calamity; some think of the Jewish Church in *Babylon*, others think the Psalmist doth here personate Mankind lying under a state of Corruption, because he wishes for the coming of the Messiah, to accomplish that Redemption promised by God, and needed by them. Indeed the Title of the Psalm is, *A Prayer of the Afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and pours out his Complaint before the Lord.* Whether afflicted with the sense of Corruption, or with the sense of Oppression. And the Redemption by the Messiah, which the antient Church looked upon as the fountain of their Deliverance from a sinful or a servile Bondage, is in this Psalm spoken of: A set time appointed for the discovery of his Mercy to *Zion*, *ver.* 13. An appearance in Glory to build up *Zion*, *ver.* 16. The loosning of the Prisoner by Redemption, and them that are appointed to Death, *ver.* 20. The calling of the Gentiles, *ver.* 22. And the latter part of the Psalm, wherein are the *Verses* I have read, are applied to Christ, *Heb.* 1. Whatsoever the design of the Psalm might be, many things are intermingled that concern the Kingdom of the Messiah, and Redemption by Christ.

Some make three parts of the Psalm,

1. *A Petition* plainly delivered, *verse* 1, 2. *Hear my Prayer, O Lord, and let my Cry come unto thee*, &c.

2. *The Petition strongly and argumentatively enforced and pleaded*, v. 3. from the Misery of the Petitioner in himself, and his Reproach from his Enemies.

3. *An acting of Faith in the expectation of an Answer in the general Redemption promised*, verse 12, 13. *But thou, O Lord, shalt endure for ever; thou shalt arise and have mercy upon* Zion; *The Heathen shall fear thy Name.*

The first part is the Petition *pleaded*; the second part is the Petition *answered* in an assurance, that there should in time be a full deliverance. * The design of the *Penman* is, to confirm the Church in the truth of the Divine Promises; that tho' the foundations of the World should be ript up, and the Heavens clatter together, and the whole Fabrick of them be unpinn'd and fall to pieces, the firmest parts of it dissolved; yet the Church should continue in its stability, because it stands not upon the changeableness of Creatures, but is built upon the immutable Rock of the Truth of God, which is as little subject to change as his Essence.

* *Pareus.*

They shall perish, thou shalt change them. As he had before ascribed to God the *foundation of Heaven and Earth*, ver. 25. so he ascribes to God here the *destruction* of them: Both the beginning and end of the World are here ascertained. There is nothing indeed from the present appearance of things that can demonstrate the Cessation of the World; The Heaven and Earth stand firm; the motions of the heavenly Bodies are the same, their Beauty is not decayed: Individuals corrupt, but the Species and Kinds remain: The Successions of the Year observe their due order; but the Sin of Man renders the change of the present appearance of the World necessary, to accomplish the design of God for the glory of his Elect. The Heavens do not naturally perish, as some fancied an old Age of the World, wherein it must necessarily decay as the Bodies of Animals do; or that the parts of the Heavens are broken off by their rubbing one against another in their Motion, and falling to the Earth, are the Seeds of those things that grow up among us *. * Plin. Hist. lib. 2. ca. 3.

The Earth and Heavens. He names here the most stable parts of the World, and the most beautiful parts of the Creation; those that are freest from Corruptibility and Change, to illustrate thereby the Immutability of God; that tho' the Heavens and Earth have a Prerogative of fixedness above other parts of the World, and the Creatures that reside below; the Heavens remain the same as they were created, and the Center of the Earth retains its fixedness, and are as beautiful and fresh in their Age as they were in their Youth many Years ago, notwithstanding the change of the Elements; Fire and Water being often turned into Air, so that there may remain but little of that Air which was first created by reason of the continual Transmutation; yet this firmness of the Earth and Heavens, is not to be regarded in comparison of the unmoveableness and fixedness of the Being of God: As their Beauty comes short of the Glory of his Being, so doth their firmness come short of his *stability*.

Some by Heavens and Earth, understand the Creatures which reside in the Earth, and those which are in the Air, which is called *Heaven* often in Scripture; but the ruin and fall of these being seen every Day, had been no fit Illustration of the unchangeableness of God.

They shall perish, they shall be changed.

1. They *may* perish, say some; they have it not from themselves that they do ~~no~~ not perish, but from thee, who didst endue them with an incorruptible Nature; They shall perish if thou speakest the word; Thou canst with as much ease destroy them as thou didst create them: But the Psalmist speaks not of their possibility, but the certainty of their perishing.

2. They *shall* perish in their Qualities and Motion, not in their Substance, say others: They shall cease

ceaſe from that motion which is deſigned properly for the generation and corruption of things in the Earth; but in regard of their ſubſtance and beauty they ſhall remain: As when the Strings or Wheels of a Clock or Watch are taken off, the material parts remain; tho' the motion of it, and the uſe for diſcovering the time of the day, ceaſeth. * To periſh, doth not ſignifie always a falling into nothing, an annihilation, by which both the matter and the form are deſtroyed, but a ceaſing of the preſent appearance of them; a ceaſing to be what they now are, as a Man is ſaid to periſh when he dies, whereas the better part of Man doth not ceaſe to be: The figure of the Body moulders away, and the matter of it returns to Duſt; but the Soul being Immortal ceaſeth not to act, when the Body by reaſon of the abſence of the Soul is uncapable of acting. So the Heavens ſhall periſh; the appearance they now have ſhall vaniſh, and a more glorious and incorruptible frame be erected by the power and goodneſs of God. The diſſolution of Heaven and Earth is meant by the word [*periſh*]; the raiſing a new frame is ſignified by the word [*changed*]; as if the Spirit of God would prevent any wrong meaning of the word [*periſh*] by alleviating the ſenſe of that, by another which ſignifies only a mutation and change; as when we change a Habit and Garment, we quit the old to receive the new.

* *Coccei in loc.*

[*As a Garment, as a Veſture.*] Thou ſhalt change them *, ἑλίξεις Thou ſhalt *fold them up*. The Heavens are compared to a Curtain *, and ſhall in due time be folded up as Cloaths and Curtains are. As a *Garment* encompaſſeth the whole body, ſo do the Heavens encircle the Earth. * Some ſay as a Garment is folded up to be laid aſide, that when there is need it may be taken again for uſe; ſo ſhalt thou fold up the Heavens like a Garment, that when they are repaired, thou mayſt again ſtretch them out about the Earth; thou ſhalt fold them up, ſo that what did appear ſhall not now appear. It may be illuſtrated by the *metaphor* of a Scrole or Book, which the Spirit of God uſeth, *Iſa.*34.4. *Rev.* 6. 14. *The Heavens departed as a Scrole when it is rouled together.* When a Book is rouled up or ſhut, nothing can be read in it till it be opened again; ſo the Face of the Heavens, wherein the Stars are as Letters declaring the Glory of God, ſhall be ſhut or rouled together, ſo that nothing ſhall appear till by its renovation it be opened again: As a Garment it ſhall be changed, not to be uſed in the ſame faſhion, and for the ſame uſe again. It ſeems indeed to be for the worſe; an old garment is not changed but into rags, to be put to other uſes, and afterwards thrown upon the Dunghill: But Similitudes are not to be preſſed too far; and this will not agree with the new Heavens and new Earth, *phyſically* ſo, as well as *metaphorically* ſo. 'Tis not likely the Heavens will be put to a worſe uſe than God deſigned them for in Creation: However a change as a Garment, ſpeaks not a total corruption, but an alteration of qualities; as a Garment not to be uſed in the ſame faſhion, as before. We may obſerve,

* *Septuag.*
*Pſ.*104.2.
* *Eſtius in Heb.*1.

1. That *'tis probable, the World ſhall not be annihilated but refin'd.* It ſhall loſe its preſent form and faſhion, but not its foundation: Indeed as God raiſed it from nothing, ſo he can reduce it into nothing; yet it doth not appear that God will annihilate it, and utterly deſtroy both the matter and form of it; part ſhall be conſumed, and part purified, 2 *Pet.* 3. *v.*12,13. *The Heavens ſhall be on fire and diſſolved, nevertheleſs we, according to his promiſe, look for a new Heaven and a new Earth.* They ſhall be melted down as Gold by the Artificer, to be refined from its Droſs, and wrought into a more beautiful faſhion, that they may ſerve the deſign of God for thoſe that ſhall reſide therein; a new World wherein Righteouſneſs ſhall dwell: The Apoſtle oppoſing it thereby, to the old World wherein wickedneſs did reſide. The Heavens are to be purged, as the Veſſels that held the Sin-offering were to be purified by the fire of the Sanctuary.

God indeed will take down this Scaffold which he hath built to publiſh his Glory. As every Individual hath a certain term of its duration; ſo an end is appointed for the univerſal nature of Heaven and Earth, *Iſa.*51.6. *The Heavens ſhall vaniſh like Smoke,* which diſappears. As ſmoke is reſolved and attenuated into Air, not annihilated; ſo ſhall the World aſſume a new face, and have a greater clearneſs and ſplendor: As the Bodies of Men diſſolved into Duſt, ſhall have more glorious qualities at their Reſurrection: As a Veſſel of Gold is melted down to remove the batterings in it, and receive a more comely form by the Skill of the Workman.

(1.) *The World was not deſtroyed by the Deluge:* It was rather waſhed by water than conſumed; So it ſhall be rather refined by the laſt fire, than lie under an irrecoverable ruin.

(2.) *'Tis not likely God would liken the everlaſtingneſs of his Covenant, and the perpetuity of his ſpiritual* Iſrael, *to the duration of the Ordinances of the Heavens, (as he doth in* Jer.21.35,36.) *if they were wholly to depart from before him.* Tho' that place may only tend to an aſſurance of a Church in the World while the World endures; yet it would be but ſmall comfort, if the happineſs of Believers ſhould endure no longer than the Heavens and Earth, if they were to have a total period.

(3.) Beſides, *the Bodies of the Saints muſt have place for their ſupport to move in, and glorious objects ſuited to thoſe glorious ſenſes which ſhall be reſtored to them*; Not in any carnal way which our Saviour rejects, when he ſaith, there is *no eating*, or *drinking, or marrying*, &c. *in the other World*; but whereby they may glorifie God; tho' how or in what manner their ſenſes ſhall be uſed, would be raſhneſs to determine; only ſomething is neceſſary for the corporeal ſtate of Men, that there may be an employment for their Senſes as well as their Souls.

(4.) Again, *How could the Creature, the World, or any part of it, be ſaid to be delivered from the bondage of Corruption, into the glorious liberty of the Sons of God, if the whole Frame of Heaven and Earth were to be annihilated?* Rom.8.21. The Apoſtle alſo ſaith, that the Creature *waits* with an *earneſt expectation for this manifeſtation of the Sons of God*, v.19. which would have no foundation, if the whole frame ſhould be reduced to nothing. What joyful expectation can there be in any of a total ruin? How ſhould the Creature be capable of partaking in this glorious liberty of the Sons of God? * As the World for the ſin of Man loſt its firſt dignity, and was curſed after the Fall, and the beauty beſtowed upon it by Creation defaced; So it ſhall recover that antient glory, when he ſhall be fully reſtored by the Reſurrection to that dignity he loſt by his firſt ſin. As Man ſhall be freed from his corruptibility to receive that glory which is prepared for him; ſo ſhall the Creatures be freed from that imperfection or corruptibility, thoſe ſtains and ſpots upon the face of them, to receive a new glory ſuited to their nature, and anſwerable to the deſign of God, when the *glorious liberty* of the Saints ſhall be accompliſh'd. * As when a Prince's Nuptials are ſolemnized, the whole Country eccho's with joy; ſo the inanimate Creatures, when the time of the Marriage of the Lamb is come, ſhall have a delight and pleaſure from that renovation. The Apoſtle ſets forth the whole World as a perſon *groaning*, and the Scripture is frequent in ſuch Metaphors; as when the Creatures are ſaid to *wait upon God, and*

Rom.8.21.

* *Hyper. in Heb.*1.

* *Meſtrezat ſur.Heb.*1.

to

*Pſal. 104. v. 27, 29. *to be troubled* *; the *Hills are ſaid to leap, and the Mountains to rejoyce*: The Creature is ſaid to groan, as the Heavens are ſaid to declare the glory of God, paſſively, naturally, not rationally. 'Tis not likely Angels are here meant, tho' they cannot but deſire it; ſince they are affected with the diſhonour and reproach God hath in the World, they cannot but long for the reſtoration of his honour, in the reſtoration of the Creature to its true end: And indeed the Angels are employed to ſerve Man in this ſinful ſtate, and cannot but in holineſs wiſh the Creature freed from his corruption: Nor is it meant of the new Creatures which have the firſt fruits of the Spirit, thoſe he brings in afterwards, *groaning* and *waiting for the* *Verſe 23. *Adoption* *; where he diſtinguiſheth the rational Creature from the Creature he had ſpoken of before: If he had meant the believing Creature by that Creature that deſired the liberty of the Sons of God, what need had there been of that additional diſtinction, *and not only they, but we alſo who have the firſt fruits of the Spirit, groan within our ſelves?* Whereby it ſeems he means ſome Creatures below rational Creatures, ſince neither Angels nor bleſſed Souls can be ſaid to travail in pain, with that diſtreſs as a Woman in travail hath, as the word ſignifies, who per- *Meſtrazat ſur. Heb. 1. form the work joyfully which God ſets them upon *. If the Creatures be ſubject to vanity by the ſin of Man, they ſhall alſo partake of a happineſs by the reſtoration of Man. The Earth hath born Thorns and Thiſtles, and venemous Beaſts; The Air hath had its Tempeſts and infectious Qualities; The Water hath cauſed its Floods and Deluges. The Creature hath been abuſed to Luxury and Intemperance, and been tyranniz'd over by Man, contrary to the end of its Creation: 'Tis convenient that ſome time ſhould be allotted for the Creature's attaining its true end, and that it may partake of the peace of Man, as it hath done of the fruits of his ſin; otherwiſe it would ſeem that ſin had prevailed more than grace, and would have had more power to deface than grace to reſtore things into their due order.

5. Again, *upon what account ſhould the Pſalmiſt exhort the Heavens to rejoyce, and the Earth to be glad, when God comes to judge the World with righte-* *Pſal. 96. v. 11, 12, 13 *ouſneſs* *; *if they ſhould be annihilated and ſunk for ever into nothing?* It would ſeem, ſaith *Daille*, to be an impertinent figure, if the Judge of the World brought them to a total deſtruction; an entire ruine could not be matter of triumph to Creatures, who naturally have that inſtinct or inclination put into them by their Creator to preſerve themſelves, and to affect their own preſervation.

6. Again, *The Lord is to rejoyce in his works*, Pſal. 104. 31. *The glory of the Lord ſhall endure for ever; the Lord ſhall rejoyce in his works*; not *hath*, but *ſhall* rejoyce in his works: In the works of Creation; which the *Pſalmiſt* hath enumerated, and which is the whole ſcope of the *Pſalm*: And he intimates that it is part of the glory of the Lord which endures for ever; that is, his manifeſtative glory, to rejoyce in his works: The Glory of the Lord muſt be underſtood with reference to the Creation he had ſpoken of before. How ſhort was that joy God had in his works after he had ſent them beautified out of his hand? How ſoon did *he repent*, not only *that he had made Man*, but was *grieved at the heart* alſo, that he made the other Creatures which Man's ſin had diſ- Gen. 6. 7. order'd? What joy can God have in them, ſince the Curſe upon the entrance of ſin into the World, remains upon them? If they are to be annihilated upon the full reſtoration of his Holineſs, what time will God have to rejoyce in the other works of Creation? 'Tis the joy of God to ſee all his works in their due order; every one pointing to their true end; marching together in their excellency, according to his firſt intendment in their Creation. Did God create the World to perform its end only for one day; ſcarce ſo much, if *Adam* fell the very firſt day of his Creation? What would have been their end, if *Adam* had been confirm'd in a ſtate of happineſs as the Angels were; 'tis likely will be anſwered and performed upon the compleat reſtoration of Man to that happy ſtate from whence he fell. What Artificer compiles a work by his skill but to rejoyce in it? And ſhall God have no joy from the works of his hands? Since God can only rejoyce in goodneſs, the Creatures muſt have that goodneſs reſtored to them which God pronounced them to have at the firſt Creation, and which he ordained them for, before he can again rejoyce in his works: The goodneſs of the Creatures is the glory and joy of God.

Inference 1. We may infer from hence, *what a baſe and vile thing Sin is, which lays the foundation of the Worlds change.* Sin brings it to decrepit Age: Sin over-turned the whole work of God *; ſo that *Gen. 3. 17. to render it uſeful to its proper end, there is a neceſſity of a kind of a new creating it: This cauſes God to fire the Earth for a purification of it from that infection and contagion brought upon it by the apoſtacy and corruption of Man: It hath ſerved ſinful Man, and therefore muſt undergo a purging flame to be fit to ſerve the holy and righteous Creator. As Sin is ſo riveted in the body of Man, that there is need of a change by death to raſe it out; ſo hath the Curſe for ſin got ſo deep into the bowels of the World, that there is need of a change by fire to refine it for its Maſters uſe. Let us look upon Sin with no other notion than as the Object of Gods hatred, the cauſe of his grief in the Creatures, and the Spring of the pain and ruine of the World.

2. *How fooliſh a thing is it to ſet our hearts upon that which ſhall periſh, and be no more what it is now?* The Heavens and Earth, the ſolideſt and firmeſt parts of the Creation, ſhall not continue in the poſture they are; they muſt periſh and undergo a refining change. How feeble and weak are the other parts of the Creation, the little Creatures walking upon and fluttering about the World, that are periſhing and dying every day; and we ſcarce ſee them clothed with life and beauty this day, but they wither, and are diſpoyl'd of all the next; and are ſuch frail things fit Objects for our everlaſting Spirits and Affections? Tho' the daily employment of the Heavens is the declaration of the glory of God *, yet neither this, nor their *Pſal 19. 1. harmony, order, beauty, amazing greatneſs and glory of them, ſhall preſerve them from a diſſolution and melting at the preſence of the Lord: Tho' they have remained in the ſame poſture from the Creation till this day, and are of ſo great antiquity; yet they muſt bow down to a change before the Will and Word of their Creator; and ſhall we reſt upon that which ſhall vaniſh like Smoke? Shall we take any Creature for our ſupport like Ice, that will crack under our feet, and muſt by the order of their Lord Creator deceive our hopes? Periſhing things can be no ſupport to the Soul; If we would have reſt, we muſt run to God and reſt in God. How contemptible ſhould that be to us; whoſe faſhion ſhall paſs away, which ſhall not endure long in its preſent form and appearance; contemptible as a reſt, not contemptible as the work of God; contemptible as an end, not contemptible as a means to attain our end? If theſe muſt be changed, how unworthy are other things to be the Center of our Souls, that change in our very uſing of them, and ſlide away in our very enjoyment of them?

Thou art the ſame. The Eſſence of God, with all the perfections of his nature, are pronounced the ſame, without any variation from Eternity to Eternity: So that the Text doth not only aſſert the eter-

nal duration of God, but his Immutability in that duration: his Eternity is ſignified in that expreſſion, *thou ſhalt endure*; his Immutability in this, *thou art the ſame* *. To endure, argues indeed his Immutability as well as Eternity: For what endures, is not changed, and what is changed, doth not endure: But *thou art the ſame* *, doth more fully ſignifie it: He could not be the ſame, if he could be changed into any other thing than what he is; The *Pſalmiſt* therefore puts, not thou *haſt been* or *ſhalt be*, but *thou art* the ſame without any alteration; Thou art the ſame, that is, the ſame God, the ſame in Eſſence and Nature, the ſame in Will and Purpoſe; Thou doſt change all other things as thou pleaſeſt; but thou art immutable in every reſpect, and receiveſt no ſhadow of change, tho' never ſo light and ſmall. * The *Pſalmiſt* here alludes to the name *Jehovah*, *I am*; and doth not only aſcribe Immutability to God, but exclude every thing elſe from partaking in that perfection: All things elſe are tottering; God ſees all other things in continual motion under his feet, like Water paſſing away and no more ſeen, while he remains fixed and immoveable: His Wiſdom and Power, his Knowledge and Will, are always the ſame. His Eſſence can receive no alteration, neither by it ſelf nor by any external Cauſe; whereas other things either naturally decline to deſtruction, paſs from one term to another, till they come to their period; or ſhall at the laſt day be wrapped up, after God hath compleated his Will in them and by them; as a Man doth a Garment he intends to repair and tranſform to another uſe.

* *Eſtius* in Heb. 1.

* *Chryſoſtom* אתה הוא

* Αλλοιώσεως κρείττων, *above all change.* Theodor.

So that in the Text God as Immutable, is oppoſed to all Creatures as periſhing and changeable.

Doct. *God is unchangeable in his Eſſence, Nature, and Perfections.* Immutability and Eternity are linkt together; and indeed true Eternity is true Immutability, whence Eternity is defin'd by the Poſſeſſion of an immutable Life. Yet Immutability differs from Eternity in our conception: Immutability reſpects the Eſſence or Exiſtence of a thing, Eternity reſpects the duration of a Being in that State; or rather, * *Immutability is the State it ſelf*, Eternity is the meaſure of that State. A thing is ſaid to be changed, when it is otherwiſe now in regard of Nature, State, Will, or any Quality than it was before; when either ſomething is added to it or taken from it; when it either loſes or acquires: But now it is the eſſential property of God, not to have any acceſſion to, or diminution of his Eſſence or Attributes, but to remain entirely the ſame: He wants nothing; He loſes nothing, but doth uniformly exiſt by himſelf, without any new nature, new thoughts, new will, new purpoſe, or new place.

* *Gamachæus.*

* *Amyrant* ſur. Heb. 9. p. 153.

* This unchangeableneſs of God was anciently repreſented by the figure of a *Cube*, a piece of Metal or Wood framed four-ſquare; when every ſide is exactly of the ſame equality, caſt it which way you will, it will always be in the ſame poſture, becauſe it is equal to it ſelf in all its dimenſions: He was therefore ſaid to be the *Center* of all things, and other things the Circumference; the Center is never moved while the Circumference is; it remains immoveable in the midſt of the Circle: *There is no variableneſs nor ſhadow of turning with him* *. The *Moon* hath her Spots, ſo hath the *Sun*; there is a mixture of Light and Darkneſs; it hath its changes; ſometimes it is in the increaſe, ſometimes in the wane; it is always either gaining or loſing, and by the turnings and motions, either of the Heavenly Bodies or of the Earth, 'tis in its Eclipſe: by the interpoſition of the Earth between that and the Sun. The Sun alſo hath its diurnal and annual motion; it riſeth and ſets, and puts on a different Face: It doth not always ſhine with a Noon-day light; 'tis ſometimes veil'd with Clouds and Vapours; it is always going from one Tropick to another, whereby it makes various ſhadows on the Earth, and produceth the various Seaſons of the year; 'tis not always in our Hemiſphere, nor doth it always ſhine with an equal force and brightneſs in it: Such ſhadows and variations have no place in the eternal Father of Lights; He hath not the leaſt ſpot or diminution of Brightneſs; nothing can cloud him or eclipſe him. For the better underſtanding this Perfection of God,

* James 1. v. 17.

I ſhall Premiſe three things.

1. *The Immutability of God is a Perfection.* Immutability conſidered in it ſelf, without relation to other things, is not a Perfection. 'Tis the greateſt miſery and imperfection of the evil Angels, that they are immutable in malice againſt God: But as God is infinite in Eſſence, infinitely Good, Wiſe, Holy; ſo it is a Perfection neceſſary to his Nature, that he ſhould be immutably all this; all Excellency, Goodneſs, Wiſdom, immutably all that he is; without this he would be an imperfect Being. Are not the Angels in Heaven, who are confirmed in a holy and happy ſtate, more perfect than when they were in a poſſibility of committing evil, and becoming miſerable? Are not the Saints in Heaven, whoſe Wills by Grace do unalterably cleave to God and Goodneſs, more perfect than if they were as *Adam* in Paradiſe, capable of loſing their Felicity as well as preſerving it? We count a Rock, in regard of its ſtability, more excellent than the Duſt on the ground, or a Feather that is toſſed about with every wind; Is it not alſo the perfection of the Body to have a conſtant tenor of health, and the glory of a Man not to warp aſide from what is juſt and right, by the perſwaſions of any temptations?

2. *Immutability is a Glory belonging to all the Attributes of God.* 'Tis not a ſingle perfection of the Divine Nature, nor is it limited to particular Objects thus and thus diſpoſed. Mercy and Juſtice have their diſtinct Objects, and diſtinct Acts; Mercy is converſant about a Penitent, Juſtice converſant about an obſtinate Sinner. In our notion and conception of the Divine Perfections, his Perfections are different; The Wiſdom of God is not his Power, nor his Power his Holineſs; but Immutability is the Center wherein they all unite: There is not one Perfection but may be ſaid to be, and truly is immutable; none of them will appear ſo glorious without this Beam, this Sun of Immutability, which renders them highly excellent without the leaſt ſhadow of imperfection: How cloudy would his Bleſſedneſs be, if it were changeable? How dim his Wiſdom, if it might be obſcur'd? How feeble his Power, if it were capable to be ſickly and languiſh? How would Mercy loſe much of its luſtre, if it could change into wrath; and Juſtice much of its dread, if it could be turned into Mercy, while the object of Juſtice remains unfit for Mercy, and one that hath need of Mercy continues only fit for the Divine Fury? But unchangeableneſs is a Thread that runs through the whole Web; 'tis the enamel of all the reſt; none of them without it could look with a triumphant aſpect; His Power is unchangeable; * *In the Lord Jehovah is everlaſting ſtrength*; his *Mercy and his Holineſs endure for ever*; *He never could, nor ever can look upon iniquity* *: He is a Rock in the righteouſneſs of his Ways, the truth of his Word, the holineſs of his Proceedings, and the rectitude of his Nature: All are expreſt, *Deut.* 32. 4. *He is a Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are Judgment; A God of Truth, and without Iniquity, juſt and right is he.* All that we conſider in God is unchangeable; for his Eſſence and his Properties are the ſame, and therefore what is neceſſarily belonging to the Eſſence of God, belongs alſo to every perfection of the nature of God; none

* Iſa. 26. 4.

* Hab. 1. 13.

of

of them can receive any addition or diminution: From the unchangeableneſs of his nature, the Apoſtle, *James* 1.17. infers the unchangeableneſs of his holineſs; and himſelf in *Mal.* 3. 6. the unchangeableneſs of his counſel.

3. *Unchangeableneſs doth neceſſarily pertain to the Nature of God.* 'Tis of the ſame neceſſity with the rectitude of his Nature; He can no more be changeable in his Eſſence, than he can be unrighteous in his Actions. God is a neceſſary Being; He is neceſſarily what he is, and therefore is unchangeably what he is. Mutability belongs to contingency. If any perfection of his Nature could be ſeparated from him, he would ceaſe to be God: What did not poſſeſs the whole Nature of God, could not have the Eſſence of God; 'Tis reciprocated with the Nature of God. Whatſoever is immutable by Nature, is God; whatſoever is God, is immutable by Nature. Some Creatures are immutable by his Grace and Power: * God is holy, happy, wiſe, good by his Eſſence; Angels and Men are made holy, wiſe, happy, ſtrong and good, by Qualities and Graces: The Holineſs, Happineſs, and Wiſdom of Saints and Angels, as they had a beginning, ſo they are capable of increaſe and diminution, and of an end alſo; for their ſtanding is not from themſelves, or from the nature of created ſtrength, holineſs or wiſdom, which in themſelves are apt to fail, and finally to decay; but from the ſtability and confirmation they have by the Gift and Grace of God: The Heaven and Earth ſhall be changed, and after that renewal and reparation, they ſhall not be changed. Our Bodies after the Reſurrection ſhall not be changed; but for ever be *made conformable to the glorious Body of Chriſt* *; but this is by the powerful Grace of God: So that indeed thoſe things may be ſaid afterwards rather to be unchanged than unchangeable, becauſe they are not ſo by nature, but by Soveraign diſpenſation. As Creatures have not neceſſary Beings, ſo they have not neceſſary Immutability. Neceſſity of Being, and therefore Immutability of Being, belongs by Nature only to God; otherwiſe if there were any change in God, he would be ſometimes what he was not, and would ceaſe to be what he was; which is againſt the Nature, and indeed againſt the natural Notion of a Deity. Let us ſee then,

* *Archbold.* Serm.

* Phil. 3. 21

1. *In what regards God is immutable.*
2. *Prove that Gods is Immutable.*
3. *That this is proper to God, and incommunicable to any Creature.*
4. *Some Propoſitions to clear the unchangeableneſs of God from any thing that ſeems contrary to it.*
5. The Uſe.

Firſt in what *reſpects God is unchangeable.*

1. *God is unchangeable in his Eſſence.* He is unalterably fixed in his Being, that not a Particle of it can be loſt from it, not a Mite added to it. If a Man continue in Being as long as *Methuſelah*, Nine hundred and Sixty nine years, yet there is not a day, nay an hour, wherein there is not ſome alteration in his ſubſtance; tho' no ſubſtantial part is wanting, yet there is an addition to him by his Food, a diminution of ſomething by his Labour; He is always making ſome acquiſition, or ſuffering ſome loſs: But in God there can be no alteration, by the acceſſion of any thing to make his ſubſtance greater or better, or by diminution to make it leſs or worſe. He who hath no Being from another, cannot but be always what he is: God is the firſt Being, an independent Being; He was not produced of himſelf, or of any other, but by Nature always hath been; and therefore cannot by himſelf, or by any other, be changed from what he is in his own nature. That which is not, may as well aſſume to it ſelf a Being, as he, who hath and is all Being, have the leaſt change from what he is. Again; becauſe he is a Spirit, he is not ſubject to thoſe mutations which are found in corporeal and bodily Natures; becauſe he is an abſolutely ſimple Spirit, not having the leaſt particle of compoſition; he is not capable of thoſe changes which may be in created Spirits.

1. If his Eſſence were mutable. *God would not truly be*; It could not be truly ſaid by himſelf, *I am that I am* *, if he were ſuch a Thing or Being at this time, and a different Being at another time. Whatſoever is changed, properly is not, becauſe it doth not remain to be what it was: That which is changed was ſomething, is ſomething, and will be ſomething; a Being remains to that thing which is changed; yet tho' it may be ſaid ſuch a thing is, yet it may be alſo ſaid ſuch a thing is not, becauſe it is not what it was in its firſt Being; 'tis not now what it was, 'tis not now what it was not; 'tis another thing than it was, it was another thing than it is; it will be another thing than what it is or was: 'Tis indeed a Being, but a different Being from what it was before. But if God were changed, it could not be ſaid of him that *he is*, but it might alſo be ſaid of him, that *he is not*; or if he were changeable, or could be changed, it might be ſaid of him he is, but he will not be what he is; or he may not be what he is, but there will be, or may be ſome difference in his Being, and ſo God would not be *I am that I am*; for tho' he would not ceaſe utterly to be, yet he would ceaſe to be what he was before.

* Exo. 3. 14.

2. Again; If his Eſſence were mutable, *he could not be perfectly bleſſed, and fully rejoyce in himſelf.* If he changed for the better, he could not have an infinite pleaſure in what he was before the change, becauſe he was not infinitely bleſſed; and the pleaſure of that ſtate could not be of a higher kind than the ſtate it ſelf, or at leaſt the apprehenſion of a happineſs in it: If he changed for the worſe, he could not have a pleaſure in it after the change; for according to the diminution of his ſtate, would be the decreaſe of his pleaſure: His pleaſure could not be infinite before the change, if he changed for the better; it could not be infinite after the change, if he changed for the worſe: If he changed for the better, he would not have had an infinite Goodneſs of Being before; and not having an infinite Goodneſs of Being, he would have a finite Goodneſs of Being; for there is no *medium* between finite and infinite: Then tho' the change were for the better, yet being finite before, ſomething would be ſtill wanting to make him infinitely Bleſſed; becauſe being finite, he could not change to that which is infinite; for finite and infinite are extreams ſo diſtant, that they can never paſs into one another; that is, that that which is finite ſhould become infinite, or that which is infinite ſhould become finite: So that ſuppoſing him mutable, his Eſſence in no ſtate of change, could furniſh him with an infinite peace and bleſſedneſs.

3. Again; If Gods Eſſence be changed, *he either encreaſeth or diminiſheth* *: Whatſoever is changed, doth either gain by receiving ſomething larger and greater than it had in it ſelf before, or gains nothing by being changed. If the former, then it receives more than it ſelf, more than it had in it ſelf before. The Divine Nature cannot be encreaſed; for whatſoever receives any thing than what it had in it ſelf before, muſt neceſſarily receive it from another, becauſe nothing can give to it ſelf that which it hath not: But God cannot receive from another what he hath not already, becauſe whatſoever other things poſſeſs, is derived from him, and therefore contained in him, as the Fountain contains the Vertue in it ſelf which it conveys to the ſtreams; ſo that God cannot gain any thing: If a thing that is changed gain nothing by that change, it loſeth ſomething of what it had

* *Hugo Victorin.* in Petavio.

before in it ſelf; and this loſs muſt be by it ſelf or ſome other. God cannot receive any loſs from any thing in himſelf; he cannot will his own diminution; that is repugnant to every Nature: He may as well will his own deſtruction as his own decreaſe; Every decreaſe is a partial deſtruction: But it is impoſſible for God to die any kind of Death, to have any reſemblance of Death, for he is Immortal, and *only hath Immortality* *, therefore impoſſible to be diminiſht in any particle of his Eſſence; nor can he be diminiſht by any thing in his own Nature, becauſe his infinite ſimplicity admits of nothing diſtinct from himſelf, or contrary to himſelf. All decreaſes come from ſomething contrary to the nature of that thing which doth decreaſe: Whatſoever is made leſs than it ſelf, was not truly *Unum*, one and ſimple, becauſe that which divides it ſelf in ſeparation was not the ſame in conjunction. Nor can he be diminiſht by any other without himſelf; becauſe nothing is ſuperior to God, nothing ſtronger than God which can oppreſs him: But whatſoever is changed, is weaker than that which changeth it, and ſinks under a Power it cannot ſucceſsfully reſiſt; weakneſs belongs not to the Deity. Nor *laſtly*, can God change from a State wherein he is, to another State equal to the former, as Men in ſome caſes may do; for in paſſing from one ſtate to another equal to it, ſomething muſt be parted with which he had before, that ſome other thing may accrue to him as a recompence for that loſs, to make him equal to what he was: This recompence then he had not before, tho' he had ſomething equal to it: And in this caſe it could not be ſaid by God, *I am that I am*, but I am equal to what I was; for in this caſe there would be a diminution and increaſe, which (as was ſhewed) cannot be in God.

* 1 Tim. 6. v. 16.

Victorinus. in petavio.

4. Again; *God is of himſelf, from no other* *: Natures, which are made by God, may increaſe, becauſe they began to be; they may decreaſe, becauſe they were made of nothing, and ſo tend to nothing; the condition of their original leads them to defect, and the Power of their Creator brings them to increaſe. But God hath no original, he hath no defect, becauſe he was not made of nothing; He hath no increaſe, becauſe he had no beginning: He was before all things, and therefore depends upon no other thing which by its own change can bring any change upon him. * That which is from it ſelf cannot be changed, becauſe it hath nothing before it, nothing more excellent than it ſelf; But that which is from another, as its firſt Cauſe and chief Good, may be changed by that which was its efficient Cauſe and laſt End.

* *Auſtin. Fulgen.* in Petavio.

* *Petav. Tom.* 1. p. 173.

2. God is immutable *in regard of Knowledge*. God hath known from all Eternity all that which he can know, ſo that nothing is hid from him; He knows not at preſent any more than he hath known from Eternity, and that which he knows now he always knows; *All things are open and naked before him*, Heb. 4. 13. A Man is ſaid to be changed in regard of Knowledge, when he knows that now which he did not know before, or knows that to be falſe now which he thought true before, or hath ſomething for the Object of his Underſtanding now, which he had not before: But,

1. *This would be repugnant to the Wiſdom and Omniſcience which belongs to the Notion of a Deity.* That cannot be God, that is not infinitely Wiſe; that cannot be infinitely Wiſe, that is either ignorant of, or miſtaken in his apprehenſion of any one thing. If God be changed in Knowledge, it muſt be for want of Wiſdom; all change of this nature in Creatures, implies this defect preceding or accompanying it: Such a thought of God, would have been unworthy of him that is *only Wiſe*; that hath no Mate for Wiſdom *! none Wiſe beſides himſelf: If he knew that thing this day which he knew not before, he would not be an *only Wiſe* Being; for a Being that did know every thing at once, might be conceived, and ſo a wiſer Being be apprehended by the mind of Man. If God underſtood a thing at one time, which he did not at another, he would be changed from Ignorance to Knowledge; As if he could not do that this day which he could do to morrow, he would be changed from Impotence to Power: He could not be always Omniſcient, becauſe there might be yet ſomething ſtill to come which he yet knows not, tho' he may know all things that are paſt. What way ſoever you ſuppoſe a change, you muſt ſuppoſe a preſent or a paſt Ignorance; If he be changed in his knowledge for the perfection of his underſtanding, he was ignorant before; If his underſtanding be impaired by the change, he is ignorant after it.

* 1 Tim. 1. v. 17.

2. *If God were changeable in his Knowledge, it would make him unfit to be an Object of Truſt to any rotional Creature.* His *Revelations* would want the due ground for entertainment, if his Underſtanding were changeable; for that might be revealed as truth now which might prove falſe hereafter, and that as falſe now which hereafter might prove true; and ſo God would be an unfit Object of Obedience in regard of his Precepts, and an unfit Object of Confidence in regard of his Promiſes: For if he be changeable in Knowledge, he is defective in Knowledge, and might promiſe that now which he would know afterwards was unfit to be promiſed, and therefore unfit to be performed: It would make him an incompetent Object of dread, in regard of his threatnings; for he might threaten that now, which he might know hereafter were not fit or juſt to be inflicted. A changeable mind and underſtanding cannot make a due and right judgment of things to be done, and things to be avoided. No wiſe Man would judge it reaſonable to truſt a weak and flitting perſon.

God muſt needs be unchangeable in his knowledge: But, as the *Schoolmen* ſay, that as the Sun always ſhines, ſo God always knows; as the Sun never ceaſeth to ſhine, ſo God never ceaſeth to know: Nothing can be hid from the vaſt compaſs of his Underſtanding; no more than any thing can ſhelter it ſelf without the Verge of his Power. This farther appears in that,

1. *God knows by his own Eſſence.* He doth not know as we do, by habits, qualities, ſpecies, whereby we may be miſtaken at one time, and rectified at another: He hath not an Underſtanding diſtinct from his Eſſence as we have; but being the moſt ſimple Being, his Underſtanding is his Eſſence; and as from the infiniteneſs of his Eſſence we conclude the infiniteneſs of his Underſtanding; ſo from the unchangeableneſs of his Eſſence, we may juſtly conclude the unchangeableneſs of his Knowledge. Since therefore God is without all compoſition, and his Underſtanding is not diſtinct from his Eſſence; what he knows, he knows by his Eſſence; and there can then be no more mutability in his knowledge, than there can be in his Eſſence; and if there were any in that, he could not be God, becauſe he would have the property of a Creature: If his Underſtanding then be his Eſſence, his Knowledge is as neceſſary, as unchangeable as his Eſſence: As his Eſſence eminently contains all perfections in it ſelf, ſo his Underſtandings comprehends all things paſt, preſent, and future, in it ſelf: If his Underſtanding and his Eſſence were not one and the ſame, he were not ſimple but compounded; if compounded, he would conſiſt of parts; if he conſiſted of parts, he would not be an independent Being, and ſo would not be God.

2. *God knows all things by one intuitive act.* As there is no ſucceſſion in his Being, ſo that he is one thing

thing now, and another thing hereafter; ſo there is no ſucceſſion in his knowledge: He knows things that are ſucceſſive, before their exiſtence and ſucceſſion, by one ſingle act of intuition; by one caſt of his eye all things future are preſent to him in regard of his Eternity and Omnipreſence: So that tho' there is a change and variation in the things known, yet his Knowledge of them, and their ſeveral changes in nature, is invariable and unalterable. As imagine a Creature that could ſee with his eye at one glance the whole compaſs of the Heavens, by ſending out beams from his eye without receiving any ſpecies from them, he would ſee the whole Heavens uniformly; this part now in the Eaſt, then in the Weſt, without any change in his eye; for he ſees every part and every motion together; and tho' that great Body varies and whirls about, and is in continual agitation; his eye remains ſted faſt, ſuffers no change, beholds all their motions at once, and by one glance. * God knows all things from Eternity, and therefore perpetually knows them; the reaſon is, becauſe the Divine Knowledge is infinite *, and therefore comprehends all knowable Truths at once. An eternal Knowledge comprehends in it ſelf all Time, and beholds paſt and preſent in the ſame manner, and therefore his Knowledge is Immutable: By one ſimple Knowledge he conſiders the infinite ſpaces of paſt and future.

* *Suarez.* vol. 1. p. 137.

* Pſ. 145.5. *His underſtanding is infinite.*

3. *Gods Knowledge and Will is the cauſe of all things and their ſucceſſions.* * There can be no pretence of any changeableneſs of knowledge in God, but in this caſe, before things come to paſs, he knows that they will come to paſs; after they are come to paſs, he knows that they are paſt and ſlide away. This would be ſomething, if the ſucceſſion of things were the cauſe of the Divine Knowledge, as it is of our knowledge; but on the contrary, the Divine Knowledge and Will is the cauſe of the ſucceſſion of them: God doth not know Creatures becauſe they are, but they are becauſe he knows them. *All his Works were known to him from the beginning of the World* *. All his Works were not known to him, if the events of all thoſe Works were not alſo known to him; If they were not known to him, how ſhould he make them? He could not do any thing ignorantly: He made them then after he knew them, and did not know them after he made them: His knowledge of them made a change in them, their exiſtence made no change in his Knowledge: He knew them when they were to be Created, in the ſame manner that he knew them after they were Created; before they were brought into act, as well as after they were brought into act; before they were made, they were, and were not; they were in the Knowledge of God, when they were not in their own nature: God did not receive his Knowledge from their exiſtence, but his Knowledge and Will acted upon them to bring them into Being.

* *Auſtin. Bradwardine.*

* Acts 15.18

4. *Therefore the diſtinction of paſt and future, makes no change in the Knowledge of God.* When a thing is paſt, God hath no more diſtinct knowledge of it after it is paſt, than he had when it was to come; all things were in their Circumſtances of paſt, preſent, and to come, ſeen by his Underſtanding, as they were determined by his Will. * Beſides, to know a day to be paſt or future, is only to know the ſtate of that day in it ſelf, and to know its relation, to that which follows, and that which went before: This day wherein we are, if we conſider it in the ſtate wherein it was yeſterday, it was to come, it was future; but if we conſider it in that ſtate wherein it will be to morrow, we underſtand it as paſt. This in Man cannot be ſaid to be a different knowledge of the thing it ſelf, but only of the circumſtance attending a thing, and the different relation of it. As I ſee the Sun this day, I know it was up yeſterday, I know it will be up to morrow; my knowledge of the Sun is the ſame; if there be any change, it is in the Sun, not in my knowledge, only I apply my knowledge to ſuch particular circumſtances. How much more muſt the knowledge of thoſe things in God be unchangeable, who knows all thoſe ſtates, conditions and circumſtances, moſt perfectly from Eternity, wherein there is no ſucceſſion, no paſt or future, and therefore will know them for ever? He always beholds the ſame thing; he ſees indeed ſucceſſion in things, and he ſees a thing to be paſt which before was future: As from Eternity he ſaw *Adam* as exiſting in ſuch a time; In the firſt time he ſaw that he would be, in the following time he ſaw that he had been: But this he knew from Eternity, this he knew in the ſame manner; tho' there was a variation in *Adam*, yet there was no variation in Gods knowledge of him in all his ſtates; tho' *Adam* was not preſent to himſelf, yet in all his ſtates he was preſent to Gods Eternity.

* *Gamch.* 1. p. *Aquin.* Qu. 9. cap. 1 p. 73.

5. *Conſider, that the knowledge of God, in regard of the manner of it, as well as the objects, is incomprehenſible to a finite Creature.* So that tho' we cannot arrive to a full underſtanding of the manner of Gods Knowledge, yet we muſt conceive ſo of it, as to remove all imperfection from him in it: And ſince it is an imperfection to be changeable, we muſt remove that from God; the Knowledge of God about things paſt, preſent, and future, muſt be unconceivably above ours: *His underſtanding is infinite*, Pſal. 147.5. There is no number of it; it can no more be calculated or drawn into an account by us, than infinite ſpaces which have no bounds and limits can be meaſured by us. We can no more arrive, even in Heaven, to a comprehenſive underſtanding of the manner of his Knowledge, than of the infinite glory of his Eſſence; we may as well comprehend one as the other. This we muſt conclude, that God being not a Body, doth not ſee one thing with eyes and another thing with mind, as we do; but being a Spirit, he ſees and knows only with Mind, and his Mind is himſelf, and is as unchangeable as himſelf; and therefore as he is not now another thing than what he was, ſo he knows not any thing now in another manner than as he knew it from Eternity: He ſees all things in the Glaſs of his own Eſſence; as therefore the Glaſs doth not vary, ſo neither doth his Viſion.

3. *God is unchangeable in regard of his Will and Purpoſe.* A change in purpoſe is, when a Man determines to do that now, which before he determined not to do, or to do the contrary; when a Man hates that thing which he loved, or begins to love that which he before hated: When the Will is changed, a Man begins to will that which he willed not before, and ceaſeth to will that which he willed before: But whatſoever God hath decreed, is Immutable; whatſoever God hath promiſed, ſhall be accompliſh'd; *The Word that goes forth of his Mouth ſhall not return to him void, but it ſhall accompliſh that which he pleaſeth* *; whatſoever *he purpoſeth, he will do* *; His Decrees are therefore called *Mountains of Braſs* *; Braſs, as having ſubſtance and ſolidity; Mountains, as being immoveable, not only by any Creature, but by himſelf, becauſe they ſtand upon the Baſis of infallible Wiſdom, and are ſupported by uncontroulable Power. From this Immutability of his Will publiſh'd to Man, there could be no releaſe from the ſeverity of the Law, without ſatisfaction made by the death of a Mediator, ſince it was the unalterable Will of God that death ſhould be the Wages of Sin; and from this immutable Will it was, that the length of Time from the firſt promiſe of the Redeemer to his Miſſion, and the daily provocations of Men, altered not his purpoſe for the accompliſhment of it in the fullneſs

* Iſa. 55.11.

Iſa. 46.11.

* Numb. 23 v. 19.

* Zach. 6.1.

of that time he had reſolved upon; Nor did the wickedneſs of former Ages hinder the addition of ſeveral promiſes as Buttreſſes to the firſt.

To make this out, conſider,

1. *The Will of God is the ſame with his Eſſence.* If God had a Will diſtinct from his Eſſence, he would not be the moſt ſimple Being. God hath not a faculty of Will diſtinct from himſelf: As his Underſtanding is nothing elſe but *Deus intelligens*, God underſtanding; ſo his Will is nothing elſe but *Deus volens*, God willing; being therefore the Eſſence of God, tho' it is conſidered according to our weakneſs as a faculty, 'tis as his Underſtanding and Wiſdom, eternal and immutable, and can no more be changed than his Eſſence; The Immutability of the Divine Counſel depends upon that of his Eſſence: He is the Lord *Jehovah*, therefore he is true to his Word, *Mal.* 3.6. *Iſa.* 43. 13. *Yea, before the Day was, I am, He, and there is none that can deliver out of my hand.* He is the ſame, immutable in his Eſſence, therefore irreſiſtable in his Power.

2. *There is a concurrence of Gods Will and Underſtanding in every thing.* As his Knowledge is eternal, ſo is his Purpoſe. Things created had not been known to be, had not God reſolved them to be the act of his Will; the exiſtence of any thing ſuppoſeth an act of his Will. Again, as God knows all things by one ſimple viſion of his Underſtanding, ſo he wills all things by one act of volition; therefore the Purpoſe of God in the Scripture, is not expreſt by Counſels in the Plural Number, but Counſel, ſhewing that all the Purpoſes of God are not various, but as one Will, branching it ſelf out into many acts towards the Creature; but all knit in one Root, all links of one Chain. Whatſoever is eternal, is immutable: As his Knowledge is eternal, and therefore immutable, ſo is his Will; He wills or nills nothing to be in Time, but what he willed and nilled from Eternity; if he willed in Time that to be, that he willed not from Eternity, then he would know that in Time which he knew not from Eternity: For God knows nothing future, but as his Will orders it to be future, and in time to be brought into Being.

3. *There can be no Reaſon for any change in the Will of God.* When Men change in their minds, it muſt be for want of foreſight, becauſe they could not foreſee all the Rubs and Bars which might ſuddenly offer themſelves; which if they had foreſeen, they would not have taken ſuch meaſures; hence Men often will that which they afterwards wiſh they had not willed, when they come to underſtand it clearer, and ſee that to be injurious to them which they thought to be good for them; or elſe the change proceeds from a natural inſtability without any juſt cauſe, and an eaſineſs to be drawn into that which is unrighteous; or elſe it proceeds from a want of power, when Men take new Counſels, becauſe they are invincibly hindred from executing the old. But none of thoſe can be in God.

1. It cannot be *for want of foreſight.* What can be wanting to an infinite Underſtanding? How can any unknown event defeat his Purpoſe; ſince nothing happens in the World but what he wills to effect, or wills to permit; and therefore all future events are preſent with him? Beſides, it doth not conſiſt with Gods Wiſdom to reſolve any thing, but upon the higheſt reaſon; and what is the higheſt and infinite reaſon, cannot but be unalterable in it ſelf; for there can be no Reaſon and Wiſdom higher than the higheſt. All Gods Purpoſes are not bare acts of Will, but acts of Counſel, *Eph.* 1. 11. *He works all things according to the Counſel of his own Will*; and he doth not ſay ſo much that his Will, as that *his Counſel ſhall ſtand*, Iſa.46.10. It ſtands becauſe it is Counſel: And the Immutability of a Promiſe is called the *Immutability of his Counſel*, Heb. 6. 17. as being introduced and ſettled by the moſt perfect Wiſdom, and therefore to be carried on to a full and compleat execution: His Purpoſe then cannot be changed for want of foreſight; for this would be a charge of weakneſs.

2. Nor can it proceed *from a natural Inſtability of his Will*, or an eaſineſs to be drawn to that which is unrighteous: If his Will ſhould not adhere to his Counſel, 'tis becauſe it is not fit to be followed, or becauſe it will not follow it; If not fit to be followed, 'tis a reflection upon his Wiſdom; if it be eſtabliſh'd, and he will not follow it, there is a contrariety in God, as there is in a fallen Creature, Will againſt Wiſdom: That cannot be in God, which he hates in a Creature, *viz.* the diſorder of faculties, and being out of their due place. The *Righteouſneſs* of God is like a *great Mountain*, Pſal. 36. 6. The rectitude of his Nature is as immoveable in it ſelf, as all the great Mountains in the World are by the ſtrength of Man. *He is not as a Man, that he ſhould repent or lye*, Numb.23.19. who often changes, out of a perverſity of Will, as well as want of Wiſdom to foreſee, or want of Ability to perform. His eternal Purpoſe muſt either be righteous or unrighteous; if righteous and holy, he would become unholy by the change, if not righteous nor holy, then he was unrighteous before the change; which way ſoever it falls, it would reflect upon the Righteouſneſs of God, which is a blaſphemous imagination. * If God did change his Purpoſe, it muſt be either for the better, then the Counſel of God was bad before; or for the worſe, then he was not Wiſe and Good before. * *Maxim. Tyrius* diſſert.3.30.

3. Nor can it be *for want of ſtrength.* Who hath power to controul him? Not all the combin'd devices and endeavours of Men can make the Counſel of God to totter, *Prov.*19.21. *There are many devices in a Mans heart, nevertheleſs the Counſel of the Lord, that ſhall ſtand*; that, and that only ſhall ſtand: Man hath a power to deviſe and imagine, but no power to effect and execute of himſelf. God wants no more Power to effect what he will, than he wants Underſtanding to know what is fit.

Well then, ſince God wanted not Wiſdom to frame his Decrees, nor Holineſs to regulate them, nor Power to effect them; what ſhould make him change them? Since there can be no reaſon ſuperior to his; no event unforeſeen by him; no Holineſs comparable to his; no Unrighteouſneſs found in him; no Power equal to his to put a rub in his way.

4. *Tho' the Will of God be immutable, yet it is not to be underſtood ſo, as that the things themſelves ſo willed, are immutable*; Nor will the Immutability of the things willed by him, follow upon the unchangeableneſs of his Will in willing them; tho' God be firm in willing them, yet he doth not will that they ſhould always be. God did not perpetually will the doing thoſe things which he once decreed to be done: He decreed that Chriſt ſhould ſuffer, but he did not decree that Chriſt ſhould always ſuffer; ſo he willed the Moſaical Rites for a time, but he did not will that they ſhould always continue; He willed that they ſhould endure only for a time, and when the time came for their ceaſing, God had been mutable if he had not put an end to them, becauſe his Will had fixed ſuch a Period: So that the changing of thoſe things which he had once appointed to be practiſed, is ſo far from charging God with changeableneſs, that God would be mutable if he did not take them away, ſince he decreed as well their abolition at ſuch a time, as their continuance till ſuch a time; ſo that the removal of them was purſuant to his unchangeable Will and Decree. If God had decreed that ſuch Laws ſhould always continue, and afterwards changed that Decree, and reſolved the abrogation of

of them; then indeed God had been mutable; He had reſcinded one Decree by another; He had then ſeen an error in his firſt reſolve, and there muſt be ſome weakneſs in the reaſon and wiſdom whereon it was grounded: * But it was not ſo here; for the change of thoſe Laws is ſo far from ſlurring God with any mutability, that the very change of them is no other than the Iſſue of his eternal Decree; for from Eternity he purpoſed in himſelf to change this or that diſpenſation, tho' he did decree to bring ſuch a diſpenſation into the World: The Decree it ſelf was eternal and immutable, but the thing decreed was temporary and mutable. As a Decree from Eternity doth not make the thing decreed to be eternal; ſo neither doth the Immutability of the Decree, render the thing ſo decreed to be immutable. As for Example, God decreed from all Eternity to create the World; the Eternity of this Decree did not make the World to be in Being, and actually created from Eternity; ſo God decreed immutably that the World ſo created ſhould continue for ſuch a time; The Decree is immutable if the World periſh at that time, and would not be immutable if the World did endure beyond that time that God hath fixed for the duration of it: As when a Prince orders a Mans remaining in Priſon for ſo many days; if he be prevailed with to give him a Delivery before thoſe Days, or to continue him in cuſtody for the ſame Crime after thoſe days, his Order is changed; But if he orders the delivery of him juſt at that time, till which he had before decreed that he ſhould continue in Priſon, the Purpoſe and Order of the Prince remains firm, and the change in the ſtate of the Priſoner, is the fruit of that firm and fixed reſolution: So that we muſt diſtinguiſh between the Perſon decreeing, the Decree it ſelf, and the Thing decreed. The Perſon decreeing, *viz. God* is in himſelf immutable, and the Decree is immutable; but the Thing decreed may be mutable; and if it were not changed according to the firſt purpoſe, it would argue the Decree it ſelf to be changed; For whiles a Man wills that this may be done now, and another thing done afterwards, the ſame Will remains; and tho' there be a change in the Effect, there is no change in the Will.

* *Turretin. de ſatisfac. p.266.*

5. *The immutability of Gods Will doth not infringe the Liberty of it.* The Liberty of Gods Will conſiſts with the neceſſity of continuing his Purpoſe. God is neceſſarily good, immutably good; yet he is freely ſo, and would not be otherwiſe than what he is. God was free in his firſt Purpoſe; and purpoſing this or that by an infallible an unerring Wiſdom, it would be a weakneſs to change the Purpoſe: But indeed the Liberty of Gods Will doth not ſeem ſo much to conſiſt in an indifferency to this or that, as in an independency on any thing without himſelf: His Will was free, becauſe it did not depend upon the Objects about which his Will was converſant. To be immutably good, is no point of Imperfection, but the height of Perfection.

4. As God is unchangeable in regard of Eſſence, Knowledge, Purpoſe; ſo *he is unchangeable in regard of Place:* He cannot be changed in *Time*, becauſe he is *Eternity*; ſo he cannot be changed in *Place*, becauſe he hath *Ubiquity*: He is eternal, therefore cannot be changed in Time: He is Omnipreſent, therefore cannot be changed in Place: He doth not begin to be in one Place wherein he was not before, or ceaſe to be in a Place wherein he was before. He that fills every place in Heaven and Earth, cannot change Place; He cannot leave one to poſſeſs another, that is equally in regard of his Eſſence in all; *He fills Heaven and Earth*, Jer. 23.24. The Heavens that are not ſubject to thoſe changes to which ſublunary Bodies are ſubject, that are not diminiſh'd in quantity or quality; yet they are always changing place in regard of their motion; no part of them doth always continue in the ſame point: But God hath no change of his Nature, becauſe he is moſt inward in every thing; He is ſubſtantially in all Spaces, real and imaginary; There is no part of the World which he doth not fill; no place can be imagined wherein he doth not exiſt. Suppoſe a Million of Worlds above and about this, encircling one another; his Eſſence would be in every part and point of thoſe Worlds; Becauſe it is indiviſible, it cannot be divided; nor can it be contained within thoſe created limits of Millions of Worlds, when the moſt ſoaring and beſt coyning fancy hath run through all Creatures, to the higheſt Sphere of the Heavens, and imagined one World after another, till it can fancy no more: None of theſe, nor all of theſe, can contain God; for the *Heaven of Heavens cannot contain him*, 1 Kings 8.27. He is *higher than Heaven, deeper than Hell* *, and poſſeſſes infinite imaginary ſpaces beyond created limits. He who hath no cauſe of Being, can have no limits of Being *: And tho' by Creation he began to be in the World; yet he did not begin to be where the World is, but was in the ſame imaginary ſpace from all Eternity; for he was always in himſelf by his own eternal *Ubi*.

* Job 11 8.

* *Gamachæus, ut ſupra.*

Therefore *obſerve*, that when God is ſaid to *draw near* to us, when we *draw near* to him *, 'tis not by local motion or change of place, but by ſpecial and ſpiritual influences, by exciting and ſupporting grace. As we ordinarily ſay, the Sun is come into the Houſe when yet it remains in its place and order in the Heavens, becauſe the Beams pierce through the Windows and enlighten the Room: So when God is ſaid to *come down* or deſcend *, 'tis not by a change of place, but a change of outward acts, when he puts forth himſelf in ways of freſh Mercy or new Judgments, in the effluxes of his Love, or the flames of his Wrath. When good Men feel the warm Beams of his Grace refreſhing them, or wicked Men feel the hot Coals of his Anger ſcorching them. Gods drawing near to us, is not ſo much his coming to us, but his drawing us to him *: As when Water-men pull a Rope that is a one end faſtened to the Shore, and the other end to the Veſſel; the Shore is immoveable, yet it ſeems to the eye to come to them, but they really move to the Shore. God is an immoveable Rock; we are floating and uncertain Creatures; while he ſeems to approach to us, he doth really make us to approach to him: He comes not to us by any change of place himſelf, but draws us to him by a change of Mind, Will, and Affections in us.

* James 4.8.

* Gen. 11.5. Exod. 34.5.

* The Ancients, as *Dionyſius*, expreſt it by this ſimilitude.

2. *The ſecond* thing propounded, is *the Reaſons to prove God immutable.* The *Heathens* acknowledged God to be ſo; *Plato*, and the *Pythagoreans*, called God, or the Stable good Principle αὐτὸν, *Idem*: The evil Principle, ἕτερον, another thing, changeable; one thing one time, and another thing another time.

Plato calls God ὡσαὐτως ἀεὶ ἐχόμενον lib. 1. de Re. *Stabiliſq; manens dat cuncta moveri*, Boet. *Conſolat.* lib. 3.

Daniel 6. 26. *He is the living God and ſtedfaſt for ever.*

1. *The Name* Jehovah *ſignifies this Attribute*, Exod. 3. 14. *I am that I am, I am hath ſent me to you.* It ſignifies his Immutability as well as Eternity. *I am* ſignifies his Eternity; *that* or *the ſame that I am*, his Immutability: As it reſpects the Eſſence of God, it ſignifies his unchangeable Being from Eternity to Eternity; * As it reſpects the Creature, it ſignifies his conſtancy in his Counſels and Promiſes, which ſpring from no other cauſe but the unchangeableneſs of his Nature. The reaſon why Men ſtand not to their Covenant, is becauſe they are not always the ſame: *I am*, that is, I am the ſame, before the Creation of the World, and ſince the Creation of the World; before the entrance of Sin, and ſince the entrance of Sin; before their going into *Egypt*, and whiles they remain in *Egypt*. * The very Name *Jehovah*, bears according

Trap. on *Exod.*

* *Amyrald.* de Trinitat. p.433.

* *Spanhe. Synta. part.* 1. p.39.

according to the Grammatical Order, a mark of Gods Unchangeableneſs; It never hath any thing added to it, nor any thing taken from it; It hath no Plural Number, no Affixes, a Cuſtom peculiar to the Eaſtern Languages; It never changes its letters as other words do. * That only is a true Being, which hath not only an eternal Exiſtence, but ſtability in it: That is not truly a Being that never remains in the ſame ſtate. All things that are changed, ceaſe to be what they were, and begin to be what they were not, and therefore cannot have the title truly applied to them *they are*; they are indeed, but like a River in a continual Flux, that no Man ever ſees the ſame; let his eye be fixed upon one place of it, the water he ſees, ſlides away, and that which he ſaw not, ſucceeds in its place; let him take his eye off but for the leaſt moment, and fix it there again, and he ſees not the ſame that he ſaw before. All ſenſible things are in a perpetual ſtream; that which is ſometimes this, and ſometimes that, is not, becauſe it is not always the ſame; whatſoever is changed, is ſomething now which it was not always: But of God it is ſaid, *I am*, which could not be if he were changeable; for it may be ſaid of him he is not, as well as he is, becauſe he is not what he was; If we ſay not of him, he was, nor he will be, but only he is; whence ſhould any change arrive? He muſt invincibly remain the ſame, of whoſe Nature, Perfections, Knowledge and Will, it cannot be ſaid it was, as if it were not now in him; or it ſhall be, as if it were not yet in him; But he is, becauſe he doth not only exiſt; but doth always exiſt the ſame. *I am*, that is, I receive from no other what I am in my ſelf: He depends upon no other in his Eſſence, Knowledge, Purpoſes, and therefore hath no changing Power over him.

* *Petav. Theol. Dogmat. Tom. 1. cap 6. §. 7, 8.*

2. *If God were changeable, He could not be the moſt perfect Being.* God is the moſt perfect Being, and poſſeſſes in himſelf infinite and eſſential Goodneſs, *Mat.* 5. 48. *Your heavenly Father is perfect*: If he could change from that perfection, he were not the higheſt Exemplar and Copy for us to write after. If God doth change, it muſt be either to a greater Perfection than he had before, or to a leſs, *mutatio perfectiva vel amiſſiva*; If he changes to acquire a Perfection he had not, then he was not before the moſt excellent Being neceſſarily; He was not what he might be; there was a defect in him, and a privation of that which is better than what he had and was; and then he was not always the beſt, and ſo was not always God; and being not always God, could never be God; for to begin to be God is againſt the Notion of God: Not to a leſs perfection than he had; that were to change to imperfection, and to loſe a perfection which he poſſeſſed before, and ceaſe to be the beſt Being; for he would loſe ſome good which he had, and acquire ſome evil which he was free from before: So that the Soveraign Perfection of God, is an Invincible Bar to any change in him; For which way ſoever you caſt it for a change, his Supream Excellency is impaired and nulled by it: For in all change, there is ſomething from which a thing is changed, and ſomething to which it is changed; ſo that on the one part, there is a loſs of what it had, and on the other part there is an acquiſition of what it had not: If to the better, he was not perfect, and ſo was not God; if to the worſe, he will not be perfect, and ſo be no longer God after that change.

If God be changed, his change muſt be voluntary or neceſſary; if voluntary, he then intends the change for the better, and choſe it to acquire a Perfection by it: The Will muſt be carried out to any thing under the notion of ſome Goodneſs in that which it deſires. Since Good is the Object of the deſire and will of the Creature, Evil cannot be the Object of the deſire and will of the Creator. And if he ſhould be changed for the worſe when he did really intend the better, it would ſpeak a defect of Wiſdom, and a miſtake of that for good which was evil and imperfect in it ſelf; and if it be for the better, it muſt be a motion or change for ſomething without himſelf; that which he deſireth is not poſſeſſed by himſelf but by ſome other: There is then ſome good without him and above him, which is the end in this change; for nothing acts but for ſome end, and that end is within it ſelf or without it ſelf; If the end for which God changes be without himſelf, then there is ſomething better than himſelf: Beſides, if he were voluntarily changed for the better, why did he not change before? If it were for want of Power, he had the imperfection of weakneſs; If for want of Knowledge of what was the beſt Good, he had the imperfection of Wiſdom, he was ignorant of his own happineſs; If he had both Wiſdom to know it and Power to effect it, it muſt be for want of Will; He then wanted that love to himſelf and his own Glory, which is neceſſary in the Supream Being: Voluntarily he could not be changed for the worſe, he could not be ſuch an Enemy to his own Glory, there is nothing but would hinder its own Imperfection and becoming worſe: Neceſſarily he could not be changed, for that neceſſity muſt ariſe from himſelf, and then the difficulties ſpoken of before will recur; or it muſt ariſe from another; He cannot be bettered by another, becauſe nothing hath any good but what it hath received from the hands of his bounty, and that without loſs to himſelf; nor made worſe; if any thing made him worſe, it would be Sin, but that cannot touch his Eſſence, or obſcure his Glory, but in the deſign and nature of the Sin it ſelf, *Job* 35. *v.* 6, 7. *If thou ſinneſt, what doſt thou againſt him? Or if thy Tranſgreſſions be multiplied, what doſt thou unto him? If thou be righteous, what giveſt thou him; or what receives he at thy hand?* He hath no addition by the Service of Man, no more than the Sun hath of Light by a multitude of Torches kindled on the Earth, nor any more impair by the Sins of Men, than the Light of the Sun hath by Mens ſhooting Arrows againſt it.

3. * *God were not the moſt ſimple Being, if he were not immutable.* There is in every thing that is mutable, a Compoſition, either eſſential or accidental; and in all changes, ſomething of the thing changed remains, and ſomething of it cealeth and is done away: As for example, in an accidental change, If a white Wall be made black, it loſes its white colour; but the Wall it ſelf, which was the Subject of that colour, remains and loſes nothing of its ſubſtance: Likewiſe in a ſubſtantial change, as when Wood is burnt, the ſubſtantial part of Wood is loſt, the earthly part is changed into Aſhes, the airy part aſcends in Smoke, the watery parts is changed into Air by the Fire: There is not an annihilation of it, but a reſolution of it into thoſe parts whereof it was compounded; and this change doth evidence, that it was compounded of ſeveral parts diſtinct from one another. If there were any change in God, 'tis by ſeparating ſomething from him, or adding ſomething to him; if by ſeparating ſomething from him, then he was compounded of ſomething diſtinct from himſelf; for if it were not diſtinct from himſelf, it could not be ſeparated from him without loſs of his Being; if by adding any thing to him, then it is a compounding of him, either ſubſtantially or accidentally.

* *Gamach. in prim. part. Aquin. queſt. 9. cap. 1. part. 72.*

Mutability is abſolutely inconſiſtent with Simplicity, whether the change come from an internal or external Principle. If a change be wrought by ſomething without, it ſuppoſeth either contrary or various parts in the thing ſo changed, whereof it doth conſiſt, if it be wrought by any thing within, it ſuppoſeth

ſeth that the thing ſo changed doth conſiſt of one part that doth change it, and another part that is changed, and ſo it would not be a ſimple Being. If God could be changed by any thing within himſelf, all in God would not be God; his Eſſence would depend upon ſome parts, whereof ſome would be ſuperior to others: If one part were able to change or deſtroy another, that which doth change would be God, that which is changed would not be God; ſo God would be made up of a Deity and a non-Deity, and part of God would depend upon God; part would be dependent, and part would be independent; part would be mutable, part immutable: So that Mutability is againſt the notion of Gods Independency as well as his Simplicity. * God is the moſt ſimple Being; for that which is firſt in Nature, having nothing beyond it, cannot by any means be thought to be compounded; for whatſoever is ſo, depends upon the parts whereof it is compounded, and ſo is not the firſt Being: Now God being infinitely ſimple, hath nothing in himſelf which is not himſelf, and therefore cannot will any change in himſelf, he being his own Eſſence and Exiſtence.

* *Ficinus Zachar. mitylen in Peta. Tom. 1. p. 169.*

4. *God were not eternal if he were mutable.* In all change there is ſomething that periſhes, either ſubſtantially or accidentally. All change is a kind of death, or imitation of death; that which was, dies, and begins to be what it was not. The Soul of Man, tho' it ceaſeth not to be and exiſt; yet when it ceaſeth to be in quality what it was, is ſaid to die. *Adam* died when he changed from Integrity to Corruption, tho' both his Soul and Body were in Being *; and the Soul of a regenerate Man is ſaid to *die to Sin*, when it is changed from Sin to Grace *. In all change there is a reſemblance of death: So the Notion of Mutability is againſt the Eternity of God. If any thing be acquired by a change, than that which is acquired was not from Eternity, and ſo he was not wholly eternal; if any thing be loſt which was from Eternity, he is not wholly everlaſting: If he did decreaſe by the change, ſomething in him which had no beginning would have an end; if he did increaſe by that change, ſomething in him would have a beginning that might have no end *. What is changed doth not remain, and what doth not remain is not eternal. Tho' God always remains in regard of Exiſtence, he would be Immortal, and live always; yet if he ſhould ſuffer any change, he could not properly be eternal; becauſe he would not always be the ſame, and would not in every part be eternal; for all change is finiſhed in Time, one moment preceding, another moment following; but that which is before Time cannot be changed by Time. God cannot be eternally what he was; that is, he cannot have a true Eternity, if he had a new Knowledge, new Purpoſe, a new Eſſence; if he were ſometimes this, and ſometimes that, ſometimes know this, and ſometimes know that, ſometimes purpoſe this, and afterwards hath a new purpoſe, he would be partly temporary and partly eternal, not truly and univerſally eternal: He that hath any thing of newneſs, hath not properly and truly an intire Eternity. Again, by the ſame reaſon that God could in the leaſt ceaſe to be what he was, he might alſo ceaſe wholly to be; and no reaſon can be rendred, why God might not ceaſe wholly to be, as well as ceaſe to be intirely and uniformly what he was: All changeableneſs implies a corruptibility.

*Gen. 2. 17. *Rom. 6. 11

* *Auſtin in Per. Tom. 1 p. 201.*

5. If God were changeable, *He were not Infinite and Almighty.* All change ends in addition or diminution; if any thing be added, he was not Infinite before; if any thing be diminiſh'd, he is not Infinite after. All change implies bounds and limits to that which is changed; but God is infinite, *His greatneſs is unſearchable* *: We can add Number to Number without any end, and can conceive an infinite Number; yet the Greatneſs of God is beyond all our Conceptions: But if there could be any change in his Greatneſs for the better, it would not be unſearchable before that change; if for the worſe, it would not be unſearchable after that change: Whatſoever hath limits and is changeable, is conceivable and ſearchable; But God is not only not known, but impoſſible in his own Nature to be known and ſearched out, and therefore impoſſible to have any diminution in his Nature. All that which is changed, arrives to ſomething which is was not before, or ceaſeth in part to be what it was before.

* Pſ. 145. 3. אין חקר *to end, no term.*

He would not alſo be *Almighty.* What is Omnipotent cannot be made worſe; for to be made worſe, is in part to be corrupted: If he be made better, he was not Almighty before, ſomething of Power was wanting to him: If there ſhould be any change, it muſt proceed from himſelf or from another; if from himſelf, it would be an inability to preſerve himſelf in the perfection of his Nature; if from another, he would be inferior in Strength, Knowledge and Power, to that which changes him, either in his Nature, Knowledge or Will; in both an inability; an inability in him to continue the ſame, or an inability in him to reſiſt the Power of another.

6. *The World could not be ordered and governed, but by ſome Principle or Being which were immutable.* Principles are always more fixed and ſtable, than things which proceed from thoſe Principles; and this is true both in Morals and Naturals. Principles in Conſcience, whereby Men are governed, remain firmly engraven in their Minds. The Root lies firmly in the Earth, while Branches are ſhaken with the Wind. The Heavens, the cauſe of Generation, are more firm and ſtable than thoſe things which are wrought by their influence. All things in the World are moved by ſome Power and Vertue which is ſtable; and unleſs it were ſo, no Order would be obſerved in Motion, no Motion could be regularly continued. He could not be a full ſatisfaction to the infinite deſire of the Souls of his People. Nothing can truly ſatisfie the Soul of Man but Reſt; and nothing can give it reſt, but that which is perfect and immutably perfect; for elſe it would be ſubject to thoſe agitations and variations, which the Being it depends upon is ſubject to.

The *Principle* of all things muſt be immutable *; which is deſcribed by ſome by a Unite, the Principle of Number, wherein there is a reſemblance of Gods Unchangeableneſs. A Unite is not variable, it continues in its own Nature immutably an Unite; It never varies from it ſelf, it cannot be changed from it ſelf, but is as it were ſo omnipotent towards others, that it changes all Numbers: If you add any Number, it is the beginning of that Number, but the Unite is not encreaſed by it; a new Number ariſeth from that Addition, but the Unite ſtill remains the ſame, and adds a value to other Figures, but receives none from them.

* *Fotherby Atheomaſtix. p. 308. Gerhard. loc. com.*

3. The third thing to ſpeak to is,

That Immutability is proper to God, and incommunicable to any Creature. Mutability is natural to every Creature as a Creature, and Immutability is the ſole perfection of God: He only is infinite Wiſdom, able to fore-know future events; He only is infinitely powerful, able to call forth all means to effect; So that wanting neither Wiſdom to contrive, nor Strength to execute, he cannot alter his Counſel: None being above him, nothing in him contrary to him, and being defective in no Bleſſedneſs and Perfection, he cannot vary in his Eſſence and Nature: Had not Immutability as well as Eternity, been a Property ſolely pertaining to the Divine Nature, as well as creative Power and eternal Duration; the

Apoſtles

Apoſtles Argument to prove Chriſt to be God from from this perpetual ſameneſs, had come ſhort of any convincing ſtrength. Theſe words of the Text he applies to Chriſt, *Heb.* 1. 10, 11, 12. *They ſhall be changed, but thou art the ſame.* There had been no ſtrength in the reaſon, if Immutability by Nature did belong to any Creature.

The *changeableneſs of all Creatures* is evident;

1. *Of Corporeal Creatures*, it is evident to ſenſe. All Plants and Animals, as they have their duration bounded in certain limits; ſo while they do exiſt, they proceed from their riſe to their fall; they paſs through many ſenſible alterations, from one degree of Growth to another, from buds to bloſſoms, from bloſſoms to flowers and fruits; they come to their pitch that Nature hath ſet them, and return back to the ſtate from whence they ſprung; there is not a day, but they make ſome acquiſition, or ſuffer ſome loſs; they die and ſpring up every day; nothing in them more certain than their Inconſtancy: *Rom 8.20 *The Creature is ſubject to vanity* *. The heavenly Bodies are changing their place; the Sun every day is running his Race, and ſtays not in the ſame Point; and tho' they are not changed in their Eſſence, yet they are in their Place: Some indeed ſay there is a continual generation of Light in the Sun, as there is a loſs of Light by the caſting out its Beams, as in a Fountain there is a flowing out of the Streams, and a continual generation of ſupply: And tho' theſe heavenly Bodies have kept their ſtanding and motion from the time of their Creation; yet both the Suns ſtanding ſtill in *Joſhuah*'s time, and its going back in *Hezekiah*'s time, ſhew that they are changeable at the pleaſure of God.

But in Man, the change is perpetually viſible; every day there is a change from Ignorance to Knowledge, from one Will to another, from Paſſion to Paſſion, ſometimes ſad and ſometimes cheerful, ſometimes craving this, and preſently nauſeating it; his Body changes from health to ſickneſs, or from weakneſs to ſtrength; ſome alteration there is either in Body or Mind. Man, who is the nobleſt Creature, the ſubordinate end of the Creation of other things, cannot aſſure himſelf of a conſiſtency and fixedneſs in any thing the ſhort ſpace of *a day*, no not of a mi- * Job 7. 3. nute; all his Months are *Months of vanity* *; whence Pſal 35. the *Pſalmiſt* calls Man at the *beſt eſtate, altogether vanity*, a meer heap of vanity: As he contains in his Nature the Nature of all Creatures, ſo he inherits in his Nature the Vanity of all Creatures: A little World, the Center of the World, and of the Vanity * Pſal. 62. 9. of the World; yea, *lighter than Vanity* *; more moveable than a Feather; toſt between Paſſion and Paſſion, daily changing his end, and changing the means; An Image of nothing.

2. *Spiritual Natures*, as *Angels*; They change not in their Being, but that is from the indulgence of God: They change not in their Goodneſs, but that is not from their Nature, but Divine Grace in their confirmation; but they change in their Knowledge, they know more by *Chriſt* than they did by *Crea-* *1 Tim. 3 16 *tion* *; They have an addition of knowledge every day, by the providential diſpenſations of God to his *Eph. 3. 10. *Church* *; and the increaſe of their aſtoniſhment and love, is according to the increaſe of their Knowledge and Inſight: They cannot have a new diſcovery, without new admirations of what is diſcovered to them; There is a change in their *joy*, *when there is* *Luk 15. 10 *a change in a Sinner* *: They were changed in their Eſſence, when they were made ſuch glorious Spirits of nothing; Some of them were changed in their Will, when of holy they became impure: The good Angels were changed in their Underſtandings, when the Glories of God in Chriſt were preſented to their view; and all can be changed in their Eſſence again; and as they were made of nothing, ſo by the Power of God may be reduced to nothing again. So glorified Souls ſhall have an unchanged operation about God, for they ſhall behold his face without any grief or fear of loſs, without vagrant thoughts; but they can never be unchangeable in their Nature, becauſe they can never paſs from finite to infinite.

No Creature can be *unchangeable in its Nature.*

1. *Becauſe every Creature roſe from nothing.* As they roſe from nothing, ſo they tend to nothing unleſs they are preſerved by God: The Notion of a Creature ſpeaks changeableneſs; becauſe to be a Creature, is to be made ſomething of nothing, and therefore Creation is a change of nothing into ſomething: The Being of a Creature begins from change, and therefore the Eſſence of a Creature is ſubject to change: God only is uncreated, and therefore unchangeable; If he were made, he could not be immutable; for the very making is a change of not being into being. All Creatures were made good as they were the fruits of Gods Goodneſs and Power; but muſt needs be mutable, becauſe they were the extracts of nothing.

2. Becauſe *every Creature depends purely upon the Will of God.* They depend not upon themſelves, but upon another for their Being: As they received their Being from the Word of his Mouth, and the Arm of his Power; ſo by the ſame Word they can be cancelled into nothing, and return into as little ſignificancy as when they were nothing: He that created them by a Word, can by a Word deſtroy them, *Pſal.* 104. *v.* 29. If God ſhould *take away their breath, they die and return into their Duſt.* As it was in the power of the Creator that things might be, before they actually were; ſo it is in the power of the Creator that things after they are, may ceaſe to be what they are; and they are in their own Nature as reducible to nothing, as they were producible by the power of God from nothing; for there needs no more than an Act of Gods Will to null them, as there needed only an Act of Gods Will to make them. Creatures are all ſubject to a higher Cauſe: They are all *reputed as nothing: He doth according to his Will in the Armies of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth, and none can ſtay his Hand, or ſay unto him, what doſt thou* *? But God is unchangeable, becauſe *Dan. 4. 35. he is the higheſt Good; none above him, all below him; all dependent on him; Himſelf upon none.

3. *No Creature is abſolutely perfect.* No Creature can be ſo perfect, or can ever be, but ſomething by the infinite Power of God may he added to it; for whatſoever is finite may receive greater additions, and therefore a change. No Creature you can imagine, but in your thoughts you may fancy him capable of greater perfections than you know he hath, or than really he hath: The perfections of all Creatures are ſearchable; the perfection of God is only *unſearchable* *, and therefore he only immutable. * Job 11. 6

God only is always the ſame: Time makes no addition to him, nor diminiſheth any thing of him; His Nature and Eſſence, his Wiſdom and Will, have always been the ſame from Eternity, and ſhall be the ſame to Eternity without any variation.

4. The *fourth thing* propounded, is ſome *Propoſitions to clear this Unchangeableneſs of God, from any thing that ſeems contrary to it.*

Firſt, *There was no change in God when he began to create the World in Time.* The Creation was a real change, but the change was not ſubjectively in God, but in the Creature; the Creature began to be what it was not before. Creation is conſidered as active or paſſive *; active Creation is the Will and *Gamach. in part. 1. Aquin. Qu. 9. cap. 1. p. 72. Power of God to create; this is from Eternity, becauſe God willed from Eternity to create in Time; This never had beginning, for God never began in Time

time to underſtand any thing, to will any thing, or to be able to do any thing; but he always underſtood, and always willed thoſe things which he determined from Eternity to produce in Time. The *Decree* of God may be taken for the *Act* decreeing, that is eternal and the ſame; or for the *Object* decreed, that is in Time: So that there may be a change in the *Object*, but not in the *Will* whereby the Object doth exiſt.

1. There was no change in God by the *Act* of Creation, *becauſe there was no new Will in him.* There was no new Act of his Will which was not before. The Creation begun in Time, but the Will of Creating was from Eternity. The Work was new, but the Decree whence that new work ſprung, was as ancient as the Ancient of days: When the time of creating came, God was not made *ex nolente volens*, as we are; for whatſoever God willed to be now done, he willed from Eternity to be done; but he willed alſo that it ſhould not be done, till ſuch an inſtant of time, and that it ſhould not exiſt before ſuch a time. If God had willed the Creation of the World only at that time when the World was produced, and not before, then indeed God had been changeable: But tho' God ſpake that Word, which he had not ſpoke before, whereby the World was brought into act; yet he did not will that Will he willed not before. God did not create by a new Counſel, or new Will, but by that which was from Eternity, *Eph.* 1. 9. All things are wrought according to that *purpoſe in himſelf*, and according to *the Counſel of his Will*, v. 11. And as the holineſs of the Elect is the fruit of his eternal Will *before the foundation of the World*, v. 4. ſo likewiſe is the Exiſtence of things, and of thoſe perſons whom he did elect: As when an Artificer frames a Houſe, or a Temple, according to that Model he had in his mind ſome years before, there is no change in the Model in his mind, the Artificer is the ſame, tho' the Work is produced by him ſometime after he had framed that Copy of it in his own mind; but there is a change of the thing produced by him according to that Model. Or when a rich Man intends *four or five years* hence, if he lives, to build an Hoſpital, is there any change in his Will, when after the expiration of that time he builds and endows it? Tho' it be after his Will, yet it is the fruit of his precedent Will: So God from all Eternity did will and command that the Creatures ſhould exiſt in ſuch a part of time; and by this eternal Will, all things, whether paſt, preſent or to come, did, do, and ſhall exiſt at that point of time, which that Will did appoint for them; Not as tho' God had a new Will, when things ſtood up in Being, but only that which was prepared in his immutable Counſel and Will from Eternity, doth then appear. There can be no Inſtant fixed from Eternity, wherein it can be ſaid, God did not will the Creation of the World; For had the Will of God for the ſhorteſt moment been undetermined to the Creation of the World, and afterwards reſolved upon it, there had been a moral change in God from not willing to willing; But this there was not, for God executes nothing in Time which he had not ordained from Eternity, and appointed all the means and circumſtances whereby it ſhould be brought about. As the determination of our Saviour to ſuffer was not a new Will, but an eternal Counſel, and wrought no change in God. Acts 2. 23.

2. There is no change in God by the act of Creation, becauſe *there was no new Power in God.* Had God had a Will at the time of the Creation which he had not before, there had been a moral change in him; ſo had there been in him a Power only to create then and not before, there had been a phyſical change in him from weakneſs to ability. There can be no more new Power in God, than there can be a new Will in God; for his Will is his Power, and what he willeth to effect, that he doth effect: As he was unchangeably Holy, ſo he was unchangeably Almighty, *which was, and is, and is to come* *; which was Almighty, and is Almighty, and ever will be Almighty. The Work therefore makes no change in God, but there is a change in the thing wrought by that Power of God. Suppoſe you had a Seal engraven upon ſome Metal a hundred years old, or as old as the Creation; and you ſhould this day, ſo many Ages after the engraving of it, make an impreſſion of that Seal upon Wax; would you ſay the Engravement upon the Seal were changed, becauſe it produced that ſtamp upon the Wax now, which it did not before? No, the change is purely in the Wax, which receives a new figure or form by the impreſſion; not in the Seal, that was capable of imprinting the ſame long before. God was the ſame from Eternity, as he was when he made a Signature of himſelf upon the Creatures by Creation, and is no more changed by ſtamping them into ſeveral forms, than the Seal is changed by making impreſſion upon the Wax: As when a Houſe is enlightned by the Sun, or that which was cold is heated by it; there is a change in the Houſe from darkneſs to light, from coldneſs to heat; but is there any change in the light and heat of the Sun? There is a change in the thing enlightned or warmed by that light and heat which remains fixed and conſtant in the Sun, which was as capable in it ſelf to produce the ſame effects before, as at that inſtant when it works them: So when God is the Author of a new Work, he is not changed; becauſe he works it by an eternal Will and an eternal Power. * Rev. 4. 8.

3. *Nor is there any new relation acquired by God by the Creation of the World.* There was a new relation acquired by the Creature; as when a Man ſins, he hath another relation to God than he had before; he hath relation to God, as a Criminal to a Judge; But there is no change in God, but in the Malefactor. The Being of Men makes no more change in God than the Sins of Men. As a Tree is now on our right hand, and by our turning about it is on our left hand, ſometimes before us, ſometimes behind us, according to our motion near it or about it: and the turning of the Body; There is no change in the Tree, which remains firm and fixed in the Earth; but the change is wholly in the poſture of the Body; whereby the Tree may be ſaid to be before us or behind us, or on the right hand or on the left hand. * God gained no new relation of Lord or Creator by the Creation; for tho' he had created nothing to rule over, yet he had the Power to create and rule, tho' he did not create and rule: As a Man may be called a skilful Writer, tho' he does not write, becauſe he is able to do it when he pleaſes; or a Man skilful in Phyſick is called a Phyſician, tho' he doth not practiſe that Skill, or diſcover his Art in the diſtribution of Medicines; becauſe he may do it when he pleaſes, it depends upon his own Will to ſhew his Art when he has a mind to it: So the Name Creator and Lord, belongs to God from Eternity, becauſe he could create and rule, tho' he did not create and rule: But howſoever, if there were any ſuch change of relation, that God may be called Creator and Lord, after the Creation, and not before; 'tis not a change in Eſſence, nor in Knowledge, nor in Will; God gains no perfection, nor diminution by it, his Knowledge is not increaſed by it; He is no more by it than he was, and will be, if all thoſe things ceaſed; and therefore *Auſtin* illuſtrates it by this ſimilitude; as a piece of Money when it is given as the price of a thing, or depoſited only as a pledge for the ſecurity of a thing borrowed; the Coyn is the ſame and is not changed, tho' the relation it had as a pledge and as a price be different

* *Petav. Theol. Dogmat. Tom. 1. lib.*

from one another; ſo that ſuppoſe any new relation be added, yet there is nothing happens to the Nature of God which may infer any change.

2. The ſecond Propoſition. *There was no change in the Divine Nature of the Son, when he aſſumed Humane Nature.* There was an Union of the two Natures, but no change of the Deity into the Humanity, or of the Humanity into the Deity; both preſerved their peculiar Properties: The Humanity was changed by a communication of excellent Gifts from the Divine Nature, not by being brought into an equality with it, for that was impoſſible that a Creature ſhould become equal to the Creator; He took the *Form of a Servant*, but he loſt not the Form of God, he deſpoiled not himſelf of the Perfections of the Deity; He was indeed emptied, *and became of no reputation* *, but he did not ceaſe to be God, tho' he was reputed to be only a Man, and a very mean one too: The Glory of his Divinity was not extinguiſh'd nor diminiſh'd, tho' it was obſcur'd and darkned under the veil of our infirmities; but there is no more change in the hiding of it, than there was in the Body of the Sun, when it is ſhadowed by the interpoſition of a Cloud; His blood, while it was pouring out from his Veins, was the *blood of God* *; and therefore when he was bowing the Head of his Humanity upon the Croſs, he had the Nature and Perfections of God; for had he ceaſed to be God, he had been a meer Creature, and his Sufferings would have been of as little value and ſatisfaction as the Sufferings of a Creature.

* Phil. 2. 7.

* Act. 20. 28

He could not have been a ſufficient Mediator, had he ceaſed to be God; and he had ceaſed to be God, had he loſt any one Perfection proper to the Divine Nature; and loſing none, he loſt not this of unchangeableneſs, which is none of the meaneſt belonging to the Deity: Why by his Union with the Humane Nature ſhould he loſe this, any more than he loſt his Omniſcience, which he diſcovered by his knowledge of the thoughts of Men; or his Mercy, which he manifeſted to the height in the time of his Suffering? That is truly a change, when a thing ceaſeth to be what it was before; This was not in Chriſt, he aſſumed our Nature without laying aſide his own. * When the Soul is united to the Body, doth it loſe any of thoſe perfections that are proper to its Nature? Is there any change either in the ſubſtance or qualities of it? No, but it makes a change in the Body, and of a dull Lump it makes it a living Maſs, conveys vigour and ſtrength to it; and by its power, quickens it to ſence and motion, So did the Divine Nature and Humane remain intire; there was no change of the one into the other, as Chriſt by a Miracle changed Water into Wine, or Men by Art change Sand or Aſhes into Glaſs: And when *he prays for the Glory he had with God before the World was* *, he prays that a Glory he had in his Deity, might ſhine forth in his Perſon as Mediator, and be evidenced in that height and ſplendor ſuitable to his dignity, which had been ſo lately darkned by his abaſement; that as he had appeared to be the Son of Man in the infirmity of the Fleſh, he might appear to be the Son of God in the glory of his Perſon, that he might appear to be the Son of God, and the Son of Man, in one Perſon.

* *Zanch.* de Immutab. Dei. *Goulart* de Immutab. de Dieu.

* John 17. 5.

* *Gamach.* in Part. 1. Aquin. qu. 9. cap. 1.

* Again, there could be no change in this Union; for in a real change, ſomething is acquired which was not poſſeſſed before, neither formally nor eminently; But the Divinity had from Eternity before the Incarnation, all the perfections of the Humane Nature eminently in a nobler manner than they are in themſelves, and therefore could not be changed by a real Union.

3. The third Propoſition. *Repentance and other Affections, aſcribed to God in Scripture, argue no change in God.* We often read of God's *repenting*, repenting of the *Good* he promiſed *, and of the *Evil* he threatned *, or of the *Work* he hath wrought *.

* Jer. 18. 10
* Exod. 32. v. 14.
John 3. 10.

We muſt obſerve therefore, that,

1. *Repentance is not properly in God.* He is a *pure Spirit*, and is not capable of thoſe Paſſions, which are ſigns of weakneſs and impotence, or ſubject to thoſe regrets, we are ſubject to: Where there is a proper repentance, there is a want of foreſight, an ignorance of what would ſucceed, or a defect, in the examination of the occurrences, which might fall within conſideration: All repentance of a fact, is grounded upon a miſtake in the event, which was not foreſeen; or upon an after-knowledge of the evil of the thing which was acted by the perſon repenting: But God is ſo wiſe that he cannot err; ſo holy he cannot do evil; and his certain preſcience or fore-knowledge, ſecures him againſt any unexpected events: God doth not act but upon clear and infallible reaſon: And a change upon paſſion is accounted by all ſo great a weakneſs in Man, that none can entertain ſo unworthy a conceit of God. Where he is ſaid to repent,* he is alſo ſaid to grieve; now no proper grief can be imagined to be in God: As repentance is inconſiſtent with infallible foreſight, ſo is grief no leſs inconſiſtent with undefiled bleſſedneſs: *God is bleſſed for ever* *, and therefore nothing can befal him that can ſtain that bleſſedneſs; his bleſſedneſs would be impaired, and interrupted, while he is repenting, tho' he did ſoon rectifie that which is the cauſe of his repentance: *God is of one mind, and who can turn him? what his Soul deſires that he doth* *.

* Gen. 6. 6.

* Rom. 9 8.

* Job. 23. v. 13.

2. But *God accommodates himſelf in the Scripture to our weak capacity.* God hath no more of a proper repentance, than he hath of a real body; tho' he, in accommodation to our weakneſs, aſcribes to himſelf the Members of our Bodies, to ſet out to our underſtanding the greatneſs of his perfections, we muſt not conclude him a Body like us; ſo becauſe he is ſaid to have anger and repentance, we muſt not conclude him to have paſſions like us. When we cannot fully comprehend him as he is, he cloaths himſelf with our nature in his expreſſions, that we may apprehend him as we are able, and by an inſpection into our ſelves, learn ſomething of the nature of God; yet thoſe Humane ways of ſpeaking ought to be underſtood in a manner agreeable to the infinite Excellency and Majeſty of God; and are only deſigned to mark out ſomething in God, which hath a reſemblance with ſomething in us: As we cannot ſpeak to God as Gods, but as Men; ſo we cannot underſtand him ſpeaking to us as a God, unleſs he condeſcends to ſpeak to us like a Man. God therefore frames his language to our dulneſs, not to his own ſtate; and informs us by our own phraſes, what he would have us learn of his nature; as Nurſes talk broken language to young Children. In all ſuch expreſſions, therefore we muſt aſcribe the perfection we conceive in them to God, and lay the imperfection at the door of the Creature.

3. Therefore *repentance in God is only a change of his outward conduct, according to his infallible foreſight and immutable Will.* He changes the way of his Providential proceeding according to the *carriage* of the Creature, without changing his *Will*, which is the Rule of his Providence; when God ſpeaks of his *repenting that he had made Man* *; 'tis only his changing his conduct from a way of kindneſs to a way of ſeverity, and is a word ſuited to our capacities, to ſignifie his deteſtation of ſin, and his reſolution to puniſh it, after Man had made himſelf quite another thing than God had made him; *It repents me*, that is, I am purpoſed to deſtroy the World; as he that repents of his work throws it away: * As if a Potter caſts away the Veſſel he

* Gen. 6. 6

* Mercer. *in loc.*

he had framed, it were a teſtimony, that he repented that ever he took pains about it: So the deſtruction of them ſeems to be a repentance in God that ever he made them; 'tis a change of Events, not of Counſels. *Repentance* in us is a grief for a former fact, and a changing of our courſe in it: Grief is not in God, * but his repentance is a willing a thing ſhould not be as it was, which Will was fixed from Eternity; for God foreſeeing Man would fall, and decreeing to permit it, he could not be ſaid to repent in time of what he did not repent from Eternity; and therefore if there were no repentance in God from Eternity, there could be none in time. But God is ſaid to repent, when he changes the diſpoſition of Affairs without himſelf; as Men when they repent, alter the courſe of their actions, ſo God alters things *extra ſe*, or without himſelf, but changes nothing of his own purpoſe within himſelf. It rather notes the action he is about to do, than any thing in his own nature, or any change in his eternal purpoſe. God's repenting of his kindneſs, is nothing but an inflicting of puniſhment, which the Creature by the change of his carriage hath merited: As his repenting of the evil threatned is the with-holding the puniſhment denounced, when the Creature hath humbly ſubmitted to his Authority, and acknowledged his Crime.

* Petavius *Theol. Dogmat.*

Or elſe we may underſtand thoſe expreſſions of joy, and grief, and repentance, to ſignifie thus much, * that the things declared to be the objects of joy, and grief, and repentance, are of that nature, that if God were capable of our paſſions, he would diſcover himſelf in ſuch caſes as we do: As when the *Prophets* mention the joys and applaudings of Heaven, Earth, and the Sea, they only ſignifie that the things they ſpeak of are ſo good, that if the Heavens, and the Sea, had natures capable of joy, they would expreſs it upon that occaſion in ſuch a manner as we do: So would God have joy at the obedience of Men, and grief at the unworthy carriage of Men, and repent of his kindneſs, when Men abuſe it; and repent of his puniſhment, when Men reform under his Rod, were the Majeſty of his nature capable of ſuch affections.

* *Daille*, in Sermon on 2 *Pet.* 3. 9. p. 60.

4 Propoſition. *The not fulfilling of ſome predictions in Scripture, which ſeem to imply a changeableneſs of the Divine Will, do not argue any change in it.* As when he *reprieved Hezekiah* from death, *after* a *meſſage* ſent by the *Prophet Iſaiah, that he ſhould die* *, and when he made an *arreſt* of that Judgment he had threatned by *Jonah* againſt *Niniveh* *.

* 2 Kings, 20. v. 1, 5. Iſa. 38. 1, 5. * Jon. 3. v. 4, 10.

There is not indeed the ſame reaſon of promiſes and threatnings altogether, for in promiſing the obligation lies upon God, and the right to demand, is in the party that performs the condition of the promiſe: But in threatnings, the obligation lies upon the ſinner, and God's right to puniſh is declared thereby: So that tho' God doth not puniſh, his Will is not changed; becauſe his Will was to declare the demerit of ſin, and his right to puniſh upon the Commiſſion of it; tho' he may not puniſh according to the ſtrict letter of the threatning the perſon ſinning, but relax his own Law, for the honour of his Attributes, and transfer the puniſhment from the Offender to a perſon ſubſtituted in his room; this was the caſe in the firſt threatning againſt Man, and the ſubſtituting a Surety in the place of the Malefactor.

* *Rivet* in Geneſ. exercita. 51. p. 213.

But the *anſwer* to theſe caſes is this, * that where we find *predictions in Scripture* declared, and yet not executed, we muſt conſider them, not as abſolute, but conditional, or as the Civil Law calls it, an *interlocutory Sentence*. God declared what would follow by natural Cauſes, or by the demerit of Man, not what he would abſolutely himſelf do: And in many of thoſe predictions, tho' the condition be not expreſt, yet it is to be underſtood; ſo the promiſes of God are to be underſtood with the condition of perſeverance in well doing; and threatnings with a clauſe of revocation annex'd to them, provided that Men repent: And this God lays down as a general caſe, always to be remembred as a rule for the interpreting his threatnings againſt a Nation, and the ſame reaſon will hold in threatnings againſt a particular perſon. *Jer.* 18. 7, 8, 9, 10. *At what inſtant I ſhall ſpeak concerning a Nation and concerning a Kingdom, to pluck up, and pull down, and deſtroy it: If that Nation againſt whom I have pronounc'd, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them*; and ſo when he ſpeaks of planting a Nation, if they do evil, he will repent of the good, *&c.* 'Tis an *Univerſal Rule*, by which all particular caſes of this nature are to be tried; ſo that when Man's repentance arrives, God remains firm in his firſt Will, always equal to himſelf, and it is not he that changes, but Man. For ſince the interpoſition of the Mediator, with an eye to whom God governed the World after the Fall, the right of puniſhing was taken off if Men repented, and Mercy was to flow out, if by a Converſion Men returned to their Duty, *Ezek.* 18. 20, 21. This, I ſay, is grounded upon God's entertaining the *Mediator*; for the Covenant of Works diſcovered no ſuch thing as Repentance or Pardon. Now theſe general Rules are to be the Interpreters of particular Caſes: So that predictions of good are not to be counted abſolute, if Men return to evil; nor predictions of evil, if Men be thereby reduced to a repentance of their Crimes.

So *Niniveh* ſhall be deſtroyed; that is, according to the general Rule, unleſs the Inhabitants repent, which they did; they manifeſted a belief of the threatning, and gave glory to God by giving credit to the *Prophet*: and they had a notion of this rule God lays down in the other *Prophets*; for they had an apprehenſion that upon their humbling themſelves, they might eſcape the threatned vengeance, and ſtop the ſhooting thoſe Arrows that were ready in the *Bow* *. Tho' *Jonah* proclaimed deſtruction without declaring any hopes of an Arreſt of Judgment, yet their natural notions of God afforded ſome natural hopes of relief, if they did their duty, and ſpurned not againſt the *Prophet*'s meſſage; and therefore, ſaith one, God did not always expreſs this condition, becauſe it was needleſs; his own Rule revealed in Scripture was ſufficient to ſome, and the natural Notion all Men had of God's goodneſs upon their Repentance, made it not abſolutely neceſſary to declare it: And beſides, ſaith he, it is bootleſs; The expreſſing it can do but little good; ſecure ones will repent never the ſooner, but rather preſume upon their hopes of Gods forbearance, and linger out their Repentance till it be too late: And to work Men to Repentance, whom he hath purpoſed to ſpare, he threatens them with terrible Judgments; which by how much the more terrible and peremptory they are, are likely to be more effectual for the end God in his purpoſe deſigns them, *viz.* to humble them under a ſenſe of their demerit, and an acknowledgment of his righteous Juſtice; and therefore tho' they be abſolutely denounced, yet they are to be *conditionally* interpreted with a reſervation of Repentance: As for that *Anſwer* which one gives, that by *forty days* was not meant *forty Natural days*, but *forty Prophetical days*; that is, years, a day for year; and that the City was deſtroyed forty years after by the *Medes*: The expreſſion of God's repenting upon their Humiliation, puts a Bar to that Interpretation; God *repented*; that is, he did not bring the puniſhment upon 'em according to thoſe days the *Prophet* had expreſt;

* *Sanderſon's* Serm. Par. 2. p. 257, 258.

expreſt; and therefore *forty natural days* are to be underſtood; and if it were meant of *forty years*, and they were deſtroyed at the end of that term, how could God be ſaid to repent, ſince according to that, the puniſhment threatned was according to the time fixed brought upon them? And the deſtruction of it *forty years* after, will not be eaſily evinced, if *Jonah* lived in the time of *Jeroboam* the *ſecond King of* Iſrael, as he did *; And *Niniveh* was deſtroyed in the time of *Joſiah* King of *Judah*. But the other *Anſwer* is plain. God did not fulfil what he had threatned, becauſe they reformed what they had committed: When the threatning was made, they were a fit Object for Juſtice; but when they repented, they were a fit Object for a merciful Reſpite. To threaten when ſins are high, is a part of Gods Juſtice; not to execute when ſins are revok'd by Repentance, is a part of Gods goodneſs. And in the caſe of *Hezekiah* *, *Iſaiah* comes with a Meſſage from God, that he ſhould *ſet his houſe in order*, for he ſhall die; that is, the Diſeaſe was mortal, and no outward Applications could in their own nature reſiſt the Diſtemper. *Behold, I will add to thy days fifteen years; I will heal thee*: It ſeems to me to be one entire Meſſage, becauſe the latter part of it was ſo ſuddenly after the other committed to *Iſaiah* to be delivered to *Hezekiah*; for he was not gone out of the Kings Houſe, before he was ordered to return with the news of his health, by an extraordinary indulgence of God againſt the power of Nature, and force of the Diſeaſe: *Behold I will add to thy Life*; noting it an extraordinary thing: He was in the *ſecond Court* of the Kings Houſe when this word came to him *; the Kings Houſe having three Courts, ſo that he was not gone above half way out the Palace. God might ſend this Meſſage of Death, to prevent the Pride *Hezekiah* might ſwell with for his deliverance from *Senacherib*: As *Paul* had a *Meſſenger of Satan* to buffet him to prevent his lifting up *; and this good Man was ſubject to this ſin, as we find afterwards in the Caſe of the *Babyloniſh* Embaſſadors: And God delayed this other part of the Meſſage to humble him, and draw out his Prayer; and as ſoon as ever he found *Hezekiah* in this temper, he ſent *Iſaiah* with a comfortable meſſage of recovery: So that the Will of God was to ſignifie to him the mortality of his diſtemper, and afterwards to relieve him by a meſſage of an extraordinary Recovery.

* 2 Kings, 14.25.

* 2 Kings, 20.1,5.

Iſa 38.1,5.

* 2 Kings, 20. 4.

* 2 Cor. 12. v. 7.

5. Propoſition. *God is not changed, when of loving to any Creatures he becomes angry with them, or of angry he becomes appeaſed.* The change in theſe caſes is in the Creature; according to the alteration in the Creature, it ſtands in a various relation to God: an *innocent* Creature is the Object of his Kindneſs, an *offending* Creature is the Object of his Anger; there is a change in the diſpenſation of God, as there is a change in the Creature making himſelf capable of ſuch diſpenſations. God always acts according to the immutable nature of his Holineſs, and can no more change in his Affections to good and evil, than he can in his Eſſence. When the Devils, now fallen, ſtood as glorious Angels, they were the Objects of Gods love, becauſe holy: When they fell, they were the Objects of Gods hatred, becauſe impure; the ſame reaſon which made him love them while they were pure, made him hate them when they were criminal: The reaſon of his various diſpenſations to them was the ſame in both, as conſidered in God, his immutable holineſs; but as reſpecting the Creature, different; the nature of the Creature was changed, but the Divine holy nature of God remain'd the ſame; **With the pure thou wilt ſhew thy ſelf pure, and with the froward thou wilt ſhew thy ſelf froward*: He is a refreſhing light to thoſe that obey him, and a conſuming fire to thoſe that reſiſt him. Tho' the ſame Angels were not always loved, yet the ſame reaſon that moved him to love them, moved him to hate them. It had argued a change in God, if he had loved them always, in whatſoever poſture they were towards him: It could not be counted love, but a weakneſs and impotent fondneſs; the change is in the object, not in the affection of God: For the object loved before, is not beloved now, becauſe that which was the motive of love, is not now in it: So that the Creature having a different ſtate from what it had, falls under a different affection or diſpenſation.

* Pſ. 18.26.

It had been a mutable affection in God, to love that which was not worthy of love, with the ſame love wherewith he loved that which had the greateſt reſemblance to himſelf: Had God loved the fallen Angels in that ſtate, and for that ſtate, he had hated himſelf, becauſe he had loved that which was contrary to himſelf, and the Image of his own holineſs, which made them appear before, good in his ſight. The Will of God is unchangeably ſet to love righteouſneſs and hate iniquity, and from this hatred to puniſh it: And if a righteous Creature contracts the wrath of God, or a ſinful Creature hath the communications of Gods love, it muſt be by a change in themſelves. Is the Sun changed when it hardens one thing and ſoftens another, according to the diſpoſition of the ſeveral ſubjects? Or when the Sun makes a flower more fragrant, and a dead Carcaſs more noyſome? There are divers effects, but the reaſon of that diverſity is not in the Sun, but in the ſubject; the Sun is the ſame, and produceth thoſe different effects, by the ſame quality of heat: So if an unholy Soul approach to God, God looks angrily upon him; If a holy Soul come before him, the ſame immutable perfection in God draws out his kindneſs towards him: As ſome think, the Sun would rather refreſh than ſcorch us, if our bodies were of the ſame nature and ſubſtance with that Luminary.

As the Will of God for Creating the World, was no new, but an Eternal Will, tho' it manifeſted it ſelf in time; ſo the Will of God, for the puniſhment of ſin, or the reconciliation of the Sinner, was no new Will: Tho' his wrath in time break out in the effects of it upon Sinners, and his love flows out in the effects of it upon Penitents. Chriſt by his death reconciling God to Man, did not alter the Will of God, but did what was conſonant to his Eternal Will: He came not to change his Will, but to execute his Will. *Lo I come to do thy Will, O God**. And the grace of God in Chriſt, was not a new grace, but an old grace in a new appearance; *the grace of God hath appeared* *.

* Heb. 10.7.

* Tit. 1.11.

6. Propoſition. *A change of Laws by God argues no change in God, when God abrogates ſome Laws which he had ſettled in the Church, and enacts others.* I ſpake of this ſomething the laſt day: I ſhall only add this. God commanded one thing to the Jews, when the Church was in an *infant* ſtate; and removed thoſe Laws, when the Church came to ſome *growth*. The *Elements* of the World were ſuited to the ſtate of *Children*. * A Mother feeds not the *Infant* with the ſame Diet as ſhe doth when it is grown up. Our *Saviour* acquainted not his Diſciples with ſome things at one time which he did at another, becauſe they were not able to bear them; Where was the change, in Chriſts Will, or in their growth from a ſtate of weakneſs to that of ſtrength? A *Phyſician* preſcribes not the ſame thing to a perſon in health, as he doth to one conflicting with a diſtemper; nor the ſame thing in the beginning, as he doth in the ſtate or declination of the diſeaſe. The *Phyſicians* Will and Skill are the ſame, but the capacity and neceſſity of the Patient for this or that Medicine, or Method of proceeding, are not the ſame.

* Gal. 4.3.

When God changed the *Ceremonial* Law, there was no change in the Divine Will, but an execution of his Will; For when God commanded the obſervance of

the

the Law, he intended not the perpetuity of it; nay, in the *Prophet*, he declares the ceſſation of it; he decreed to command it, but he decreed to command it only for ſuch a time; ſo that the abrogation of it was no leſs an execution of his Decree, than the eſtabliſhment of it for a ſeaſon was: The commanding of it was purſuant to his Decree for the appointing of it, and the nulling of it was purſuant to his Decree of continuing it only for ſuch a ſeaſon: So that in all this there was no change in the Will of God.

The Counſel of God ſtands ſure; what changes ſoever there are in the World, are not in God or his Will, but in the events of things, and the different relations of things to God: 'Tis in the Creature, not in the Creator. The *Sun* always remains of the ſame hue, and is not diſcoloured in it ſelf, becauſe it ſhines green through a green glaſs, and blue through a blue Glaſs; the different colours come from the Glaſs, not from the Sun: The change is always in the diſpoſition of the Creature, not in the Nature of God or his Will.

5. *Uſe.*

1. For *Information.*

1. If God be unchangeable in his Nature, and Immutability be a Property of God, *Then Chriſt hath a Divine Nature.* This in the *Pſalm* is applied to Chriſt in the *Hebrews*, Heb. 1. 11. where he joyns the citation out of this Pſalm with that out of *Pſalm* 45. 6, 7. *Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever; thou haſt loved Righteouſneſs and hated Iniquity, therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the Oyl of Gladneſs above thy Fellows; and thou Lord, in the beginning haſt laid the Foundation of the Earth,* &c. As the firſt muſt neceſſarily be meant of Chriſt the Mediator, and therein he is diſtinguiſh'd from God, as one anointed by him; ſo the other muſt be meant of Chriſt, whereby he is made one with God, in regard of the Creation and Diſſolution of the World, in regard of Eternity and Immutability. Both the Teſtimonies are linkt together by the Copulative [*and*] *and thou Lord*, declaring thereby that they are both to be underſtood of the ſame Perſon the Son of God: The deſign of the Chapter is to prove Chriſt to be God; and ſuch things are ſpoken of him, as could not belong to any Creature, no, not to the moſt excellent of the Angels: The ſame Perſon that is ſaid to be anointed above his Fellows, and is ſaid to lay the foundation of the Earth and Heavens, is ſaid to be *the ſame*; that is, the ſame in himſelf: The Prerogative of *ſameneſs* belongs to that Perſon, as well as Creation of Heaven and Earth.

The *Socinians* ſay it is ſpoken of God, and that God ſhall deſtroy the Heavens by Chriſt; if ſo, Chriſt is not a meer Creature, not created when he was Incarnate; for the ſame Perſon that ſhall change the World, did create the World; If God ſhall change the World by him, God alſo created the World by him; He was then before the World was; for how could God create the World by one that was not? That was not in Being till after the Creation of the World? The Heavens ſhall be changed, but the Perſon who is to change the Heavens, is ſaid to be the ſame, or unchangeable in the Creation, as well as the Diſſolution of the World. This *ſameneſs* refers to the whole Sentence.

* *Placeus de deitate Chriſti.*

* The *Pſalm* wherein the *Text* is, and whence this in the *Hebrews* is cited, is properly meant of Chriſt, and Redemption by him, and the compleating it at the laſt day, and not of the *Babyloniſh* Captivity; That Captivity was not ſo deplorable, as the ſtate the *Pſalmiſt* deſcribes: *Daniel* and his Companions flouriſhed in that Captivity; it could not reaſonably be ſaid of them, that their days were conſumed like Smoke, their heart withered like Graſs; that they forgot *to eat their Bread* *: Beſides, he complains of *ſhortneſs of Life* *; But none had any more reaſon to complain of that in the time of the Captivity, than before and after it, than at any other time: Their Deliverance would contribute nothing to the natural length of their lives. Beſides, when *Sion* ſhould be built, the *Heathen* ſhould *fear the Name of the Lord*, (that is, worſhip God) and *all the Kings of the Earth* his *Glory*. The rearing the *ſecond Temple* after the deliverance, did not Proſelyte the Nations, nor did the Kings of the Earth Worſhip the Glory of God; nor did God appear in ſuch Glory at the erecting the *ſecond Temple*: The *ſecond Temple* was leſs glorious than the *firſt*, for it wanted ſome of the Ornaments which were the Glory of the firſt; But it is ſaid of this ſtate, * That when the Lord ſhould *build up Sion*, he ſhould *appear in his Glory*; his proper Glory, and extraordinary Glory. Now *that God who ſhall appear* in Glory and build up *Sion*, is the *Son of God*, the Redeemer of the World; He builds up the Church, he cauſes the Nations to fear the Lord, and the Kings of the Earth his Glory; He broke down the partition Wall, and opened a door for the Entrance of the *Gentiles*; He ſtruck the Chains from off the Priſoners, and looſed thoſe that *were appointed to death* by the Curſe of the Law *: And to this Perſon is aſcribed the Creation of the World; and he is pronounced to remain the *ſame* in the midſt of an infinite number of changes in inferior things: And it is likely the *Pſalmiſt* conſiders not only the beginning of Redemption, but the compleating of it at the *ſecond coming* of Chriſt; for he complains of thoſe evils, which ſhall be removed by his ſecond coming, *viz.* The ſhortneſs of Life, Perſecutions and Reproaches, wherewith the Church is afflicted in this World; and comforts not himſelf with thoſe Attributes which are directly oppoſed to ſin, as the Mercy of God, the Covenant of God, but with thoſe that are oppoſed to Mortality and Calamities; as the unchangeableneſs and Eternity of God; and from thence infers a perpetual eſtabliſhment of Believers. * *The Children of thy Servants ſhall continue, and their ſeed ſhall be eſtabliſhed before thee:* So that the *Pſalm* it ſelf ſeems to aim in the whole diſcourſe at Chriſt, and aſſerts his Divinity, which the Apoſtle, as an Interpreter, doth fully evidence; applying it to him, and manifeſting his Deity by his *Immutability* as well as Eternity.

* While all other things loſe their forms, and paſs through multitudes of variations, he conſtantly remains the ſame, and ſhall be the ſame, when all the *Empires* of the World ſhall ſlide away, and a *Period* be put to the preſent motions of the Creation: And as there was no change made in his being by the Creation of things, ſo neither ſhall there be by the final alteration of things; he ſhall ſee them finiſh, as he ſaw them riſe up into Being, and be the ſame after their Ruine, as he was before their Original; he is the firſt and the laſt *.

* *As it is* v. 3, 4.

* v. 11.

* Ver. 16.

* Ver. 20.

* Ver. 28.

* *Daile* Mc. lang. des Sermons, Part 2. § 1. p. 8, 9, 10, &c.

* Rev. 1. 17.

2. *Here is ground and encouragement for Worſhip.* An *Atheiſt* will make another uſe of this: If God be immutable, why ſhould we Worſhip him, why ſhould we Pray to him; Good will come if he wills it, evil cannot be averted by all our Supplications, if he hath ordered it to fall upon us?

But certainly, ſince unchangeableneſs in knowing, and willing goodneſs, is a perfection: An adoration and admiration is due to God, upon the account of this excellence. If he be God he is to be reverenced, and the more highly reverenced, becauſe he cannot but be God.

Again, what comfort could it be to pray to a God, that like the *Chamæleon* changed colours every day, every moment? What encouragement could there be to lift up our eyes to one that were of one mind this day, and of another mind to morrow? Who would put up a Petition to an Earthly Prince that were ſo muta-

mutable, as to grant a Petition one day, and deny it another, and change his own act? But if a Prince promiſe this or that thing upon ſuch or ſuch a condition, and you know his promiſe to be as unchangeable as the Laws of the *Medes* and *Perſians*, would any Man reaſon thus? Becauſe it is unchangeable we will not ſeek to him, we will not perform the condition, upon which the fruit of the Proclamation is to be enjoyed. Who would not count ſuch an inference ridiculous? What bleſſings hath not God promiſed upon the condition of ſeeking him? Were he of an unrighteous nature, or changeable in his mind, this would be a bar to our ſeeking him, and fruſtrate our hopes: But ſince it is otherwiſe, is not this excellency of his nature the higheſt encouragement to ask of him the bleſſings he hath promiſed, and a beam from Heaven to fire our zeal in asking? If you deſire things againſt his Will, which he hath declared he will not grant; Prayer then would be an act of diſobedience, an injury to him, as well as an act of folly in it ſelf; his unchangeableneſs then might ſtifle ſuch deſires: But if we ask according to his Will, and according to our reaſonable wants, what ground have we to make ſuch a ridiculous argument? He hath willed every thing that may be for our good, if we perform the condition he hath required; and hath put it upon record, that we may know it, and regulate our deſires and ſupplications according to it: If we will not ſeek him, his Immutability cannot be a bar; but our own folly is the cauſe; and by our neglect we deſpoil him of this perfection as to us, and either imply that he is not ſincere, and means not as he ſpeaks; or that he is as changeable as the Wind, ſometimes this thing, ſometimes that, and not at all to be confided in. If we ask according to his revealed Will, the unchangeableneſs of his Nature will aſſure us of the Grant; and what a preſumption would it be in a Creature dependent upon his Sovereign, to ask that which he knows he has declared his Will againſt; ſince there is no good we can want, but he hath promiſed to give, upon our ſincere and ardent deſire for it.

God hath decreed to give this or that to Man, but conditionally, and by the means of *enquiring* after him, and *asking* for it: * *Ask and you ſhall receive*; as much as to ſay, you ſhall not receive unleſs you ask. When the higheſt promiſes are made, God expects they ſhould be put in ſuit: Our Saviour joyns the Promiſe and the Petition together; the Promiſe to encourage the Petition, and the Petition to enjoy the Promiſe: He doth not ſay, *perhaps* it ſhall be given, but *it ſhall*; that is, it certainly ſhall; your heavenly Father is unchangeably willing to give you thoſe things. We muſt depend upon his Immutability for the thing, and ſubmit to his Wiſdom for the time. Prayer is an acknowledgment of our dependence upon God, which dependence could have no firm foundation without unchangeableneſs. Prayer doth not deſire any change in God, but is offered to God that he would confer thoſe things which he hath immutably willed to communicate, but he willed them not without Prayer as the means of beſtowing them. The light of the Sun is ordered for our comfort, for the diſcovery of viſible things, for the ripening the fruits of the Earth; but withal, 'tis required that we uſe our faculty of ſeeing, that we employ our induſtry in ſowing and planting, and expoſe our fruits to the view of the Sun, that they may receive the influence of it. If a Man ſhuts his eyes, and complains that the Sun is changed into darkneſs, it would be ridiculous; the Sun is not changed, but we alter our ſelves; Nor is God changed in not giving us the bleſſings he hath promiſed, becauſe he hath promiſed in the way of a due addreſs to him, and opening our Souls to receive his influence; and to this, his Immutability is the greateſt encouragement.

* Ezek. 36. v. 37. Mat. 7.7.

3. This ſhews *how contrary Man is to God in regard of his inconſtancy.* What an infinite diſtance is there between the immutable God, and mutable Man, and how ſhould we bewail this flittingneſs in our Nature?

There is a Mutability in us as Creatures, and a Creature cannot but be mutable by Nature, otherwiſe it were not a Creature, but God. The eſtabliſhment of any Creature is from Grace and Gift; Naturally we tend to nothing, as we come from nothing: This Creature-mutability is not our ſin, yet it ſhould cauſe us to lye down under a ſenſe of our own nothingneſs, in the preſence of the Creator. The Angels as Creatures, tho' not corrupt, cover their faces before him: And the arguments God uſes to humble *Job*, tho' a fallen Creature, are not from his Corruption; for I do not remember that he taxed him with that; but from the *greatneſs of his majeſty and excellency of his Nature declared in his Works* *. And therefore Men that have no ſenſe of God, and humility before him, forget that they are Creatures as well as corrupt ones.

* Job 38. v. 39, 40, 41

How great is the diſtance between God and us, in regard of our inconſtancy in good, which is not natural to us by Creation? For the mind and affections were regular, and by the great Artificer were pointed to God as the Object of Knowledge and Love. We have the ſame faculties of Underſtanding, Will and Affection, as *Adam* had in Innocence; but not with the ſame Light, the ſame Bias, and the ſame Ballaſt. Man by his fall, wounded his head and heart; the wound in his head made him unſtable in the Truth, and that in his heart unſtedfaſt in his Affections: He changed himſelf from the Image of God to that of the Devil, from Innocence to Corruption; and from an ability to be ſtedfaſt, to a perpetual Inconſtancy: *His Silver became Droſs, and his Wine was mixed with Water* *. He changed,

* Iſa. 1. 22.

1. *To inconſtancy in Truth, oppoſed to the Immutability of Knowledge in God.* How are our Minds floting between Ignorance and Knowledge? Truth in us is like thoſe *Ephemera*, Creatures of a days continuance, ſprings up in the Morning and expires at Night. How ſoon doth that fly away from us, which we have had, not only ſome weak flaſhes of, but which we have learned, and have had ſome reliſh of? *The Devil ſtood not in the Truth* *, and therefore manages his Engines to make us as unſtable as himſelf: Our Minds reel, and corrupt reaſonings overſway us; like Spunges we ſuck up Water, and a light compreſſion makes us ſpout it out again. Truths are not engraven upon our hearts, but writ as in Duſt, defaced by the next puff of wind; *carried about with every Wind of Doctrine*, Eph. 4.14. Like a Ship without a Pilot and Sails, at the courteſie of the next Storm; or like Clouds that are Tenants to the Wind and Sun, moved by the Wind, and melted by the Sun. The *Galatians* were no ſooner called into the Grace of God, but they were *removed from it* *; Some have been reported to have *menſtruam fidem*, kept an Opinion for a Month; and many are like him that believed the Souls Immortality, no longer than he had *Plato*'s Book of that Subject in his hand *: One likens ſuch to *Children*; they play with Truths as Children do with Babies, one while embrace them, and a little after throw them into the Dirt. How ſoon do we forget what the Truth is delivered to us, and what it repreſented us to be *? Is it not a thing to be bewailed, that Man ſhould be ſuch a Weather-cock, turned about with every breath of Wind, and ſhifting Aſpects as the Wind ſhifts Points?

* John 8. 44.

* Gal. 1. 6.

* *Sedgwick Chriſts Counſel*, p. 230.

* James 1. v. 23, 24.

2. *Inconſtancy in Will and Affections oppoſed to the Immutability of Will in God.* We waver between *God* and *Baal*; and while we are not only reſolving, but upon motion a little way, look back with a hankering after *Sodom*; Sometimes lifted up with heavenly intentions, and preſently caſt down with earthly cares; like

like a Ship that by an advancing Wave ſeems to aſpire to Heaven, and the next fall of the Waves makes it ſink down to the Depths. We change purpoſes oftner than faſhions; and our reſolutions are like Letters in water, whereof no mark remains: We will be as *John* to day to love Chriſt, and as *Judas* to morrow to betray him, and by an unworthy levity, paſs into the Camp of the Enemies of God; reſolved to be as holy as *Angels* in the Morning, when the Evening beholds us as impure as Devils: How often do we hate what before we loved, and ſhun what before we longed for? And our reſolutions are like Veſſels of Chryſtal, which break at the firſt knock, are daſht in pieces by the next temptation. *Saul* reſolved not to perſecute *David* any more, but you ſoon find him upon his old game. *Pharaoh more than once promiſed*, and probably reſolved to *let* Iſrael *go*; but
* Exod. 8. v. 27, 32. at the end of the ſtorm his purpoſes vaniſh *. When an affliction pincheth Men, they intend to change their courſe; and the next news of eaſe changes their intentions: Like a Bow, not fully bent in their inclinations, they cannot reach the Mark, but live many years between reſolutions of Obedience, and affections
* Pſ. 78. 17. to *Rebellion* *: And what promiſes Men make to God are often the fruit of their Paſſion, their Fear, not of their Will. The *Iſraelites* were ſtartled at the *terrors* wherewith the Law was delivered, and pro-
* Exo. 20. 19 miſed obedience *, but a Month after *forgat* them, and make a *Golden Calf*, and in the ſight of *Sinai* call for,
* Exod. 32. and *dance before their Gods* *; Never people more unconſtant: *Peter*, who vowed an Allegiance to his Maſter, and a Courage to ſtick to him, forſwears him almoſt with the ſame breath. Thoſe that cry out with a zeal, *the Lord he is God*, ſhortly after return
* 1 Kings 18. v. 39. to the ſervice of their *Idols* *. That which ſeems to be our pleaſure this day, is our vexation to morrow: A fear of a Judgment puts us into a religious pang, and a love to our Luſts reduceth us to a rebellious inclination: As ſoon as the danger is over, the pain is forgotten: Salvation and Damnation preſent themſelves to us, touch us, and ingender ſome weak wiſhes, which are diſſolved by the next allurements of a carnal intereſt. No hold can be taken of our promiſes, no credit is to be given to our reſolutions.

3. *Inconſtancy in Practice.* How much beginning in the Spirit, and ending in the Fleſh; one day in the Sanctuary, another in the Stews; clear in the Morning as the Sun, and clouded before Noon; in Heaven by an excellency of Gifts, in Hell by a courſe of Prophaneſs? Like a Flower, which ſome mention, that changes its colour three times a day; one part white, then purple, then yellow. The Spirit luſts againſt the Fleſh, and the Fleſh quickly triumphs over the Spirit. In a good Man, how often is there a Spiritual Lethargy? Tho' he doth not openly defame God, yet he doth not always glorifie him: He doth not forſake the Truth, but he doth not always make the attainment of it, and ſettlement in it his buſineſs. This levity diſcovers it ſelf in Religious Duties,
* Rom. 7. 21 *when I would do good, evil is preſent with me.* Never more preſent, than when we have a mind to do good, and never more preſent than when we have a mind to do the beſt and greateſt good: How hard is it to make our thoughts and affections keep their ſtand? Place them upon a good Object, and they will be friſking from it, as a Bird from one Bough, one Fruit to another. We vary poſtures according to the various objects we meet with. The courſe of the World is a very airy thing, ſuited to the uncertain motions of that Prince of the power of the Air, which
Eph. 2. 2. works in it.

This ought to be bewailed by us. Tho' we may ſtand faſt in the truth, tho' we may ſpin our reſolutions into a firm web, tho' the Spirit may triumph over the fleſh in our practice, yet we ought to bewail it, becauſe inconſtancy is our nature, and what fixedneſs we have in good is from grace. What we find practiſed by moſt Men, is natural to all *: *As face anſwers to face in a glaſs*, ſo doth *heart to heart* *; a face in the glaſs is not more like a natural face, whoſe Image it is, than one Mans heart is naturally like another.

* *Lawrence of Faith*, p. 262.
* Prov 27. v. 19.

1. *'Tis natural to thoſe out of the Church. Nebuchadnezzar* is ſo affected with *Daniel*'s prophetick Spirit, that he would have none accounted the true God, but the *God of Daniel* *. How ſoon doth this
* Dan. 2. 47. notion ſlip from him, and an Image muſt be ſet up for all to worſhip, upon pain of a moſt cruel painful death? *Daniel*'s *God* is quite forgotten: The miraculous deliverance of the *three Children* for not worſhiping his Image, makes him ſettle a Decree to ſecure the *Honour of God* from the reproach of his Subjects *; yet a little while after, you have him ſtruting in his Palace, as if there were no God but himſelf.
* Dan. 3. 29.

2. *'Tis natural to thoſe in the Church.* The *Iſraelites* were the only Church God had in the World, and a notable Example of inconſtancy. After the Miracles of *Ægypt they* murmured againſt God, when they ſaw *Pharaoh* marching with an Army at their heels. They deſired food, and ſoon nauſeated the *Manna* they were before fond of: When they came into *Canaan*, they ſometimes worſhiped God, and ſometimes Idols, not only the Idols of one Nation, but of all their Neighbours: In which regard God calls this his *Heritage or ſpeckled Bird* *; a Peacock
* Jer. 12. 9. ſaith *Hierom*, inconſtant, made up of varieties of Idolatrous colours and ceremonies.

This levity of Spirit is the root of all miſchief; it ſcatters our thoughts in the Service of God, it is the cauſe of all Revolts and Apoſtacies from him, it makes us unfit to receive the communications of God; whatſoever we hear is like words writ in ſand, ruffled out by the next gale; whatſoever is put into us is like precious liquor in a Palſie hand, ſoon ſpilt: It breeds diſtruſt of God; when we have an uncertain judgment of him, we are not like to confide in him: An uncertain judgment will be followed with a diſtruſtful heart. In fine, where it is prevalent, it is a certain ſign of ungodlineſs; to be driven with the wind like chaff, and to be ungodly, is all one, in the judgment of the holy Ghoſt, *Pſal.* 1. 4. The *ungodly are like the chaff which the wind drive away*, which ſignifies not their deſtruction, but their diſpoſition, for their deſtruction is inferred from it, *ver.* 5. *Therefore the ungodly ſhall not ſtand in judgment.*

How contrary is this to the unchangeable God, who is always the ſame, and would have us the ſame, in our religious *Promiſes* and *Reſolutions* for good?

4. If God be immutable, 'tis *ſad news to thoſe that are reſolved in Wickedneſs, or careleſs of returning to that duty he requires.* Sinners muſt not expect, that God will alter his will, make a breach upon his nature, and violate his own word to gratifie their luſts: No, 'tis not reaſonable God ſhould diſhonour himſelf to ſecure them, and ceaſe to be God, that they may continue to be wicked, by changing his own nature, that they may be unchanged in their vanity. God is the ſame; goodneſs is as amiable in his ſight, and ſin as abominable in his eyes now, as it was at the beginning of the World: Being the ſame God, he is the ſame Enemy to the Wicked, as the ſame Friend to the Righteous: He is the ſame in Knowledge, and cannot forget ſinful acts; He is the ſame in Will, and cannot approve of unrighteous Practices: Goodneſs cannot but be always the Object of his Love, and Wickedneſs cannot but be always the Object of his Hatred: And as his averſion to ſin is always the ſame, ſo as he hath been in his Judgments upon Sinners, the ſame he will be ſtill; for

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the ſame perfection of Immutability belongs to his Juſtice for the puniſhment of Sin, as to his Holineſs for his diſaffection to Sin. Tho' the Covenant of Works was changeable by the crime of Man violating it; yet it was unchangeable in regard of God's juſtice vindicating it, which is inflexible in the puniſhment of the breaches of his Law. The Law had a Preceptive part, and a Minatory part; When Man changed the obſervation of the Precept, the righteous nature of God could not null the execution of the threatning: He could not upon the account of this perfection neglect his juſt Word, and countenance the unrighteous Tranſgreſſion. Tho' there were no more rational Creatures in Being but *Adam* and *Eve*, yet God ſubjected them to that death he had aſſured them of: And from this Immutability of his Will, ariſeth the neceſſity of the ſuffering of the Son of God, for the relief of the Apoſtate Creature. His Will in the *ſecond Covenant* is as unchangeable, as that in the *firſt*, only repentance is ſettled as the condition of the *ſecond*, which was not indulged in the *firſt*; and without repentance the Sinner muſt irrevocably periſh, or God muſt change his nature: There muſt be a change in Man, there can be none in God; *his Bow his bent, his Arrows are ready, if the wicked do not turn* *. There is not an Atheiſt, an Hypocrite, a prophane Perſon, that ever was upon the Earth, but God's Soul abhorred him as ſuch, and the like he will abhor for ever: While any therefore continue ſo, they may ſooner expect the Heavens ſhould roul as they pleaſe, the Sun ſtand ſtill at their order, the Stars change their courſe at their beck, than that God ſhould change his nature, which is oppoſite to Prophaneſs and Vanity: *Who hath hardened himſelf againſt him and hath proſpered* *?

* Pſal.7.11.

* Job9.4.

Uſe 2. *Of Comfort.*

The immutability of a good God, is a ſtrong ground of Conſolation. Subjects wiſh a good Prince to live for ever, as being loath to change him; but care not how ſoon they are rid of an Oppreſſor. This unchangeableneſs of God's Will, ſhews him as ready to accept any that come to him as ever he was; ſo that we may with confidence make our addreſſes to him, ſince he cannot change his affections to goodneſs. The fear of change in a friend, hinders a full reliance upon him; An aſſurance of ſtability encourages hope and confidence. This attribute is the ſtrongeſt prop for Faith in all our addreſſes; 'tis not a ſingle perfection, but the glory of all thoſe that belong to his nature; for he is *unchangeable in his love*, Jer.31. *v.3. in his truth*, Pſal.117.2. The more ſolemn Revelation of himſelf in his name *Jehovah*, which ſignifies chiefly his Eternity and Immutability, was to ſupport the *Iſraelites* faith, in expectation of a deliverance from *Egypt*, that he had not retracted his purpoſe, and *his promiſe* made to *Abraham* for giving *Canaan* to his Poſterity. * Herein is the *baſis* and ſtrength of all his promiſes; therefore, ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*, *thoſe that know thy name, will put their truſt in thee* *; Thoſe that are ſpiritually acquainted with thy name *Jehovah*, and have a true ſenſe of it upon their hearts, will put their truſt in thee. His goodneſs could not be diſtruſted, if his unchangeableneſs were well apprehended and conſidered: All diſtruſt would fly before it as darkneſs before the Sun; it only gets advantage of us, when we are not well grounded in his name; and if ever we truſted God, we have the ſame reaſon to truſt him for ever, Iſa.26. *v.4. Truſt in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlaſting ſtrength*, or as 'tis in the Hebrew, *a Rock of Ages*; that is, perpetually unchangeable. We find the traces of God's immutability in the Creatures; he has by his peremptory decree, ſet bounds to the Sea; *hitherto ſhalt thou come but no further, and here ſhall thy proud waves be ſtayed* *. Do we fear the Sea overflowing us in this *Iſland?* No, becauſe of his fix'd decree: And is not his promiſe in his Word, as unchangeable as his Word concerning inanimate things, as good a ground to reſt upon?

* Exod 3. v. 14, 15, 16, 17.

* Pſal 9.10.

* Job38.11.

1. *The Covenant ſtands unchangeable.* Mutable Creatures break their Leagues and Covenants, and ſnap them aſunder like *Sampſon's* Cords, when they are not accommodated to their intereſts. But an unchangeable God keeps his; *the Mountains ſhall depart, and the Hills be removed, but my kindneſs ſhall not depart from thee, nor ſhall the Covenant of my peace be removed* *. The Heaven and Earth ſhall ſooner fall aſunder, and the ſtrongeſt and firmeſt parts of the Creation crumble to duſt, ſooner than one *Iota* of my Covenant ſhall fail. It depends upon the unchangeableneſs of his Will, and the unchangeableneſs of his Word, and therefore is called *the immutability of his Counſel*, Heb.6.17. 'Tis the fruit of the everlaſting purpoſe of God; whence the Apoſtle links *purpoſe* and *grace* together. * A Covenant with a Nation may be changeable, becauſe it may not be built upon the eternal purpoſe of God *to put his fear in the heart*; but with reſpect to the Creatures obedience. Thus God choſe *Jeruſalem*, as the place wherein he would *dwell for ever* *, yet he threatens to depart from them, when they had broken Covenant with him, *and the glory of the Lord went up from the midſt of the City to the Mountain on the eaſt ſide* *. The Covenant of Grace doth not run, *I will be your God, if you will be my people:* But *I will be their God, and they ſhall be my people*, Hoſ.2.19, *&c. I will betroth thee to me for ever, I will ſay thou art my people, and they ſhall ſay thou art my God.* His everlaſting purpoſe, is to write his Laws in the hearts of the Elect. He puts a condition to his Covenant of Grace, the condition of Faith, and he reſolves to work that condition in the hearts of the Elect; and therefore Believers have two immutable Pillars for their ſupport, ſtronger than thoſe erected by *Solomon* at the Porch of the Temple, 1 *Kings* 7. 21. called *Jakin* and *Boaz*, to note the firmneſs of that building dedicated to God; theſe are *Election*, or the ſtanding Counſel of God, and the *Covenant of grace:* He will not revoke the Covenant, and blot the names of his Elect out of the Book of Life.

* Iſa.54.10.

* 2Tim.1.9.

* Pſ.132.14

* Ezek.11. v.33.

2. *Perſeverance is aſcertained.* It conſiſts not with the Majeſty of God, to call a perſon effectually to himſelf to day, to make him fit for his eternal love, to give him faith, and take away that faith to morrow; his effectual Call is the fruit of his eternal Election, and that Counſel hath no other foundation, but his conſtant and unchangeable Will; a foundation that ſtands ſure, and therefore called the foundation of God, and not of the Creature; *the foundation of God ſtands ſure, the Lord knows who are his* *. 'Tis not founded upon our own natural ſtrength, it may be then ſubject to change, as all the products of Nature are: The fallen Angels had created grace in their innocency, but loſt it by their fall. * Were this the foundation of the Creature, it might ſoon be ſhaken; ſince Man after his revolt can aſcribe nothing conſtant to himſelf, but his own inconſtancy: But the foundation is not in the infirmity of Nature, but the ſtrength of Grace, and of the Grace of God, who is immutable, who wants not vertue to be able, nor kindneſs to be willing to preſerve his own foundation. To what purpoſe doth our Saviour tell his Diſciples, *their names were written in Heaven* *, but to mark the infallible certainty of their Salvation, by an oppoſition to thoſe things which periſh, and have their *names written in the Earth* *, or upon the Sand, where they may be defaced? And why ſhould Chriſt order his Diſciples to rejoyce, that their names were written in Heaven, if God were changeable to blot them out again? Or why

* 2Tim.2. v.19.

* *Turretin* Ser.p.322.

* Luk.10.20

* Jer.17.23.

why ſhould the Apoſtle aſſure us, that tho' God had rejected the greateſt part of the *Jews*, he had not therefore rejected his people elected, according to his purpoſe and immutable Counſel, becauſe there are none of the Elect of God but will come to Salvation; * Rom. 11. 7 For, ſaith he, the *Election hath obtained it* *; that is, all thoſe that are of the Election have obtained it, and the others are hardened: Where the Seal of Sanctification is ſtampt, it is a teſtimony of God's Election, and that foundation ſhall ſtand ſure. *The foundation of the Lord ſtands ſure, having this Seal, the Lord knows who are his*, that is the foundation, the *naming* the *name of Chriſt*, or believing in Chriſt, * *Cocceius.* and *departing from iniquity* is the Seal. * As 'tis impoſſible, when God calls thoſe things that are not, but that they ſhould ſpring up into being and appear before him: So it is impoſſible, but that the Seed of God, by his Eternal purpoſe, ſhould be brought to a ſpiritual life; and that calling cannot be retracted; * Rom. 11. v. 29. for that *gift and calling is without Repentance* *. And when repentance is removed from God, in regard of ſome works, the immutability of thoſe works is declared: And the reaſon of that immutability is their pure dependance on the Eternal favour and unchangeable grace of God, * [*purpos'd in himſelf*] and not upon the mutability of the Creature. Hence their happineſs is not as Patents among Men, *quam diu bene ſe geſſerint*, ſo long as they behave themſelves well, but they have a promiſe, that they ſhall behave themſelves ſo as never wholly to depart from God, *Jer.* 32. 40. *I will make an everlaſting Covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they ſhall not depart from me.* God will not turn from them, to do them good, and promiſeth that they ſhall not turn from him for ever, or forſake him: And the bottom of it is the everlaſting Covenant, and therefore *believing and ſealing*, for ſecurity, are linkt together, *Eph.* 1. 13. And when God doth inwardly teach us his Law, he puts in a will not to depart from it: *Pſal.* 119. 102. *I have not departed from thy Judgments*; what is the reaſon? *For thou haſt taught me.*

* Eph. 1. v. 9, 11.

3. *By* this, *Eternal Happineſs is enſured.* This is the *Inference* made from the Eternity and Unchangeableneſs of God, in the *verſe* following the *Text*, verſe 28. *The Children of thy Servants ſhall continue, and their Seed ſhall be eſtabliſhed before thee*; This is the ſole concluſion drawn from thoſe Perfections of God ſolemnly aſſerted before. The Children which the Prophets and Apoſtles have begotten to thee, ſhall be totally delivered from the reliques of their Apoſtacy, and the puniſhment due to them, and rendred partakers of Immortality with thee, as Sons to dwell in their Fathers Houſe for ever. The Spirit begins a Spiritual Life here, to fit for an immutable Life in Glory hereafter; where Believers ſhall be placed upon a Throne that cannot be ſhaken, and poſſeſs a Crown that ſhall not be taken off their heads for ever.

3 Uſe. Of *Exhortation.*

1. *Let a ſenſe of the changeableneſs and uncertainty of all other things beſide God, be upon us.* There are as many changes as there are figures in the World. The whole faſhion of the World is a tranſient thing; * Job 10. 17. every Man may ſay as *Job*, * *Changes and War are againſt me.* *Lot* choſe the Plain of *Sodom*, becauſe it was the richer Soyl; He was but a little time there before he was taken Priſoner, and his ſubſtance made the Spoil of his Enemy; that is again reſtored; but a while after, Fire from Heaven devours his Wealth, tho' his Perſon was ſecur'd from the Judgment by a ſpecial Providence. We burn with a deſire to ſettle our ſelves; but miſtake the way, and build Caſtles in the Air, which vaniſh like bubbles of Soap in water.

And therefore,

1. *Let not our thoughts dwell much upon them.* Do but conſider thoſe Souls that are in the poſſeſſion of an unchangeable God, that behold his never fading Glory! Would it not be a kind of Hell to them, to have their thoughts ſtarting out to theſe things, or find any deſire in themſelves to the changeable trifles of the Earth? Nay, have we not reaſon to think, that they cover their faces with ſhame, that ever they ſhould have ſuch a weakneſs of Spirit when they were here below, as to ſpend more thoughts upon them than were neceſſary for this preſent Life; much more that they ſhould at any time value and court them above an unchangeable Good? Do they not diſdain themſelves that they ſhould ever debaſe the immutable perfections of God, as to have neglecting thoughts of him at any time, for the entertainment of ſuch a mean and inconſtant Rival?

2. *Much leſs ſhould we truſt in them*, or *rejoyce in them.* The beſt things are mutable, and things of ſuch a nature are not fit Objects of confidence. Truſt not in Riches, they have their wanes as well as increaſes; they riſe ſometimes like a Torrent, and flow in upon Men, but reſemble alſo a Torrent in as ſudden a fall and departure, and leave nothing but ſlime behind them. Truſt not in Honour; all the Honour and Applauſe in the World, is no better than an Inheritance of Wind, which the *Pilot* is not ſure of, but ſhifts from one corner to another, and ſtands not perpetually in the ſame point of the Heavens. How in a few Ages did the Houſe of *David*, a great Monarch, and a Man after God's own heart, deſcend to a mean condition, and all the glory of that Houſe ſhut up in the ſtock of a Carpenter? *David*'s Sheep-hook was turned into a Scepter, and the Scepter, by the ſame hand of Providence, turned into a Hatchet in *Joſeph* his Deſcendent.

Rejoyce not immoderately in Wiſdom; That and Learning languiſh with Age. A wound in the head may impair that which is the Glory of a Man. If an Organ be out of frame, Folly may ſucceed, and all a Man's Prudence be wound up in an irrecoverable Dotage. *Nebuchadnezzar* was no Fool, yet by a ſudden hand of God he became not only a Fool or a mad Man, but a kind of Brute. Rejoyce not in ſtrength, that decays; and a mighty Man may live to ſee his ſtrong Arm withered, and a *Graſhopper to become a Burthen* *. *The ſtrong Men ſhall bow themſelves, and the Grinders ſhall ceaſe becauſe they are few* *. Nor rejoyce in Children; they are like Birds * v. 3. upon a Tree, that make a little chirping Muſick, and preſently fall into the Fowlers Net. Little did *Job* expect ſuch ſad News as the loſs of all his Progeny, at a blow, when the Meſſenger knocked at his Gate: And ſuch changes happen oftentimes, when our expectations of comfort, and a contentment in them, are at the higheſt. How often doth a ſtring crack when the *Muſitian* hath wound it up to a juſt height for a Tune, and all his pains and delight marr'd in a moment? Nay, all theſe things change while we are uſing them, like Ice that melts between our fingers, and Flowers that wither while we are ſmelling to them: The Apoſtle gave them a good title, when he called them *uncertain riches*, and thought it a ſtrong argument to diſſwade them *from truſting in them* *. The wealth of the Merchant depends upon * 1 Tim. 6. the Winds and Waves, and the Revenue of the Huſ- v. 17. bandman upon the Clouds; and ſince they depend upon thoſe things which are uſed to expreſs the moſt changeableneſs, they can be no fit Object for truſt. Beſides, God ſometimes kindles a *Fire under all a mans Glory*, which doth inſenſibly conſume it *, and while * Iſa. 10. 10. we have them, the fear of loſing them renders us not very happy in the fruition of them. We can ſcarce tell whether they are contentments or no, becauſe ſorrow follows them ſo cloſe at the heels.

* Rom. 11. 7

* Cocceius.

* Rom. 11. v. 29.

* Eph. 1. v. 9, 11.

* Job 10. 17.

* Eccl. 12. 5.

* v. 3.

* 1 Tim. 6. v. 17.

* Iſa. 10. 10.

'Tis not an unneceſſary Exhortation for good Men; the beſt Men have been apt to place too much truſt in them. *David* thought himſelf immutable in his Proſperity; and ſuch thoughts could not be without ſome immoderate Outlets of the heart to them, and Confidences in them: And *Job* promiſed himſelf to die in his Neſt, and *multiply his days as the Sand*, without any interruption *; but he was miſtaken and diſappointed.

* Job 29. v. 18, 19, &c.

Let me add this; Truſt not in Men who are as inconſtant as any thing elſe, and often change their moſt ardent affections into implacable hatred: And tho' their affections may not be changed, their power to help you may. *Haman*'s Friends that depended on him one day, were creſt-fallen the next, when their Patron was to exchange his Chariot of State for an ignominious Gallows.

3. *Prefer an immutable God before mutable Creatures.* Is it not a horrible thing to ſee what we are, and what we poſſeſs, daily crumbling to duſt, and in a continual flux from us; and not ſeek out ſomething that is permanent, and always abides the ſame, for our portion? In *God*, or *Wiſdom*, which is Chriſt, there is *ſubſtance* *, in which reſpect he is oppoſed to all the things in the World, that are but ſhadows, that are ſhorter or longer according to the motion of the *Sun*; mutable alſo, by every little body that intervenes. God is ſubject to no decay within, to no force without; nothing in his own nature can change him from what he is, and there is no Power above can hinder him from being what he will to the Soul: He is an Ocean of all Perfection; He wants nothing without himſelf to render him bleſſed, which may allure him to a change: His Creatures can want nothing out of him to make them happy, whereby they may be inticed to prefer any thing before him. If we enjoy other things, 'tis by God's donation, who can as well withdraw them as beſtow them; and it is but a reaſonable, as well as a neceſſary thing, to endeavour the enjoyment of the immutable Benefactor, rather than his revocable Gifts.

* Pro. 8. 21.

If the Creatures had a ſufficient vertue in themſelves, to raviſh our thoughts and engroſs our Souls; yet when we take a proſpect of a fixed and unchangeable Being, what beauty, what ſtrength have any of thoſe things to vie with him? How can they bear up and maintain their intereſt, againſt a lively thought and ſenſe of God? All the Glory of them would fly before him like that of the Stars before the Sun: They were once nothing, they may be nothing again; as their own nature brought them not out of nothing, ſo their Nature ſecures them not from being reduced to nothing. What an unhappineſs is it, to have our affections ſet upon that which retains ſomething of its *non eſſe* with its *eſſe*, its not Being with its Being; that lives indeed, but in a continual flux, and may loſe that pleaſureableneſs to morrow which charms us to day?

2. This Doctrine will *teach us Patience under ſuch Providences as declare his unchangeable Will.* The rectitude of our Wills conſiſts in conformity to the Divine, as diſcovered in his Words, and manifeſted in his Providence, which are the effluxes of his immutable Will. The time of trial is appointed by his *immutable Will* *; 'tis not in the Power of the Sufferer's will to ſhorten it, nor in the Power of the Enemies will to lengthen it. Whatſoever doth happen, hath been decreed by God, (*Eccleſ.* 6. 10. *That which hath been is named already*) therefore to murmur, or be diſcontented, is to contend with God, who is mightier than we to maintain his own purpoſes. God doth act all things conveniently for that immutable end intended by himſelf, and according to the reaſon of his own Divine Will, in the true point of Time moſt proper for it and for us, not too ſoon or too ſlow, becauſe he is unchangeable in Knowledge and Wiſdom. God doth not act any thing barely by an immutable Will, but by an immutable Wiſdom, and an unchangeable Rule of Goodneſs; and therefore we ſhould not only acquieſce in what he works, but have a complacency in it; and by having our Wills thus knitting themſelves with the immutable Will of God, we attain ſome degree of likeneſs to him in his own Unchangeableneſs. When therefore God hath manifeſted his Will in opening his Decree to the World by his Work of Providence, we muſt ceaſe all diſputes againſt it, and with *Aaron* hold our peace, tho' the affliction be very ſmart: * *All fleſh muſt be ſilent before God* *; For whatſoever is his Counſel ſhall ſtand, and cannot be recall'd; all ſtruggling againſt it, is like a brittle Glaſs contending with a Rock; For *if he cut off and ſhut up, or gather together*, then *who can hinder him?* Job 11. 10. Nothing can help us, if he hath determined to afflict us; as nothing can hurt us, if he hath determined to ſecure us. The more clearly God hath evidenc'd this, or that to be his Will, the more ſinful is our ſtruggling againſt it. *Pharaoh*'s ſin was the greater in keeping *Iſrael*, by how much the more God's Miracles had been Demonſtrations of his ſettled Will to deliver them. Let nothing ſnatch our hearts to a contradiction to him, but let us *fear* and give Glory to him, when the hour of Judgment, which he hath appointed, *is come* *; that is, comply with the unchangeable will of his Precept, the more he declares the immutable will of his Providence: We muſt not think, God muſt diſgrace his Nature, and change his Proceedings for us: Better the Creature ſhould ſuffer, than God be impair'd in any of his Perfections. If God changed his Purpoſe, he would change his Nature. Patience is the way to perform the immutable Will of God, and a means to attain a gracious Immutability for our ſelves by receiving the Promiſe. *Heb.* 10. 36. *Ye have need of Patience, that after ye have done the Will of God, ye might receive the Promiſe.*

*Dan. 11. 35.

* Rev. 10. 3.

* Zach. 2. 13

* Rev. 14. 7.

3. This Doctrine will teach us *to imitate God in this perfection, by ſtriving to be immoveable in goodneſs.* God never goes back from himſelf, he finds nothing better than himſelf for which he ſhould change; and can we find any thing better than God to allure our hearts to a change from him? The Sun never declines from the Ecliptick Line, nor ſhould we from the paths of Holineſs. A ſtedfaſt obedience is encouraged by an unchangeable God to reward it, 1 *Cor.* 15. 58. *Be ſtedfaſt and immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour ſhall not be in vain in the Lord.* Unſtedfaſtneſs is the note of an Hypocrite, *Pſal.* 78. 37. Stedfaſtneſs in that which is good, is the mark of a Saint, 'tis the Character of a righteous perſon to *keep the truth*, Iſa. 26. 2. And it is as poſitively ſaid, that *he that abides not in the Doctrine of Chriſt, hath not God*, 2 *Epiſt. John* 9. But he that doth, *hath both the Father and the Son.* So much of uncertainty, ſo much of nature; ſo much of firmneſs in Duty, ſo much of Grace. We can never honour God unleſs we finiſh his work; as Chriſt did not glorifie God but in *finiſhing the work God gave him to do* *. The nearer the World comes to an end, the more is God's immutability ſeen in his promiſes and predictions, and the more muſt our unchangeableneſs be ſeen in our obedience, *Heb.* 10. 23, 35. *Let us hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith without wavering, and ſo much the more as you ſee the day approaching.* The Chriſtian *Jews* were to be the more tenacious of their faith, the nearer they ſaw the day approaching, the day of *Jeruſalems* deſtruction propheſied of by *Daniel* *, which accompliſhment muſt be a great argument to eſtabliſh the Chriſtian *Jews* in the profeſſion of Chriſt to be the *Meſſiah*; becauſe the deſtruction of the City was not to be, before the cutting off the *Meſſiah*.

* John 17. 4

* Dan. 9. 26.

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Let us be therefore conſtant in our profeſſion and ſervice of God, and not ſuffer our ſelves to be driven from him by the ill uſage, or flatter'd from him by the careſſes of the World.

1. 'Tis *reaſonable.* If God be unchangeable in doing us good, it is reaſon we ſhould be unchangeable in doing him ſervice: If he aſſures us that he is our God, our *I am*, he would alſo that we ſhould be his People. His we are. If he declare himſelf conſtant in his Promiſes, he expects we ſhould be ſo in our Obedience: As a Spouſe, we ſhould be unchangeably faithful to him as a Husband: As Subjects, have an unchangeable Allegiance to him as our Prince. He would not have us *faithful* to him for an hour or a day, but *to the death* *; And it is reaſon we ſhould be his; and if we be his Children, imitate him in his conſtancy of his holy Purpoſes.

* Rev. 2. 10.

2. 'Tis *our glory and intereſt.* To be a Reed ſhaken with every Wind, is no commendation among Men, and 'tis leſs a ground of Praiſe with God. It was *Job*'s glory, that he held faſt in his Integrity; * *In all this* Job *ſinned not*; In all this, which whole Cities and Kingdoms would have thought ground enough of high exclamations againſt God: And alſo againſt the temptation of his Wife, he retained his integrity, *Job* 2. 9. *Doſt thou ſtill retain thy integrity?* The Devil, who by God's permiſſion ſtript him of his Goods and Health, yet could not ſtrip him of his grace. As a Traveller, when the Wind and Snow beats in his face, wraps his Cloak more cloſely about him, to preſerve that and himſelf. Better we had never made profeſſion, than afterwards to abandon it; ſuch a withering profeſſion ſerves for no other uſe than to aggravate the crime, if any of us fly like a Coward, or revolt like a Traytor: What profit will it be to a Soldier, if he hath withſtood many aſſaults, and turn his back at laſt? If we would have God crown us with an immutable glory, we muſt crown our beginnings with a happy perſeverance, *Rev.* 2. 10. *Be faithful to the Death, and I will give thee a Crown of life*: Not as tho' this were the cauſe to merit it, but a neceſſary condition to poſſeſs it: Conſtancy in good is accompanied with an immutability of Glory.

* Job. 1. 22.

3. *By an unchangeable diſpoſition to good, we ſhould begin the happineſs of Heaven upon Earth.* This is the perfection of bleſſed Spirits; thoſe that are neareſt to God, as Angels and glorified Souls, they are immutable: Not indeed by Nature, but by Grace; yet not only by a neceſſity of Grace, but a liberty of Will: Grace will not let them change; and that Grace doth animate their Wills that they would not change; an immutable God fills their Underſtandings and Affections, and gives ſatisfaction to their deſires. The Saints when they were below, tried other things, and found them deficient, But now they are ſo fully ſatisfied with the beatifick Viſion, that if *Satan* ſhould have entrance among the Angels and Sons of God, 'tis not likely he ſhould have any influence upon them; he could not preſent to their Underſtandings any thing, that could either at the firſt glance, or upon a deliberate view, be preferrable to what they enjoy and are fixed in.

Well then, let us be immoveable in the Knowledge and Love of God. 'Tis the delight of God to ſee his Creatures reſemble him in what they are able. Let not our Affections to him be as *Jonah*'s Gourd, growing up in one Night, and withering the next. Let us not only fight a good Fight, but do ſo till we have finiſhed our Courſe, and imitate God in an unchangeableneſs of holy Purpoſes; and to that purpoſe, examine our ſelves daily what fixedneſs we have arrived unto; And to prevent any temptation to a Revolt, let us often poſſeſs our minds with thoughts of the immutability of God's Nature and Will, which like Fire under Water, will keep a good matter boiling up in us, and make it both retain and increaſe its heat.

4. Let this Doctrine teach us *to have recourſe to God, and aim at a near conjunction with him.* When our Spirits begin to flag, and a cold aguiſh temper is drawing upon us, let us go to him, who can only fix our hearts, and furniſh us with a Ballaſt to render them ſtedfaſt. As he is only immutable in his Nature, ſo he is the only Principle of Immutability, as well as Being in the Creature. Without his Grace, we ſhall be as changeable in our appearances as a *Camelion*, and in our turnings as the Wind. When *Peter* truſted in himſelf, he changed to the worſe: It was his Maſters recourſe to God for him that preſerved in him a reducing Principle, which changed him again for the better, and fixed him in it *.

* Luke 22. v. 32.

It will be our Intereſt to be in conjunction with him, that moves not about with the Heavens, nor is turned by the force of Nature, nor changed by the accidents in the World; but ſits in the Heavens, moving all things by his powerful Arm, according to his infinite Skill: While we have him for our God, we have his Immutability, as well as any other Perfection of his Nature, for our advantage; The nearer we come to him, the more ſtability we ſhall have in our ſelves; the further from him, the more liable to change. The Line that is neareſt to the place where it is firſt fixed, is leaſt ſubject to motion; the further it is ſtretched from it, the weaker it is, and more liable to be ſhaken. Let us alſo affect thoſe things which are neareſt to him in this perfection; the righteouſneſs of Chriſt that ſhall never wear out, and the graces of the Spirit that ſhall never burn out; by this means, what God is infinitely by Nature, we ſhall come to be finitely immutable by Grace, as much as the capacity of a Creature can contain.

A DISCOURSE UPON God's Omnipresence.

Jeremiah XXIII. 24.

Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him, saith the Lord? Do not I fill Heaven and Earth, saith the Lord?

THE occasion of this Discourse begins *verse* 16. where God admonisheth the People, not to hearken to the words of the false Prophets, which spake a Vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord. They made the people vain by their insinuations of Peace, when God had proclaimed War and Calamity; and uttered the Dreams of their Phansies, and not the Visions of the Lord; and so turned the People from the expectation of the evil day which God had threatned, *ver.* 17. *They say still unto them, that despise me, The Lord hath said, Ye shall have peace: and they say unto every one that walks after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come upon you.* And they invalidate the Prophecies of those, whom God had sent, *ver.* 18. *Who hath stood in the Counsel of the Lord, and hath perceived and heard his word? Who hath marked his word, and heard it? Who hath stood in the Counsel of the Lord?* Are they acquainted with the Secrets of God more than we? Who have the word of the Lord, if we have not? Or, it may be a continuation of God's Admonition: Believe not those Prophets; for who of them have been acquainted with the Secrets of God? Or by what means should they learn his Counsel? No, assure your selves, *a whirlwind of the Lord is gone forth in fury, even a grievous whirlwind, it shall fall grievously upon the head of the wicked*, ver. 19. A whirlwind shall come from *Babylon*, 'tis just at the door, and shall not be blown over, it shall fall with a witness upon the wicked People, and the deceiving Prophets, and sweep them together into Captivity. For *v.* 20. *The anger of the Lord shall not return, until he have executed, and till he have performed the thoughts of his heart.* My fury shall not be a childish fury that quickly languisheth, but shall accomplish whatsoever I threaten; and burn so hot, as not to be cool, till I have satisfied my vengeance; *in the latter days ye shall consider it perfectly*, ver. 20. when the storm shall beat upon you, you shall then know, that the Calamities shall answer the words you have heard. When the Conqueror shall waste your Grounds, demolish your Houses, and manacle your Hands, then shall you consider it, and have the wishes of Fools, that you had had your eyes in your heads before; you shall then know the falsness of your Guides, and the truth of my Prophets, and discern who stood in the Counsel of the Lord, and subscribe to the Messages, I have sent you.

Some understand this not only of the *Babylonish* Captivity, but refer it to the time of Christ, and the false Doctrine of Mens own Righteousness, in opposition to the Righteousness of God; understanding this verse to be partly a threatning of Wrath, which shall end in an advantage to the *Jews*, who shall in the latter time consider the falsness of their Notions about a legal Righteousness, and so make it a promise; they shall then know the intent of the Scripture, and in the latter days, the latter end of the World, when Time shall be near the rouling up, they shall reflect upon themselves; they shall *look upon him whom they have pierced*; and till these *latter days*, they shall be hardened, and believe nothing of Evangelical truths.

Now God denieth that he sent those Prophets, *v.* 21. *I have not sent these Prophets, yet they ran; I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.* They have intruded themselves without a Commission from me, whatsoever their Brags are. The reason to prove it, is, *v.* 22. *If they had stood in my Counsel*, if they had been instructed, and inspired by me, *they would have caused my people to hear my words*; they would have regulated themselves according to my word, *and have turned them from their evil way*; i. e. endeavoured to shake down their false confidences of peace, and make them sensible of their false Notions of me, and my ways. Now because those false Prophets could not be so impudent as to boast, that they Prophesied in the Name of God, when they had not Commission from him, unless they had some secret Sentiment, that they and their intentions were hid from the Knowledge and Eye of God; He adds, *v.* 23. *Am I a God at hand, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places, that I shall not see him?* Have I not the power of seeing and knowing what they do, what they design, what they think? Why should I not have such a power, since *I fill Heaven and Earth* by my Essence? *Am I a God at hand, and not a God afar off?* He excludes here the Doctrine of those that excluded the Providence of God from extending its self to the inferior things of the Earth; which error was ancient, as ancient as the time of *Job*, as appears by their opinion. That God's eyes were hood-wink'd and muffled by the thickness of the Clouds, and could not pierce through their dark and dense Body: * *Thick clouds are a covering to him, that he seeth not.*

* Job 22.14

* Some refer it to Time. Do you imagine me a God new fram'd like your Idols, beginniug a little time ago, and not existing before the foundation of the World; yea, from Eternity? *A God afar off*, further than your acutest understandings can reach? I am of a longer standing, and you ought to know my Majesty. But it rather refers to place, than time. Do you think I do not behold every thing in the Earth, as well as in Heaven? Am I lock'd up within the Walls of my Palace, and cannot peep out to behold the things done in the World? Or that I am so link'd to pleasure in the place of my Glory, as earthly Kings are in their Courts, that I have no mind, or leisure to take notice of the carriages of Men upon Earth? God doth not say, He was afar off, but only gives an account of the inward thoughts of their minds, or at least, of the Language expresst by their Actions.

* *Munster, Vatablus, Castalio Oecolamp.*

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The Interrogation carries in it a ſtrong Affirmation, and aſſures us more of God's care, and the folly of Men, in not conſidering it. *Am I a God at hand, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himſelf in ſecret places?* Heb. *in Hiddeneſſes*, in the deepeſt Cells: What? are you beſotted by your baſe Luſts, that you think me a God careleſs, ignorant, blind, that I can ſee nothing, but as a purblind Man, what is very near my eye? Are you ſo out of your wits, that you imagine you can deceive me? Do not all your behaviours ſpeak ſuch a Sentiment to lie ſecret in your heart, tho' not form'd into a full conception, yet teſtified by your Actions? No, you are much miſtaken, 'tis impoſſible but that I ſhould ſee and know all things, ſince I am preſent with all things, and am not at a greater diſtance from the things on Earth, than from the things in Heaven; for I fill all that vaſt Fabrick which is divided into thoſe two parts of *Heaven* and *Earth*; and he that hath ſuch an infinite Eſſence, cannot be diſtant, cannot be ignorant, nothing can be far from his eyes, ſince every thing is ſo near to his Eſſence.

So that it is an elegant Expreſſion of the Omniſcience of God, and a ſtrong Argument for it. He aſſerts, firſt the Univerſality of his Knowledge; but leſt they ſhould miſtake, and confine his preſence only to Heaven; he adds, That he *fills Heaven and Earth*. I do not ſee things ſo, as if I were in one place, and the things ſeen in another, as it is with Man; but whatſoever I ſee, I ſee not without my ſelf, becauſe every corner of Heaven and Earth is fill'd by me. He that fills all, muſt needs ſee and know all.

And indeed, Men that queſtion the knowledge of God, would be more convinc'd by the Doctrine of his immediate preſence with them. And this ſeems to be the deſign and manner of Arguing in this place. Nothing is remote from my knowledge, becauſe nothing is diſtant from my preſence.

I fill Heaven and Earth: He doth not ſay, I am in Heaven and Earth, but I *fill* Heaven and Earth, *i.e.* * ſay ſome, with my Knowledge; others, with my Authority, or my Power. But,

* *Tum perſpicacia, tum efficacia,* Grot.

1. The word *filling* cannot properly be referred to *the act of Underſtanding* and Will. A preſence by knowledge is to be granted, but to ſay ſuch a preſence fills a place, is an improper Speech. Knowledge is not enough to conſtitute a preſence.

A Man at *London* knows there is ſuch a City as *Paris*, and knows many things in it; can he be concluded therefore to be preſent in *Paris*, or fill any place there, or be preſent with the things he knows there? If I know any thing to be diſtant from me, how can it be preſent with me? For by knowing it to be diſtant, I know it not to be preſent. Beſides, *filling* Heaven and Earth, is diſtinguiſh'd here from Knowing or Seeing. His preſence is render'd as an Argument to prove his Knowledge. Now a Propoſition, and the proof of that Propoſition, are diſtinct, and not the ſame.

It cannot be imagin'd, that God ſhould prove *idem per idem*, as we ſay; for what would be the import of the Speech then? I know all things, I ſee all things, becauſe I know and ſee all things *. The Holy Ghoſt here accommodates himſelf to the Capacity of Men; becauſe we know that a Man ſees and knows that which is done, where he is corporally preſent; ſo he proves, that God knows all things that are done in the moſt ſecret Caverns of the heart, becauſe he is every where in Heaven and Earth, as light is every where in the Air, and Air every where in the World. Hence the Schools uſe the term *repletive* for the preſence of God.

* Suarez.

2. Nor by *filling* of Heaven and Earth, is meant *his Authority and Power*. It would be improperly ſaid of a King, that in regard of the Government of his Kingdom, is every where by his Authority, that he fills all the Cities and Countries of his Dominions. [*I, do not I fill* *?] That [*I*] notes the Eſſence of God, as diſtinguiſh'd according to our capacity, from the perfections pertaining to his Eſſence; and is in reaſon better referred to the ſubſtance of God, than to thoſe things we conceive as Attributes in him. Beſides, were it meant only of his Authority or Power, the Argument would not run well. I ſee all things, becauſe my Authority and Power fills Heaven and Earth. Power doth not always rightly infer knowledge, no not in a rational Agent. Many things in a Kingdom are done by the Authority of the King, that never arrive to the Knowledge of the King. Many things in us are done by the Power of our Souls, which yet we have not a diſtinct Knowledge of in our Underſtandings. There are many motions in ſleep, by the vertue of the Soul informing the Body, that we have not ſo much as a ſimple knowledge of in our minds. Knowledge is not rightly inferr'd from Power, or Power from Knowledge.

* Amyrald. de Trinitate, p. 57.

By *filling* Heaven and Earth is meant therefore, *a filling it with his Eſſence*. No place can be imagin'd, that is deprived of the preſence of God; and therefore when the Scripture any where ſpeaks of the *preſence* of God, it joyns Heaven and Earth together: He ſo fills them, that there is no place without him. We do not ſay a Veſſel is full, ſo long as there is any ſpace to contain more. Not a part of Heaven, nor a part of Earth, but the whole Heaven, the whole Earth, at one and the ſame time. If he were only in one part of Heaven, or one part of Earth; ay, if there were any part of Heaven, or any part of arth void of him, he could not be ſaid to fill them. I fill Heaven and Earth; not a part of me fills one place, and another part of me fills another; but I, God, fill Heaven and Earth; I am whole God, filling the Heaven; and whole God, filling the Earth. I fill Heaven, and yet fill Earth; I fill Earth, and yet fill Heaven, and fill Heaven and Earth at one and the ſame time. *God fills his own works*, a Heathen Philoſopher ſaith *.

* Seneca de Benefic. l. 4. cap. 8. *Ipſe opus ſuum implet.*

Here is then a Deſcription of God's *Preſence*.

1. *By Power*; *Am I not a God afar off?* A God in the extenſion of his Arm.

2. *By Knowledge*; *Shall I not ſee them?*

3. *By Eſſence*; as an undeniable ground for inferring the two former: I *fill* Heaven and Earth.

Doct. *God is eſſentially every where preſent in Heaven and Earth.*

If God be, he muſt be ſomewhere; that which is no where, is nothing. Since God is, he is in the World; not in one part of it; for then he were circumſcrib'd by it: if in the World, and only there, tho' it be a great ſpace, he were alſo limited. * Some therefore ſaid, God was *every where*, and *no where*. No where, *i. e.* not bounded by any place, nor receiving from any place any thing for his preſervation or ſuſtainment. He is every where, becauſe no Creature either Body or Spirit, can exclude the preſence of his Eſſence; for he is not only near, but in every thing; * *In him we live, and move, and have our Being*. Not abſent from any thing, but ſo preſent with them, that they live and move in him, and move more in God, than in the Air or Earth wherein they are; nearer to us than our fleſh to our bones, than the air to our breath; he cannot be far from them that live, and have every motion in him. The Apoſtle doth not ſay, *By him*, but *in him*, to ſhew the inwardneſs of his *Preſence*.

* Chryſoſtom.

* Acts 17. 28

As *Eternity* is the perfection whereby he hath neither beginning nor end; *Immutability* is the perfection whereby he hath neither increaſe, nor diminution: ſo *Immenſity* or *Omnipreſence*, is that whereby he hath neither bounds nor limitation. As he is in all time, yet

yet ſo as to be above Time; ſo is he in all places, yet ſo as to be above limitation by any place. It was a good expreſſion of a Heathen to illuſtrate this, that God is a Sphere or Circle, whoſe *Center is every where, and Circumference no where*. His meaning was, that the Eſſence of God was indiviſible; *i.e.* could not be divided. It cannot be ſaid, here and there the lines of it terminate; 'tis like a line drawn out in infinite ſpaces, that no point can be conceived where its length and breadth ends. The Sea is a vaſt Maſs of Waters; yet to that it is ſaid, *Hitherto ſhalt thou go, and no further*. But it cannot be ſaid of God's Eſſence, hitherto it reaches, and no further; here it is, and there it is not. 'Tis plain, that God is thus *Immenſe*, becauſe he is Infinite; we have Reaſon and Scripture to aſſent to it, tho' we cannot conceive it. We know that God is eternal, tho' Eternity is too great to be meaſured by the ſhort line of a created Underſtanding. We cannot conceive the Vaſtneſs and Glory of the Heavens, much leſs that which is ſo great, as to *fill* Heaven and Earth; yea, * *not to be contained in the Heaven of Heavens*.

* 1 Kings, 8. v. 27.

Things are ſaid to be *preſent*, or *in a place*.

1. *Circumſcriptivè*, as circumſcribed. This belongs to things that have quantity, as Bodies that are encompaſs'd by that place wherein they are; and a Body fills but one particular ſpace wherein it is, and the ſpace is commenſurate to every part of it, and every Member hath a diſtinct place. The hand is not in the ſame particular ſpace, that the foot or head is.

2. *Definitivè*, which belongs to Angels and Spirits, which are ſaid to be in a point, yet ſo as that they cannot be ſaid to be in another at the ſame time.

3. *Repletivè*, filling all places; this belongs only to God: As he is not meaſured by time, ſo he is not limited by place. A Body or Spirit, becauſe finite, fills but one ſpace; God, becauſe infinite, fills all, yet ſo as not to be contained in them, as Wine and Water is in a Veſſel. He is from the height of the Heaven, to the bottom of the Deeps, in every point of the World, and in the whole Circle of it, yet not limited by it, but beyond it.

Now this hath been acknowledged by the wiſeſt in the World.

Some indeed had other Notions of God. The more ignorant ſort of the *Jews* confin'd him to the *Temple* *. And God intimates, that they had ſuch a thought when he aſſerts his *preſence in Heaven and Earth*, in oppoſition to the Temple they built as his Houſe, and *the place* of his *Reſt* *: And the Idolaters among them, thought their Gods might be at a diſtance from them, which *Elias* intimates in the ſcoff he puts upon them *, *Cry aloud, for he is a God*, meaning *Baal*; *either he is talking, or he is purſuing, or he is in a journey*; and they follow his advice, and cried *louder*, v. 28. Whereby it is evident, they looked not on it as a mock, but as a truth. And the *Syrians* call'd the God of *Iſrael* the God of the Hills, as tho' his preſence were fixed there, and not in the Valleys *; and their own Gods in the Valleys, and not in the Mountains; they fancied every God to have a particular Dominion, and preſence in one place, and not in another; and bounded the Territories of their Gods, as they did thoſe of their Princes *. And ſome thought him tied to, and ſhut up in their Temples and Groves wherein they worſhiped him *. Some of them thought God to be confined to Heaven, and therefore ſacrificed upon the higheſt Mountains, that the ſteam might aſcend nearer Heaven, and their Praiſes be heard better in thoſe places which were neareſt to the Habitation of God: But the wiſer *Jews* acknowledged it; and therefore call'd God *Place* *, whereby they denoted his *Immenſity*; he was not contain'd in any place, every part of the World ſubſiſts by him: He was a place to himſelf, greater than any thing made by him. And the wiſer Heathens acknowledged it alſo.

* Hierom. on Iſa. 66. 1.

* Hammond on Matt. 6. 7.

* 1 Kings, 18. 17.

* 1 Kings, 20. 23.

* Med. Diatrib. vol. 1. p. 71, 72.

* Dought. Analec. exercurſ. 61. 113

* מקים Grot. upon Mark 5. 16. Maref. contra Volk. l. 1. c. 27. p. 494.

‖ *One* calls God a mind paſſing through the univerſal Nature of things; *Another*, that he was an infinite and immenſe Air *; *Another*, That it is as natural to think God is every where, as to think that God is: Hence they call'd God the Soul of the World, that as the Soul is in every part of the body, to quicken it, ſo is God in every part of the World, to ſupport it.

‖ Vide Minut. Fel. p. 20.

* Plotin. Enead 6. lib. 5. cap. 4.

And there are ſome reſemblances of this in the World, tho' no Creature can fully reſemble God in any one perfection; for then it would not be a Creature, but God. But Air and Light are ſome weak reſemblances of it: Air is in all the ſpaces of the World, in the Pores of all Bodies, in the Bowels of the Earth, and extends it ſelf from the loweſt Earth to the higheſt Regions; and the Heavens themſelves are probably nothing elſe but a refin'd kind of Air; and Light diffuſeth it ſelf through the whole Air, and every part of it is truly Light, as every part of the Air is truly Air; and tho' they ſeem to be mingled together, yet they are diſtinct things, and not of the ſame Eſſence; ſo is the Eſſence of God in the whole World, not by diffuſion as Air or Light; not mixed with any Creature; but remaining diſtinct from the Eſſence of any Created Being. Now when this hath been own'd by Men inſtructed only in the School of Nature, 'tis a greater ſhame to any acquainted with the Scripture to deny it. For the underſtanding of this, there ſhall be ſome Propoſitions premis'd in general.

1. *This is negatively to be underſtood.* Our knowledge of God is moſt by withdrawing from him, or denying to him, in our conception, any weakneſſes or imperfections in the Creature. As the infiniteneſs of God is a denial of limitation of Being, ſo Immenſity or Omnipreſence, is a denial of limitation of place: And when we ſay, God is *totus* in every place, we muſt underſtand it thus, That he is not every where by parts, as Bodies are, as Air and Light are; He is every where, *i. e.* his Nature hath no bounds, he is not tyed to any place, as the Creature is, who when he is preſent in one place, is abſent from another. As no place can be without God, ſo no place can compaſs and contain him.

2. *There is an influential Omnipreſence of God.*

1. *Univerſal with all Creatures.* He is preſent with all things by his Authority, becauſe all things are ſubject to him: By his Power, becauſe all things are ſuſtained by him: By his Knowledge, becauſe all things are naked before him. He is preſent in the World, as a King is in all parts of his Kingdom Regally preſent: Providentially preſent with all, ſince his care extends to the meaneſt of his Creatures. His Power reacheth all, and his Knowledge pierceth all.

As every thing in the World was Created by God, ſo every thing in the World is preſerved by God; and ſince Preſervation is not wholly diſtinct from Creation, 'tis neceſſary God ſhould be preſent with every thing while he preſerves it, as well as preſent with it when he created it; *Thou preſerveſt Man and Beaſt.* * *He upholds all things by the Word of his Power.* There is a vertue ſuſtaining every Creature, that it may not fall back into that Nothing from whence it was elevated by the Power of God. All thoſe natural Vertues we call the Principles of Operation, are Fountains ſpringing from his Goodneſs and Power; all things are acted and managed by him, as well as preſerved by him; and in this ſenſe God is preſent with all Creatures; for whatſoever acts another, is preſent with that which it acts, by ſending forth ſome vertue and influence, whereby it acts: If free Agents do not only *live*, but *move in him, and by him* *, much more are the motions of other natural Agents, by a vertue communicated to them,

* Pſal. 36. 6. Heb. 1. 3.

* Acts 17. 28

them, and upheld in them in the time of their acting: This vertual presence of God, is evident to our sense, a presence we feel; his *essential presence* is evident in our reason. This *influential presence* may be compar'd to that of the Sun, which tho' at so great a distance from the Earth, is present in the Air and Earth by its Light, and within the Earth by its influence, in concocting those Metals which are in the Bowels of it, without being substantially in either of them. God is thus so intimate with every Creature, that there is not the least particle of any Creature, but the marks of his power and goodness are seen in it, and his goodness doth attend them, and is more swift in its effluxes, than the breaking out of Light from the Sun, which yet are more swift than can be declar'd; but to say he is in the World only by his Vertue, is to acknowledge only the effects of his Power and Wisdom in the World, that his eye sees all, his arm supports all, his goodness nourisheth all, but himself and his essence at a distance from them *? And so the Soul of Man, according to its measure, would have in some kind a more excellent manner of presence in the body, than God, according to the infiniteness of his Being with his Creatures; for that doth not only communicate Life to the Body, but is actually present with it, and spreads its whole Essence through the Body and every Member of it: All grant, that God is efficaciously in every Creek of the World; but some say, he is only substantially in Heaven.

* *Zanch.*

2. *Limited to such Subjects that are capacitated for this or that kind of Presence.* Yet it is an *Omnipresence*, because it is a Presence in all the Subjects capacitated for it; thus there is a *special providential* Presence of God with some, in assisting them when he sets them on work as his Instruments for some special Service in the World: As with *Cyrus* *, *I will go before thee*; and with *Nebuchadnezzer*, and *Alexander*, whom he protected and directed to execute his Counsels in the World; such a presence *Judas* and others ‖ that shall not enjoy his glorious presence, had in the *working of Miracles* in the World: Besides, * as there is an *effective* presence of God with all Creatures, because he produced them, and preserves them; so there is an *objective* presence of God with rational Creatures, because he offers himself to them, to be known and loved by them: He is near to wicked men in the offers of his Grace, ‖ *call ye upon him while he is near*: Besides, there is a *gracious* presence of God with his people in whom he dwells, and makes his abode, *as in a Temple* Consecrated to him by the Graces of the Spirit. * *We will come*, i.e. the Father and the Son, *and make our abode with him.* He is present with all by the presence of his Divinity, but only in his Saints by a presence of a gracious Efficacy; he walks in the midst of the golden Candlesticks, and hath dignify'd the congregation of his People with the Title of *Jehovah Shammah*, * *The Lord is there: In* Salem *is his Tabernacle, and his dwelling place in* Sion *. As he filled the Tabernacle, so he doth the Church, with the Signs of his presence; this is not the presence wherewith he fills Heaven and Earth. His Spirit is not bestowed upon all, to reside in their hearts, enlighten their minds, and bedew them with refreshing comforts: When the Apostle speaks of God's being *above all*, and *through all*; * *Above all* in his Majesty, *through all* in his Providence; he doth not appropriate that, as he doth what follows, and *in you all*; in you all by a special Grace; as God was specially present with Christ, by the Grace of Union, so he is specially present with his People by the Grace of Regeneration. So there are several manifestations of his presence; he hath a presence of Glory in Heaven, whereby he comforts the Saints; a presence of wrath in Hell, whereby he torments the damned; in Heaven he is a God spreading his beam of Light; in Hell, a God distributing his strokes of Justice; by the one he fills Heaven, by the other he fills Hell; by his Providence and Essence, he fills both Heaven and Earth.

* Isa. 45. 2.

‖ Mat. 7. 22. *In thy name we have done many wonderful works.*

* *Cajetan in Aquin.* Par. 1. Qu. 8. Artic. 3.

‖ Isa. 55. 6.

* John 14 v. 23.

* Ezek. 48. v. 35.

* Psal. 76. 2.

* Eph. 4. 6.

3. *There is an Essential presence of God in the World.* He is not only every where, by his Power upholding the Creatures, by his Wisdom understanding them, but by his Essence containing them. That any thing is essentially present any where, it hath from God; God is therefore much more present every where, for he cannot give that which he hath not.

1. *He is Essentially present in all places* *. 'Tis as reasonable to think the Essence of God to be every where, as to be always; Immensity is as rational as Eternity; That indivisible Essence which reaches thro' all times, may as well reach thro' all places: 'Tis more excellent to be always, than to be every where; for to be always in duration is Intrinsical; to be every where is Extrinsick; if the greater belongs to God, why not the less? As all times are a moment to his Eternity, so all places are as a point to his Essence; As he is larger than all time, so he is vaster than all place: The Nations of the World are to him *as the dust of the Ballance*, or *drop of a Bucket* *. *The Nations are accounted as the small Dust*; The Essence of God may well be thought to be present every where, with that which is no more than a grain of Dust to him; and in all those Isles, which if put together, *are a very little thing* in his hand: Therefore, saith a learned *Jew* *, If a man were set in the highest Heavens, he would not be nearer to the Essence of God than if he were in the Center of the Earth. Why may not the presence of God in the World be as noble as that of the Soul in the Body, which is generally granted to be essentially in every part of the body of Man. Which is but a little World, and animates every Member by its actual presence, tho' it exerts not the same operation in every part *? The World is less to the Creator, than the Body to the Soul; and needs more the presence of God, than the Body needs the presence of the Soul. That glorious body of the Sun visits every part of the Habitable Earth in 24 hours by its beams; which reaches the Troughs of the lowest Vallies, as well as the Pinacles of the highest Mountains; must we not acknowledge in the Creator of this Sun an infinite greater proportion of presence? Is it not as easie with the Essence of God to over-spread the whole body of Heaven and Earth, as it is for the Sun to pierce and diffuse its self through the whole Air between it and the Earth, and send up its light also as far to the Regions above? Do we not see something like it in Sounds and Voices? Is not the same Sound of a Trumpet, or any other Musical Instrument, at the first breaking out of a Blast, in several places within such a compass, at the same time? Doth not every Ear that hears it, receive alike the whole sound of it? And fragrant Odors scented in several places at the same time, in the same manner; and the Organ proper for Smelling takes in the same, in every person within the compass of it: How far is the noise of Thunder heard alike to every Ear, in places something distant from one another? And do we daily find such a manner of presence in those things of so low a concern, and not imagine a kind of presence of God greater than all those? Is the sound of Thunder, the *Voice of God*, as it is call'd, every where in such a compass, and shall not the Essence of an Infinite God be much more every where? Those that would confine the Essence of God only to Heaven, and exclude it from the Earth, run into great inconveniencies. It may be demanded, whether he be in one part of the Heavens, or in the whole vast body of them? If in one part of 'em, his Essence is bounded, if he moves from that part, he is mutable, for he changes a place wherein he was, for another wherein he was not. If he be always fixed in one part of the Heavens, such a notion would render him little better than a living Statue *: If he be in the whole Heaven, why cannot his Essence possess a greater space than the whole Heavens which are so vast? How comes he to be confin'd within the compass of that, since the whole Heaven compasseth the Earth? If he be in the whole Heaven, he is in places farther distant one from another, than any part of the Earth can be from

* *Ficin.*

* Isa 40. 15.

* *Maimonid.*

* *Ficin.*

* *Hornbeck Socin Part.* 1. p. 303.

from the Heavens; ſince the Earth is like a Center in the midſt of a Circle, it muſt be nearer to every part of the Circle, than ſome parts of the Circle can be to one another: If therefore his Eſſence poſſeſſes the whole Heavens, no reaſon can be render'd why he doth not alſo poſſeſs the Earth, ſince alſo the Earth is but a little *point* in compariſon of the vaſtneſs of the Heavens: If therefore he be in every part of the Heavens, why not in every part of the Earth?

* Pſal. 129. v. 7,8,9. This Scripture is plain, * *Whither ſhall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither ſhall I flie from thy Preſence? If I aſcend up to Heaven, thou art there? If I make my Bed in Hell, behold thou art there; if I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermoſt parts of the Sea, even there ſhall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand ſhall uphold me.* If he be in Heaven, Earth, Hell, Sea, he fills all places with his Preſence; his Preſence is here aſſerted in places the moſt diſtant from one another; all the places then between Heaven and Earth are poſſeſſed by his Preſence: 'Tis not meant of his Knowledge, for that the Pſalmiſt had ſpoken of before, *v.*2,3. *Thou underſtandeſt my thoughts afar off, thou art acquainted with all my ways.* Beſides, *Thou art there*, not thy Wiſdom or Knowledge; but *Thou*, thy Eſſence, not only thy Vertue. For having before ſpoken of his Omniſcience, he proves that ſuch Knowledge could not be in God, unleſs he were preſent in his Eſſence in all places, ſo as to be excluded from none: He fills the depths of Hell, the extenſion of the Earth, and the heights of the Heavens. When the Scripture mentions the Power of God only, it expreſſeth it by Hand or Arm; but when it mentions the Spirit of God, and doth not intend the *Third Perſon* in the Trinity, it ſignifies the Nature and Eſſence of God: And ſo here, when he ſaith, *Whither ſhall I go from thy Spirit?* He adds exegetically, *Whither ſhall I flie from thy preſence*, or Heb. *face?* And the face of God in Scripture ſignifies the Eſſence of God*; *Thou canſt not ſee my face*, and *my face ſhall not be ſeen*; the effects of his Power, Wiſdom, Providence, are ſeen, which are his back parts, but not his face: The effects of his Power and Wiſdom are ſeen in the World, but his Eſſence is inviſible; and this the Pſalmiſt elegantly expreſſeth. Had I Wings endued with as much quickneſs as the firſt dawnings of the morning light, or the firſt darts of any Sun-beam that ſpreads its ſelf through the Hemiſphere, and paſſes many Miles in as ſhort a ſpace as I can think a Thought, I ſhould find thy preſence in all places before me, and could not flie out of the infinite compaſs of thy Eſſence.

* Exod. 33. v. 20,23.

2. *He is Eſſentially preſent with all Creatures.* If he be in all places, it follows that he is with all Creatures in thoſe places; as he is in Heaven, ſo he is with all Angels; as he is in Hell, ſo is he with all Devils; as he is in the Earth and Sea, he is with all Creatures inhabiting thoſe Elements: As his Eſſential preſence was the ground of the firſt Being of things by Creation, ſo it is the ground of the continued Being of things by Conſervation. As his Eſſential Preſence was the Original, ſo it is the ſupport of the exiſtence of all the Creatures. What are all thoſe magnificent expreſſions of his Creative vertue, but Teſtimonies of his Eſſential preſence at the laying the Foundation of the World*? *When he meaſured the Waters in the hollow of his hand, meted out Heaven with the Span, and comprehended the duſt of the Earth in a Meaſure, and weighed the Mountains in Scales, and the Hills in a Ballance.* He ſets forth the Power and Majeſty of God in the Creation and Preſervation of things, and every expreſſion teſtifies his preſence with them: The Waters that were upon the face of the Earth at firſt, were no more than a drop in the palm of a Mans hand, which in every part is touched by his hand. And thus he is equally preſent with the blackeſt Devils, as well as the brighteſt Angels; with the loweſt Duſt, as well as with the moſt ſparkling Sun. He is equally preſent with the Damned and the Bleſſed, as he is an Infinite Being, but not in regard of his Goodneſs and Grace. He is equally preſent with the good and the bad, with the ſcoffing *Athenians*, as well as the believing Apoſtles, in regard of his Eſſence, but not in regard of the breathing of his Divine Vertues upon them to make them like himſelf*: *He is not far from every one of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our Being.* The Apoſtle includes all; he tells them they ſhould ſeek the Lord; the Lord that they were to ſeek, is God eſſentially conſidered: We are indeed to ſeek the Perfections of God, that glitter in his works, but to the end that they ſhould direct us to the ſeeking of God himſelf in his own Nature and Eſſence*: And therefore what follows, *In him we live*, is to be underſtood not of his Power and Goodneſs, Perfections of his Nature, diſtinguiſh'd according to our manner of conception, from his Eſſence, but of the Eſſential Preſence of God with his Creatures. If he had meant it of his efficacy in preſerving us, it had not been any proof of his nearneſs to us. Who would go about to prove the body or ſubſtance of the Sun to be near us, becauſe it doth warm and enlighten us, when our ſenſe evidenceth the diſtance of it? We live in the beams of the Sun, but we cannot be ſaid to live in the Sun, which is ſo far diſtant from us. The expreſſion ſeems to be more emphatical than to intend any leſs than his Eſſential Preſence: But we live in him not only as the efficient cauſe of our Life, but as the foundation, ſuſtaining our lives and motions, as if he were like Air, diffuſed round about us. And we move in him, as *Auſtin* ſaith, as a Spunge in the Sea, not containing him, but being contained by him: He compaſſeth all, is incompaſs'd by none; he fills all, is comprehended by none. The Creator contains the World, the World contains not the Creator: As the hollow of the hand contains the water, the water in the hollow of the hand contains not the hand; and therefore ſome have choſe to ſay rather, That the World is in God, it lives and moves in him, than that God is in the World. If all things thus live and move in him, then he is preſent with every thing that hath Life and Motion; and as long as the Devils and Damned have life and motion, and being, ſo long is he with them; for whatſoever lives and moves, lives and moves in him.

* Iſa. 40.12.

* Acts 17.7.

* *Amyrald. de Trinit.*

But now this Eſſential Preſence is,

1. *Without any mixture.* I fill Heaven and Earth, not, I am mixed with Heaven and Earth; his Eſſence is not mixed with the Creatures; it remains intire in its ſelf. The Spunge retains the nature of a Spunge, tho' incompaſs'd by the Sea, and moving in it; and the Sea ſtill retains its own nature. God is moſt ſimple; his Eſſence therefore is not mixed with any thing. The light of the Sun is preſent with the air, but not mixed with it, it remains light, and the air remains air; the light of the Sun is diffuſed through all the Hemiſphere, it pierceth all tranſparent bodies, it ſeems to mix it ſelf with all things, yet remains unmixed and undivided; the light remains light, and the air remains air; the air is not light tho' it be enlightened. Or, take this ſimilitude; When many Candles are lighted up in a Room, the light is all together, yet not mixed with one another; every Candle hath a particular light belonging to it, which may be ſeparated in a moment, by removing one Candle from another; but if they were mixed they could not be ſeparated, at leaſt ſo eaſily. God is not formally one with the World, or with any Creature in the World by his Preſence in it: Nor can any Creature in the World, no, not the Soul of Man, or an Angel, come to be Eſſentially one with God, tho' God be Eſſentially preſent with it.

2. *The Eſſential Preſence is without any diviſion of himſelf. I fill Heaven and Earth*, not part in Heaven, and part in Earth; I fill one as well as the other: One part of his Eſſence is not in one place, and another part of his Eſſence in another place, he would then be changeable; for that part of his Eſſence which were now in this place, he might alter it to another, and place that part of his Eſſence which were in another

ther place, to this; but he is undivided every where. As his Eternity is one indivisible point, tho' in our conception we divide it into past, present, and to come. So the whole World is as a point to him, in regard of place, as before was said; 'tis as a small dust, and grain of dust: 'Tis impossible that one part of his Essence can be separated from another, for he is not a Body, to have one part separable from another. The light of the Sun cannot be cut into parts, it cannot be shut into any place and kept there, 'tis intire in every place; shall not God, who gives the light that power, be much more present himself? Whatsoever hath parts is finite, but God is infinite, therefore hath no parts of his Essence. Besides, if there were such a division of his Being, he would not be the most simple and uncompounded Being, but would be made up of various parts; he would not be a Spirit, for parts are evidences of composition; and it could not be said that God is here or there, but only a part of God here, and a part of God there. But *he fills Heaven and Earth*, he is as much a God in the *Earth beneath*, as in *Heaven above* *; intirely in all places, not by scraps and fragments of his Essence.

*Deut. 4. 39

3. *This Essential Presence is not by Multiplication.* For that which is infinite cannot multiply it self, or make it self more or greater than it was.

4. *This Essential Presence is not by extension or diffusion.* As a piece of Gold may be beaten out to cover a large compass of ground; no, if God should create millions of Worlds, he would be in them all, not by stretching out his Being, but by the Infiniteness of his Being; not by a new growth of his Being, but by the same Essence he had from Eternity: Upon the same reasons mention'd before, his Simplicity and Indivisibility.

5. *But totally.* There is no space, not the least, wherein God is not wholly according to his Essence, and wherein his whole substance doth not exist; not a part of Heaven can be design'd wherein the Creator is not wholly; as he is in one part of Heaven, he is in every part of Heaven. Some kind of resemblance we may have from the water of the Sea, which fills the great space of the World, and is diffused thro' all; yet the Essence of Water is in every drop of Water in the Sea, as much as the whole; and the same quality of Water, tho' it comes short in quantity; and why shall we not allow God a nobler way of Presence without diffusion, as is in that? Or take this resemblance, since God likens himself to *Light* in the Scripture*, *he covereth himself with Light*; A Chrystal Globe hung up in the Air hath Light all about it, all within it, every part is pierced by it; wherever you see the Chrystal you see the Light; the light in one part of the Chrystal cannot be distinguish'd from the light in the other part; and the whole Essence of Light is in every part; and shall not God be as much present with his Creatures, as one Creature can be with another*? God is totally every where by his own simple substance.

*Psal. 104. 2
1 John. 1. 5. *God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.*

*Bernard.

Proposition 4. *God is present beyond the World.* He is within and above all places, tho' places should be infinite in number; as he was before and beyond all Time, so he is above and beyond all Place; being from Eternity before any real time, he must also be without as well as within any real space; if God were only confin'd to the World, he would be no more infinite in his Essence than the World is in quantity; as a moment cannot be conceived from Eternity, wherein God was not in Being, so a space cannot be conceived in the mind of Man, wherein God is not present; he is not contain'd in the World nor in the Heavens. * *But will God indeed dwell on the Earth? Behold the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain Thee.* *Solomon* wonders that God should appoint a Temple to be erected to him upon the Earth, when he is not contained in the vast Circuit of the Heavens; his Essence is not straitned in the limits of any Created work; he is not contained in the Heavens, *i.e.* in the manner that he is there; but he is there in his Essence, and therefore cannot be contain'd there in his Essence. If it should be meant only of his Power and Providence, it would conclude also for his Essence; if his Power and Providence were infinite, his Essence must be so too; for the infiniteness of his Essence is the ground of the infiniteness of his Power: It can never enter into any thought, that a finite Essence can have an infinite Power, and that an infinite Power can be without an infinite Essence; it cannot be meant of his Providence, as if *Solomon* should say, *the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain thy Providence*; for naming the Heaven of Heavens, that which encircles and bounds the other parts of the World, he could not suppose a Providence to be exercis'd where there was no object to exercise it about; as no Creature is mention'd to be beyond the uttermost Heaven, which he calls here the Heaven of Heavens: Besides, to understand it of his Providence, doth not consist with *Solomon*'s admiration: He wonders that God, that hath so immense an Essence, should dwell in a Temple made with hands; he could not so much wonder at his Providence in those things that immediately concern his Worship. *Solomon* plainly asserts this of God, That he was so far from being bounded within the rich Wall of the Temple, which with so much cost he had fram'd for the Glory of his Name, that the richer Palace of the Heaven of Heavens could not contain him; 'tis true, it could not contain his Power and Wisdom, because his Wisdom could contrive other kind of Worlds, and his Power erect them: But doth the meaning of that wise King reach no farther than this? Will the Power and Wisdom of God reside on the Earth? He was too wise to ask such a question, since every object that his eyes met with in the World resolv'd him, That the Wisdom and Power of God dwelt upon the Earth, and glitter'd in every thing he had created; and Reason would assure him, That the Power that had fram'd this World, was able to frame many more; but *Solomon* considering the immensity of Gods Essence, wonders that God should order a House to be built for him, as if he wanted Roofs, and Coverings, and Habitation, as bodily Creatures do. Will God indeed dwell in a Temple, who hath an Essence so immense as not to be contain'd in the Heaven of Heavens? 'tis not the Heaven of Heavens that can contain *Him*, his substance. Here he asserts the immensity of his Essence, and his Presence not only in the Heaven, but beyond the Heavens; he that is not contain'd in the Heavens, as a Man is in a Chamber, is without, and above, and beyond the Heavens; 'tis not said they do not contain him, but it is impossible they should contain him; they *cannot contain him.* 'Tis impossible then but that he should be above them; he that is without the compass of the World, is not bounded by the limits of the VVorld; as his Power is not limited by the things he hath made, but can create innumerable VVorlds, so can his Essence be in innumerable Spaces; for as he hath power enough to make more VVorlds, so he hath Essence enough to fill them, and therefore cannot be confin'd to what he hath already created; innumerable VVorlds cannot be a sufficient place to contain God, he can only be a sufficient place to himself*; He that was before the VVorld and Place, and all things, was to himself a VVorld, a Place, and every thing*: He is really out of the VVorld in himself, as he was in himself before the Creation of the VVorld: As because God was before the Foundation of the VVorld, we conclude his Eternity; so because he is without the bounds of the VVorld, we conclude his Immensity, and from thence his Omnipresence. The VVorld cannot be said to contain him, since it was created by him; it cannot contain him now, who was contained by nothing before the VVorld was: As there was no place to contain him before the VVorld was, there can be no place to contain him since the VVorld was.

* 1 Kings, 8. 27.

* *Petav.*

* *Maccov. loc. commun. c. 19. p. 153.*

God might create more VVorlds circular and round as this, and those could not be so contiguous, but some spaces would be left between; as take 3 round Balls, lay them as close as you can to one another, there will be some spaces between; none would say but God would be in these spaces, as well as in the VVorld he had created,

ted, tho' there were nothing real and poſitive in thoſe ſpaces: Why ſhould we then exclude God from thoſe imaginary ſpaces without the World? God might alſo create many Worlds, and ſeparate them by diſtances, that they might not touch one another, but be at a great diſtance from one another; and would not God fill them as well as he doth this? If ſo, he muſt alſo fill the ſpaces between them: For if he were in all thoſe Worlds, and not in the ſpaces between thoſe Worlds, his Eſſence would be divided; there would be gaps in it, his Eſſence would be cut into parts, and the diſtance between every part of his Eſſence would be as great as the ſpace between each World: The Eſſence of God may be conceived then well enough to be in all thoſe infinite ſpaces where he can erect new Worlds.

I ſhall give one place more to prove both theſe Propoſitions, *viz. That God is Eſſentially in every part of the World*, and *Eſſentially above ours without the World.*

*Iſa.66.1. * *The Heaven is my Throne, and the Earth is my Footſtool.* He is Eſſentially in every part of the World; he is in Heaven and Earth at the ſame time; as a Man is upon his Throne and his Footſtool. God deſcribes himſelf in a human ſhape, accommodated to our capacity; as if he had his head in Heaven, and his feet on Earth; doth not his Eſſence then fill all intermediate ſpaces between Heaven and Earth? As when the head of a Man is in the upper part of a Room, and his feet upon the floor, his body fills up the ſpace between the head and his feet; this is meant of the Eſſence of God; 'tis a ſimilitude drawn from Kings ſitting upon the Throne, and not their Power and Authority, but the feet of their perſons are ſupported by the Footſtool; ſo here it is not meant only of the Perfections of God, but the Eſſence of God: Beſides, God ſeems to tax them with an erroneous conceit they had, as tho' his Eſſence were in the Temple, and not in any part of the World; therefore God makes an oppoſition between Heaven and Earth, and the Temple; *Where is the Houſe that you built unto me? and where is the place of my Reſt?* Had he underſtood it only of his Providence, it had not been any thing againſt their miſtake; for they granted his Providence to be not only in the Temple, but in all parts of the VVorld. *Where is the Houſe that you build to me?* to *me*, not to my Power or Providence, but think to include *Me* within thoſe VValls.

Again, It ſhews God to be above the Heavens, if the Heavens be his Throne; he ſits upon them, and is above them as Kings are above the Thrones on which they ſit; ſo it cannot be meant of his Providence, becauſe no Creature being without the Sphere of the Heavens, there is nothing of the Power and the Providence of God viſible there; for there is nothing for him to employ his Providence about. For Providence ſuppoſeth a Creature in actual Being; It muſt be therefore meant of his Eſſence, which is above the VVorld, and in the VVorld.

And the like proof you may ſee, *Job* 11.7,8. *'Tis as high as heaven, what canſt thou do? deeper than Hell, what canſt thou know? the meaſure thereof is longer than the Earth, and broader than the Sea.* VVhere he intends the unſearchableneſs of Gods wiſdom, but proves it by the infiniteneſs of his Eſſence, *Hebr. He is the height of the Heavens*, he is the top of all the Heavens; ſo that when you have begun at the loweſt part, and traced him thro' all the Creatures, you will find his Eſſence filling all the Creatures to be at the top of the VVorld, and infinitely beyond it.

5. Fifth Propoſition. *This is the Property of God, incommunicable to any Creature.* As no Creature can be eternal and immutable, ſo no Creature can be immenſe, becauſe it cannot be infinite; nothing can be of an innite nature, and therefore nothing of an immenſe preſence but God: It cannot be communicated to the human nature of Chriſt, tho' in Union with the Divine *: ſome indeed argue, that Chriſt, in regard of his human Nature, is every where, becauſe he ſits at the right hand of God; and the right hand of God is every where: His ſitting at the right hand of God ſignifies his Exaltation, and cannot with any reaſon be extended to ſuch a kind of arguing; *The hearts of Kings are in the hand of God*; are the hearts of Kings every where, becauſe God's hand is every where? The Souls of the Righteous are in the hand of God, is the Soul therefore of every Righteous Man every where in the VVorld? The right hand of God is from Eternity, is the Humanity of Chriſt therefore from Eternity, becauſe it ſits at the right hand of God? The right hand of God made the world, did the Humanity of Chriſt therefore make Heaven and Earth? The Humanity of Chriſt muſt then be confounded with his Divinity; be the ſame with it, not united to it. All Creatures are diſtinct from their Creator, and cannot inherit the Properties eſſential to his Nature; as *Eternity, Immenſity, Immutability, Omnipreſence, Omniſcience*; no Angel, no Soul, no Creature can be in all places at once, before they can be ſo, they muſt be Immenſe, and ſo muſt ceaſe to be Creatures, and commence God; this is impoſſible.

*Rivet. in Pſal. p. 301. Col. 2.

II *Reaſons* to prove God's Eſſential Preſence.

1*ſt.* Reaſon. *Becauſe he is infinite.* As he is infinite, he is every where; as he is ſimple, his whole Eſſence is every where; for in regard of his infiniteneſs, he hath no bounds; in regard of his ſimplicity, he hath no parts: And therefore thoſe that deny God's Omnipreſence, tho' they pretend to own him Infinite, muſt really conceive him Finite.

1. *God is infinite in his Perfections.* None can ſet bounds to terminate the greatneſs and excellency of God *. *His greatneſs is unſearchable*, Sept. οὐκ ἔστι πέρας * Pſ. 145.3. there is no end, no limitation; what hath no end is infinite; his Power is infinite *, *which doth great things* * Job 5.9. *and unſearchable*, no end of thoſe things he is able to do; His VViſdom infinite *: He underſtands all things * Pſ. 147.5. paſt, preſent, and to come; what is already made, what is poſſible to be made; his duration infinite *. *The* *Job 36.26. *number of his Years cannot be ſearched out*, ἀπέρεισιν. To make a finite thing of nothing, is an argument of an infinite Vertue; Infinite power can only extract ſomething out of the barren Womb of nothing, but all things were drawn forth by the Word of God, the Heavens and all the Hoſt of them; The Sun, Moon, Stars, the rich embelliſhments of the World appear'd in Being, *at the breath of his Mouth* *, the Author therefore muſt be infinite: * Pſal. 33.6. And ſince nothing is the cauſe of God, or of any Perfection in him; ſince he derives not his Being, or the leaſt ſpark of his glorious Nature, from any thing without him, he cannot be limited in any part of his nature by any thing without him; and indeed the infiniteneſs of his power, and his other perfections, is aſſerted by the Prophet, when he tells us, that *the Nations are as a drop of a Bucket, or the duſt of the Ballance, and leſs than nothing and vanity* *, they are all ſo in regard of his Power, * Iſa. 40. Wiſdom, &c. Conceive what a little thing a grain of v. 15. 17. duſt or ſand is, to all the duſt that may be made by the rubbiſh of a Houſe; what a little thing the heap of the rubbiſh of a Houſe, is to the vaſt heap of the rubbiſh of a whole City; ſuch a one as *London*; how little that alſo would be to the duſt of a whole Empire; how inconſiderable that alſo to the duſt of one quarter of the World, *Europe* or *Aſia*; how much leſs that ſtill to the duſt of the whole World; the whole World is compos'd of an unconceivable number of Atoms, and the Sea of an unconceivable number of drops; Now what a little grain of duſt is in compariſon of the duſt of the whole World; a drop of water from the Sea, to all the drops remaining in the Sea, That is the whole World to God. Conceive it ſtill leſs, a meer nothing, yet is it all leſs than this, in compariſon of God; there can be nothing more magnificently expreſſive of the infiniteneſs of God to a human conception, than this expreſſion of God himſelf in the Prophet.

In the Perfection of a Creature, ſomething ſtill may be thought greater to be added to it; But God containing all perfections in himſelf formally, if they be meer perfections; and eminently, if they be but perfections in the Creature mixed with imperfection; nothing

can

can be thought greater, and therefore every one of them is infinite

2. *If his Perfections be infinite, his Eſſence muſt be ſo.* How God can have infinite Perfections, and a finite Eſſence is unconceivable by a Human or Angelical underſtanding; an infinite Power, an infinite Wiſdom, an infinite Duration, muſt needs ſpeak an infinite Eſſence; ſince the infiniteneſs of his Attributes is grounded upon the infiniteneſs of his Eſſence: To own infinite perfections in a finite Subject, is contradictory. The manner of acting by his Power, and knowing by his Wiſdom, cannot exceed the manner of being by his Eſſence. His Perfections flow from his Eſſence, and the principle muſt be of the ſame rank with what flows from it; and if we conceive his Eſſence to be the cauſe of his perfections; 'tis utterly impoſſible that an infinite effect ſhould ariſe from a finite cauſe, but indeed his perfections are his Eſſence, for tho' we conceive the Eſſence of God as the ſubject, and the Attributes of God as faculties and qualities in that ſubject according to our weak model, who cannot conceive of an infinite God without ſome manner of likeneſs to our ſelves; who find Underſtanding, and Will, and Power in us diſtinct from our ſubſtance; yet truly and really there is no diſtinction between his Eſſence and Attributes; one is inſeparable from the other; his Power and Wiſdom are his Eſſence; and therefore to maintain God infinite in the one, and finite in the other, is to make a monſtrous God, and have an unreaſonable notion of the Deity; for there would be the greateſt diſproportion in his nature, ſince there is no greater diſproportion can poſſibly be between one thing and another, than there is between finite and infinite: God muſt not only then be compounded, but have parts of the greateſt diſtance from one another in nature; but God being the moſt ſimple Being without the leaſt compoſition, both muſt be equally infinite: If then his Eſſence be not infinite, his Power and Wiſdom cannot be infinite, which is both againſt Scripture and Reaſon.

Again, how ſhould his Eſſence be finite, and his Perfections be infinite, ſince nothing out of himſelf gave them either the one or the other?

* *Amyrald. de Trinitat. p. 89.* * Again, either the Eſſence can be infinite, or it cannot; if it cannot, there muſt be ſome cauſe of that impoſſibility; that can be nothing without him; becauſe nothing without him can be as powerful as himſelf, much leſs too powerful for him; nothing within him can be an Enemy to his higheſt perfection; ſince he is neceſſarily what he is, he muſt be neceſſarily the moſt perfect Being, and therefore neceſſarily infinite; ſince to be ſomething infinitely, is a greater perfection than to be ſomething finitely *; if he can be infinite, he is infinite; otherwiſe he could be greater than he is, and ſo more bleſſed and more perfect than he is, which is impoſſible; for being the moſt perfect Being, to whom nothing can be added, he muſt needs be infinite.

* *Deus eſt actus purus & nullam habet potentiam paſſivam.*

If therefore God have an infinite Eſſence, he hath an infinite Preſence. An infinite Eſſence cannot be contained in a finite place; as thoſe things which are finite have bounded ſpace, wherein they are; ſo that which is infinite hath an unbounded ſpace; for as finiteneſs ſpeaks limitedneſs; ſo infiniteneſs ſpeaks unboundedneſs; and if we grant to God an infinite duration, there is no difficulty in acknowledging an infinite preſence: Indeed the infiniteneſs of God is a property belonging to him in regard of time and place; he is bounded by no place, and limited to no time.

Again, Infinite Eſſence may as well be every where, as infinite power reach every thing; it may as well be preſent with every Being, as infinite power in its working may be preſent with nothing to bring it into Being. Where God works by his Power he is preſent in his Eſſence; becauſe his Power and his Eſſence cannot be ſeparated; and therefore his Power, Wiſdom, Goodneſs, cannot be any where, where his Eſſence is not: His Eſſence cannot be ſever'd from his Power, nor his Power from his Eſſence; for the Power of God is nothing but God acting, and the Wiſdom of God nothing but God knowing. As the power of God is always, ſo is his Eſſence; as the power of God is every where, ſo is his Eſſence; whatſoever God is, he is always, and every where: To confine him to a place, is to meaſure his Eſſence; as to confine his actions, is to limit his power; his Eſſence being no leſs infinite than his power and his wiſdom, can be no more bounded than his power and wiſdom; but they are not ſeparable from his Eſſence, yea they are his Eſſence; if God did not fill the whole World, he would be determin'd to ſome place, and excluded from others; and ſo his ſubſtance would have bounds and limits, and then ſomething might be conceived greater than God; for we may conceive that a Creature may be made by God of ſo vaſt a greatneſs as to fill the whole World; for the power of God is able to make a body that ſhould take up the whole ſpace between Heaven and Earth, and reach to every corner of it, but nothing can be conceived by any Creature greater than God; he exceeds all things, and is exceeded by none; God therefore cannot be included in Heaven, nor included in the Earth; cannot be contained in either of them; for if we ſhould imagine them vaſter than they are, yet ſtill they would be finite; and if his Eſſence were contain'd in them, it could be no more infinite than the World which contains it; As water is not of a larger compaſs than the Veſſel which contains it. If the Eſſence of God were limited either in the Heavens or Earth, it muſt needs be finite, as the Heavens and Earth are; But there is no proportion between finite and infinite; God therefore cannot be contain'd in them: If there were an infinite body, that muſt be every where; certainly then an infinite Spirit muſt be every where: Unleſs we will account him finite, we can render no reaſon why he ſhould not be in one Creature as well as in another; if he be in Heaven, which is his Creature, why can he not be in the Earth, which is as well his Creature as the Heavens.

2 Reaſon. *Becauſe of the continual operation of God in the World.* This was one reaſon made the Heathen believe that there was an infinite Spirit in the vaſt body of the World, acting in every thing, and producing thoſe admirable motions which we ſee every where in Nature: The cauſe which acts in the moſt perfect manner, is alſo in the moſt perfect manner preſent with its effects.

God preſerves all, and therefore is in all. The Apoſtle thought it a good induction *; *He is not far from us: For in him we live. For* being as much as *becauſe*, ſhews that from his operation he concluded his real preſence with all: 'Tis not his vertue is not far from every one of us; but *He*, his ſubſtance, himſelf; for none that acknowledge a God, will deny the abſence of the vertue of God from any part of the World. He works in every thing, every thing lives and works in him; therefore he is preſent with all *: Or rather if things live, they are in God, who gives them life. If things live, God is in them, and gives 'em life: If things move, God is in them, and gives them motion: If things have any Being, God is in them, and gives them Being; if God withdraws himſelf, they preſently loſe their Being; and therefore ſome have compar'd the Creature to the impreſſion of a Seal upon the Wafer, that cannot be preſerved but by the *Preſence* of the *Seal*. As his preſence was actual with what he created, ſo his preſence is actual with what he preſerves, ſince Creation and Preſervation do ſo little differ; if God creates things by his eſſential Preſence, by the ſame he ſupports them; if his ſubſtance cannot be disjoyn'd from his preſerving power, his Power and Wiſdom cannot be ſeparated from his Eſſence; where there are the marks of the one, there is the preſence of the other; for it is by his Eſſence that he is powerful and wiſe; no Man can diſtinguiſh the one from the other in a ſimple Being: God doth not preſerve and act things by a vertue diffus'd from him. It may be demanded, whether that vertue be diſtinct from God? If it be not, 'tis then the Eſſence of God; if it be diſtinct, 'tis a Creature, and then it may be ask'd how that vertue, which preſerves other things, is preſerved it ſelf? it muſt be ultimately reſolv'd into the Eſſence of God, or elſe there muſt be a running *in infinitum*: or elſe, * is that vertue of God a ſubſtance or not? Is it endued with underſtanding or not? If it hath underſtanding, how doth it differ from God? If it wants underſtanding, can any imagine that the ſupport of the World, the guidance of all

* *Acts* 17 27

* *Ponit.*

N. B.

* *Amyrald. de Trinitat. p.* 106, 107.

Creatures, the wonders of Nature can be wrought, preſerved, manag'd by a vertue that hath nothing of underſtanding in it? If it be not a ſubſtance, it can much leſs be able to produce ſuch excellent Operations, as the preſerving all the kinds of things in the World, and ordering them to perform ſuch excellent ends; this vertue is therefore God himſelf, the infinite Power and Wiſdom of God; and therefore whereſoever the effects of theſe are ſeen in the World, God is eſſentially preſent; ſome Creatures indeed act at a diſtance by a vertue diffus'd; but ſuch a manner of acting comes from a limitedneſs of Nature, that ſuch a Nature cannot be every where preſent, and extend its ſubſtance to all parts; To act by a vertue, ſpeaks the Subject finite, and it is a part of indigence: Kings act in their Kingdoms by Miniſters and Meſſengers, becauſe they cannot act otherwiſe; but God being infinitely perfect, *works all things in all* immediately *; Illumination, Sanctification, Grace, &c. are the immediate Works of God in the heart, and immediate Agents are preſent with what they do; 'tis an Argument of the greater Perfection of a Being, to know things immediately, which are done in ſeveral places, than to know them at the ſecond hand by Inſtruments: 'tis no leſs a Perfection to be every where, rather than to be tied to one place of action; and to act in other places by Inſtruments, for want of a Power to act immediately it ſelf: God indeed acts by means and ſecond cauſes in his providential diſpenſations in the World, but this is not out of any defect of power to work all immediately himſelf; but he thereby accommodates his way of acting to the nature of the Creature, and the order of things which he hath ſettled in the World; And when he works by means, he acts with thoſe means, in thoſe means, ſuſtains their faculties and vertues in them, concurs with them by his power; ſo that God's acting by means, doth rather ſtrengthen his Eſſential preſence than weaken it; ſince there is a neceſſary dependance of the Creatures upon the Creator, in their Being and Acting; and what they are, they are by the power of God; what they act, they act in the power of God, concurring with them; they have their Motion in him as well as their Being; and where the power of God is, his Eſſence is, becauſe they are inſeparable; and ſo this Omnipreſence ariſeth from the ſimplicity of the nature of God; the more vaſt any thing is, the leſs confin'd. All that will acknowledge God ſo great, as to be able to work all things by his Will, without an Eſſential preſence, cannot imagine him upon the ſame reaſon, ſo little as to be contain'd in, & bounded by any place.

*1 Cor. 12. v. 6.

3 Reaſon. *Becauſe of his Supream Perfection.*

No Perfection is wanting to God; but an unbounded Eſſence is a perfection; a limited one is an imperfection. Tho' it be a Perfection in a Man to be Wiſe, yet it is an Imperfection that his Wiſdom cannot rule all the things that concern him; tho' it be a perfection to be preſent in a place where his affairs lie, yet is it his imperfection that he cannot be preſent every where, in the midſt of all his concerns; if any Man could be ſo, it would be univerſally own'd as a prime Perfection in him above others; is that which would be a Perfection in Man, to be deny'd to God *? As that which hath life, is more perfect than that which hath not life; and that which hath ſenſe is more perfect than that which hath only life, as the Plants have; and what hath reaſon, is more perfect than that which hath only life and ſenſe, as the Beaſts have; ſo what is every where, is more perfect than that which is bounded in ſome narrow confines; if a power of motion be more excellent than to be Bed-rid; and ſwiftneſs in a Creature, be a more excellent endowment than to be ſlow and Snail like; Then to be every where without motion, is unconceivably a greater excellency than to be every where ſucceſſively by motion. God ſets forth his readineſs to help his People and puniſh his Enemies; or his Omnipreſence, by ſwiftneſs, or *flying upon the Wings of the Wind* *: The Wind is in every part of the Air, where it blows; it cannot be ſaid that it is in this or that point of the Air where you feel it, ſo as to exclude it from another part of the Air where you are not; it ſeems to poſſeſs all at once.

*Amyrald. de Trinitat. p. 74, 75.

* Pſ. 18. 10.

If the Divine Eſſence had any bounds of place, it would be imperfect, as well as if it had bounds of time; where any thing hath limitation, it hath ſome defect in Being; and therefore if God were confined or concluded, he would be as good as nothing in regard of infiniteneſs: Whence ſhould this reſtraint ariſe? There is no Power above him to reſtrain him to a certain ſpace; if ſo, then he would not be God, but that power which reſtrained him would be God: Not from his own nature, for the being every where, implies no contradiction to his nature; if his own Nature determin'd him to a certain place, then if he removed from that place, he would act againſt his Nature; to conceive any ſuch thing of God, is highly abſurd. It cannot be thought God ſhould voluntarily impoſe any ſuch reſtraint or confinement upon himſelf; this would be to deny himſelf a perfection he might have; if God have not this perfection, it is either becauſe it is inconſiſtent with his nature; or becauſe he cannot have it, or, becauſe he will not. The former cannot be; for if he hath impreſt upon Air and Light a reſemblance of his excellency, to diffuſe themſelves and fill ſo vaſt a ſpace; is ſuch an excellency inconſiſtent with the Creator more than the Creature? Whatſoever perfection the Creature hath, is eminently in God. * *Underſtand, O ye brutiſh among the people; and ye fools when will you be wiſe? He that planted the ear, ſhall he not hear? He that formed the eye, ſhall he not ſee? He that teacheth man knowledge, ſhall not he know?* By the ſame reaſon he that hath given ſuch a Power to thoſe Creatures, Air and Light, ſhall not he be much more filling all ſpaces of the World? 'Tis ſo clear a Rule, that the *Pſalmiſt* fixes a folly and brutiſhneſs upon thoſe that deny it; 'tis not therefore inconſiſtent with his nature, it were not then a Perfection, but an Imperfection; but whatſoever is an excellency in Creatures, cannot in a way of eminency be an imperfection in God; if it be then a Perfection, and God want it, 'tis becauſe he cannot have it; Where then is his Power? How can he be then the Fountain of his own Being? If he will not, where is his love to his own Nature and Glory? Since no Creature would deny that to it ſelf which it can have, and is an excellency to it; God therefore hath not only a Power or fitneſs to be every where, but he is actually every where.

* Pſal. 94. v. 8, 9.

4 Reaſon. *Becauſe of his Immutability.*

If God did not fill all the ſpaces of Heaven and Earth, but only poſſeſs one, yet it muſt be acknowledg'd that God hath a Power to move himſelf to another: It were abſurd to fix God in a part of the Heavens, like a Star in an Orb, without a power of motion to another place. If he be therefore eſſentially in Heaven, may he not be upon the Earth if he pleaſe, and transfer his Subſtance from one place to another? To ſay he cannot, is to deny him a Perfection which he hath beſtow'd upon his Creatures; the Angels his Meſſengers, are ſometimes in Heaven, ſometimes on the Earth; the Eagles, meaner Creatures, are ſometimes in the Air out of ſight, ſometimes upon the Earth. If he doth move therefore, and recede from one place, and ſettle in another, doth he not declare himſelf mutable by changing places? by being where he was not before, and in not being where he was before? He would not fill Heaven and Earth at once, but ſucceſſively; no man can be ſaid to fill a Room, that moves from one part of a Room to another; if therefore any in their imaginations, ſtake God to the Heavens, they render him leſs than his Creatures: If they allow him a power of motion from one place to another, they conceive him changeable; and in either of them they own him no greater than a finite and limited Being; limited to Heaven, if they fix him there; limited to that ſpace to which they imagine him to move.

5 Reaſon. *Becauſe of his Omnipotency.*

The Almightineſs of God is a Notion ſettled in the minds of all, That God can do whatſoever he pleaſes, every thing that is not againſt the purity of his Nature, and doth not imply a contradiction in its ſelf; he can therefore create Millions of Worlds greater than this; and Millions of Heavens greater than this Heaven he hath already created; If ſo, he is then in unconceivable ſpaces beyond this World, for his Eſſence is not leſs and narrower than his Power; and his Power is not to be thought of a further extent than his Eſſence; he cannot be excluded

ded therefore from those vast spaces where his Power may fix those Worlds if he please; if so, 'tis no wonder that he should fill this World; and there is no reason to exclude God from the narrow space of this World, that is not contain'd in infinite spaces beyond the World. God is where soever he hath a Power to act, but he hath a power to act every where in the World, every where out of the World; he is therefore every where in the World, every where out of the World. Before this World was made, he had a Power to make it in the space where now it stands; was he not then unlimitedly where the World now is, before the World received a Being by his powerful Word? Why should he not then be in every part of the World now? Can it be thought that God, who was Immense before, should, after he had created the World, contract himself to the limits of one of his Creatures, and tie himself to a particular place of his own Creation, and be less after his Creation than he was before?

This might also be prosecuted by an Argument from his *Eternity*. What is eternal in duration, is immense in essence, the same reason which renders him *Eternal*, renders him *Immense*: That which proves him to be always, will prove him to be every where.

The third thing is, *Propositions for the further clearing this Doctrine from any exceptions.*

1. *This Truth is not weakned by the expressions in Scripture, where God is said to dwell in Heaven, and in the Temple.*

1. He is indeed said *to sit in Heaven* *, and to *dwell on high* *; but *he is no where said to dwell only in the Heavens, as confin'd to them.* 'Tis the Court of his Majestical presence, but not the Prison of his Essence. For when we are told, that the *Heaven is his Throne*, we are told with the same breath, that the *Earth is his Footstool* *. He dwells on high in regard of the excellency of his Nature; but he is in all places in regard of the diffusion of his presence. The Soul is essentially in all parts of the body, but it doth not exert the same operations in all; the more noble discoveries of it are in the Head and Heart: In the Head, where it exerciseth the chiefest senses for the enriching the understanding. In the Heart, where it vitally resides, and communicates life and motion to the rest of the body. It doth not understand with the foot or toe, tho' it be in all parts of the body it informs. And so God may be said to dwell in Heaven, in regard of the more excellent and majestick representation of himself, both to the Creatures that inhabit the place, as Angels and blessed Spirits; and also in those marks of his greatness which he hath planted there, those spiritual natures which have a nobler stamp of God upon them, and those excellent bodies, as *Sun* and *Stars*, which as so many Tapers light us to behold his *glory* *, and astonish the minds of Men when they gaze upon them. 'Tis his Court, where he hath the most solemn Worship from his Creatures, all his Courtiers attending there with a pure love, and glowing zeal. He reigns there in a special manner, without any opposition to his Government; 'tis therefore call'd his *holy dwelling place* *; The Earth hath not that title, since sin cast a stain, and a ruining curse upon it. The Earth is not his Throne, because his government is oppos'd. But Heaven is none of Satans Precinct, and the Rule of God is uncontradicted by the Inhabitants of it. 'Tis from thence also he hath given the greatest discoveries of himself: Thence he sends the Angels his Messengers, his Son upon Redemption, his Spirit for Sanctification. From *Heaven* his gifts drop down upon our heads, and his grace upon our hearts *. From thence the chiefest blessings of Earth descend. The motions of the Heavens fatten the Earth; and the heavenly bodies are but Stewards to the earthly comforts for Man by their influence. Heaven is the richest, vastest, most stedfast and majestick part of the visible Creation. 'Tis there where he will at last manifest himself to his People in a full conjunction of grace and glory, and be for ever open to his People in uninterrupted expressions of goodness, and discoveries of his presence, as a reward of their labour and service. And in these respects it may peculiarly be call'd his *Throne*. And this doth no more hinder his essential presence in all parts of the Earth, than it doth his gracious presence in all the hearts of his People. God is in Heaven, in regard of the manifestation of his glory: In Hell by the expressions of his justice: In the Earth by the discoveries of his Wisdom, Power, Patience and Compassion: In his People by the monuments of his grace, & in all in regard of his substance.

2. *He is said also to dwell in the Ark and Temple.* 'Tis called, *Ps.* 26. 8. *The habitation of his house*, and the *place where his honour dwells*; and to dwell in *Jerusalem* as in his holy Mountain; *The Mountain of the Lord of Hosts* *, in regard of publishing his Oracles, answering their Prayers, manifesting more of his goodness to the *Israelites*, than to any other Nation in the World, erecting his true worship among them, which was not settled in any part of the World besides; and his worship is principally intended in that *Psalm*. The Ark is the place where his honour dwells, the worship of God is called the glory of God; *They changed the glory of God into an image made like to corruptible men* *, *i. e.* they changed the worship of God into Idolatry; and to that also doth the place in *Zechary* refer.

Now because he is said to dwell in Heaven, is he essentially only there? Is he not as essentially in the Temple and Ark, as he is in Heaven, since there are as high expressions of his habitations there, as of his dwelling in Heaven? If he dwell only in Heaven, how came he to dwell in the Temple? both are asserted in Scripture, one as much as the other. If his dwelling in Heaven did not hinder his dwelling in the Ark, it could as little hinder the presence of his essence on the Earth. To dwell in Heaven, and in one part of the Earth at the same time, is all one as to dwell in all parts of Heaven, and all parts of Earth. If he were in Heaven, and in the Ark and Temple, it was the same essence in both, tho' not the same kind of manifestation of himself. If by his dwelling in Heaven be meant his whole Essence, why is it not also to be meant by his dwelling in the Ark? It was not sure part of his Essence that was in Heaven, and part of his Essence that was on Earth, his Essence would then be divided; and can it be imagined, that he would be in Heaven and the Ark at the same time, and not in the spaces between? Could his Essence be split into fragments, and a gap made in it, that two distant spaces should be fill'd by him, and all between be empty of him. So that God's being said to dwell in Heaven, and in the Temple, is so far from impairing the truth of this Doctrine, that it more confirms and evidences it.

2. *Nor do the expressions of God's coming to us, or departing from us, impair this Doctrine of his Omnipresence.*

God is said *to hide his face* from his People *; to be *far from the Wicked*, and the Gentiles are said to be *afar off*, viz. From God ‖; and upon the manifestation of Christ ‖ *made near*; These must not be understood of any distance or nearness of his Essence, for that is equally near to all persons and things; but of some other special way and manifestation of his Presence. Thus God is said to be in Believers by Love, as they are in him *; *He that abides in love, abides in God, and God in him*: He that loves is in the thing beloved; and when two love one another, they are in one another; God is in a righteous Man by a special grace, and *far from* the wicked in regard of such special Works; and God is said to be in a place by a special manifestation, as when he was in the Bush *; or manifesting his Glory upon Mount *Sinai* ‖; *The Glory of the Lord abode upon Mount* Sinai: God is said to hide his face, when he withdraws his comforting Presence, disturbs the repose of our hearts, flasheth Terror into our Consciences, when he puts Men under the smart of the Cross, as tho' he had ordered his Mercy utterly to depart from them; or when he doth withdraw his special assisting Providence from us in our Affairs; so he departed from *Saul*, when he withdrew his direction and protection from him in the concerns of his Government *; *The Spirit of the Lord departed from* Saul, *i.e.* the Spirit of Government. God may be far from us in one respect, and near to us in another; far from us in regard of comfort, yet near to us in regard of support, when his essential presence continues the same; this is a necessary consequent upon the infiniteness of God, the other is an act of the Will of God;

ſo he was ſaid to forſake Chriſt, in regard of his obſcuring his Glory from his Humane Nature, and inflicting his Wrath; tho' he was near to him in regard of his Grace, and preſerved him from contracting any ſpot in his ſufferings. We do not ſay the Sun is departed out of the Heavens when it is be-miſted; it remains in the ſame part of the Heavens, paſſes on its courſe, tho' its Beams do not reach us by reaſon of the Bar between us and it: The Soul is in every part of the Body, in regard of its Subſtance, and conſtantly in it, tho' it doth not act ſo ſpritely and vigorouſly at one time as at another, in one and the ſame Member, and diſcover it ſelf ſo ſenſibly in its Operations; ſo all the various effects of God towards the Sons of Men, are but divers Operations of one and the ſame Eſſence: He is far from us, or near to us, as he is a Judge or a Benefactor; when he comes to puniſh, it notes not the approach of his Eſſence, but the ſtroke of his Juſtice; when he comes to benefit, 'tis not by a new acceſs of his Eſſence, but an effiux of his Grace; he departs from us, when he leaves us to the frowns of his Juſtice; he comes to us, when he encircles us in the Arms of his Mercy; but he was equally preſent with us in both diſpenſations, in regard of his Eſſence: And likewiſe God is ſaid to *come down* *, *And the Lord came down to ſee the City*; when he doth ſome ſignal and wonderful Works which attract the minds of Men to the acknowledgment of a Supream Power and Providence in the World, who judg'd God abſent and careleſs before.

*Gen. 11. 5.

3. *Nor is the Eſſential Preſence of God with all Creatures any diſparagement to him.* Since it was no diſparagement to Create the Heaven and the Earth, 'tis no diſparagement to him to fill them; if he were Eſſentially preſent with them when he created them, 'tis no diſhonour to him to be Eſſentially preſent with them, to ſupport them; if it were his glory to create them by his Eſſence, when they were nothing, can it be his diſgrace to be preſent by his Eſſence, ſince they are ſomething, and ſomething good, and very good in his Eye *? God ſaw every thing, and behold it was very good, or mighty good; all ordered to declare his Goodneſs, Wiſdom, Power, and to make him adorable to Man, and therefore took complacency in them: There is a Harmony in all things, a Combination in them for thoſe glorious Ends for which God created them; and is it a diſgrace for God to be preſent with his own Harmonious compoſition? Is it not a Muſicians Glory, to touch with his fingers the Treble, the leaſt and tendereſt ſtring, as well as the ſtrongeſt and greateſt baſe? Hath not every thing ſome Stamp of God's own Being upon it, ſince he eminently contains in himſelf the perfections of all his Works? Whatſoever hath Being, hath a Foot-ſtep of God upon it, who is all Being; every thing in the Earth is his Foot-ſtool, having a mark of his Foot upon it; all declare the Being of God, becauſe they had their Being from God; and will God account it any diſparagement to him, to be preſent with that which confirms his Being, and the glorious Perfections of his nature to his intelligent Creatures? the meaneſt things are not without their Vertues, which may boaſt God's being the Creator of them; and rank them in the midſt of his Works of Wiſdom as well as Power. Doth God debaſe himſelf to be preſent by his Eſſence, with the things he hath made, more than he doth to know them by his Eſſence? Is not the leaſt thing known by him? How? not by a faculty or act diſtinct from his Eſſence; but by his Eſſence it ſelf: How is any thing diſgraceful to the eſſential preſence of God, that is not diſgraceful to his Knowledge by his Eſſence? Beſides, would God make any thing that ſhould be an invincible reaſon to him to part with his own infiniteneſs, by a contraction of his own Eſſence into a leſs compaſs than before? it was Immenſe before, it had no bounds; and would God make a VVorld that he would be aſhamed to be preſent with, and continue it to the diminution and leſſening of himſelf, rather than annihilate it to avoid the diſparagement? This were to impeach the VViſdom of God, and caſt a blemiſh upon his infinite Underſtanding, that he knows not the conſequences of his VVork, or is well contented to be impaired in the immenſity of his own Eſſence by it. No Man thinks it a diſhonour to Light, a moſt excellent Creature, to be preſent with a Toad or Serpent; and tho' there be an infinite diſproportion between Light, a Creature, and the Father of Lights, the Creator: Yet *God being a Spirit, knows how to be with Bodies as if they were not Bodies. And being jealous of his own Honour, would not, could not do any thing that might impair it.

*Gen. 1. 31.

* *Gaſſend.*

4. *Nor will it follow, That becauſe God is Eſſentially every where, that every thing is God.* God is not every where by any conjunction, compoſition or mixture, with any thing on Earth; when Light is in every part of a Chryſtal Globe, and encircles it cloſe on every ſide, do they become one? No, the Chryſtal remains what it is, and the Light retains its own nature: God is not in us as a part of us, but as an efficient and preſerving Cauſe; 'tis not by his Eſſential Preſence, but his efficacious Preſence, that he brings any perſon into a likeneſs to his own Nature: God is ſo in his Eſſence with things, as to be diſtinct from them as a Cauſe from the Effect; as a Creator different from the Creature, preſerving their Nature, not communicating his own; his Eſſence touches all, is in conjunction with none; *Finite* and *Infinite* cannot be joyn'd, he is not far from us, therefore near to us; ſo near that we *live* and *move* in him *; Nothing is God becauſe it moves in him, any more than a Fiſh in the Sea, is the Sea, or a part of the Sea, becauſe it moves in it; Doth a Man that holds a thing in the hollow of his hand, tranſform it by that action, and make it like his hand? The Soul and Body are more ſtraitly united, than the Eſſence of God is by his Preſence with any Creature: The Soul is in the Body as a form in matter, and from their Union doth ariſe a Man; yet in this near conjunction, both Body and Soul remain diſtinct; the Soul is not the Body, nor the Body the Soul; they both have diſtinct Natures and Eſſences; the Body can never be changed into a Soul, nor the Soul into a Body; no more can God into the Creature, or the Creature into God. Fire is in heated Iron in every part of it, ſo that it ſeems to be nothing but Fire; yet is not Fire and Iron the ſame thing. But ſuch a kind of arguing againſt God's Omnipreſence, that if God were eſſentially preſent, every thing would be God, would exclude him from Heaven as well as from Earth. By the ſame reaſon, ſince they acknowledge God eſſentially in Heaven, the Heaven where he is ſhould be chang'd into the nature of God; and by arguing againſt his Preſence in Earth, upon this ground they run ſuch an inconvenience, that they muſt own him to be no where, and that which is no where is nothing. Doth the Earth become God, becauſe God is Eſſentially there, any more than the Heavens, where God is acknowledged by all to be Eſſentially preſent?

* Acts 17. 2.

Amyrald. de Trinitat. p. 99, 100.

Again, if where God is Eſſentially, that muſt be God, then if they place God in a point of the Heavens, not only that point muſt be God, but all the World; becauſe, if that point be God, becauſe God is there, then the point touched by that point muſt be God, and ſo conſequently as far as there are any points touched by one another. We live and move in God, ſo we live and move in the Air; we are no more God by that, than we are meer Air, becauſe we breathe in it, and it enters into all the pores of our body: Nay, where there was a ſtraiter Union of the Divine Nature to the Human in our Saviour, yet the Nature of both was diſtinct, and the Humanity was not chang'd into the Divinity, nor the Divinity into the Humanity.

5. *Nor doth it follow, that becauſe God is every where, therefore a Creature may be worſhipt without Idolatry.* Some of the Heathens who acknowledged God's Omnipreſence, abus'd it to the countenancing Idolatry; becauſe God was reſident in every thing, they thought every thing might be worſhiped; and ſome have us'd it as an Argument againſt this Doctrine; the beſt Doctrines may by Mens corruption be drawn out into unreaſonable and pernicious concluſions. Have you not met with any, that from the Doctrine of God's Free Mercy, and our Saviours ſatisfactory Death, have drawn Poyſon to feed their Luſts, and conſume their Souls; a Poyſon compos'd by their own corruption, and not offer'd by thoſe Truths.

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The Apoſtle intimates to us, that ſome did, or at leaſt were ready to be more laviſh in ſinning, becauſe God was abundant in Grace *; *Shall we continue in Sin, that Grace may abound?* When he prevents an Objection that he thought might be made by ſome: But as to this caſe; ſince tho' God be preſent in every thing, yet every thing retains its nature, diſtinct from the nature of God; therefore it is not to have a Worſhip due to the excellency of God: As long as any thing remains a Creature, 'tis only to have the reſpect from us, which is due to it in the rank of Creatures. When a Prince is preſent with his Guard, or if he ſhould go arm in arm with a Peaſant, is therefore the Veneration and Honour due to the Prince, to be paid to the Peaſant, or any of his Guard? Would the preſence of the Prince excuſe it, or would it not rather aggravate it? He acknowledged ſuch a Perſon equal to me, by giving him my rights, even in my ſight. Tho' God dwelt in the Temple, would not the *Iſraelites* have been accounted guilty of Idolatry, had they Worſhiped the *Images* of the *Cherubims*, or the *Ark*, or the *Altar*, as objects of Worſhip, which were erected only as means for his Service? Is there not as much reaſon to think God was as Eſſentially preſent in the Temple, as in Heaven, ſince the ſame expreſſions are uſed of the one and the other? The Sanctuary is called the *Glorious high Throne* *; and he is ſaid to *dwell between the Cherubims* ‖, *i. e.* the two Cherubims that were at the two ends of the *Mercy Seat*, appointed by God as the two ſides of his Throne in the Sanctuary, *Exod.* 25. 18. Where he was to *dwell*, ver. 8. and meet and *commune with his people*, ver. 22. Could this excuſe *Manaſſeh*'s Idolatry in bringing in a Carved Image into the Houſe of God *? Had it been a good Anſwer to the Charge, God is preſent here, and therefore every thing may be Worſhiped as God? If he be only Eſſentially in Heaven, would it not be Idolatry to direct a Worſhip to the Heavens, or any part of it as a due object, becauſe of the preſence of God there? Tho' we look up to the Heavens, where we pray and worſhip God, yet Heaven is not the object of worſhip, the Soul abſtracts God from the Creature.

Rom. 6. v. 1, 2, 15. Shall we ſin becauſe we are not under the Law but under Grace?

* Jer. 17. 13 ‖ Pſ. 80. 1.

* 1 Chron. 33. 7.

6. *Nor is God defil'd by being preſent with thoſe Creatures which ſeems filthy to us.* Nothing is filthy in the Eye of God as his Creature; he could never elſe have pronounced all good; whatſoever is filthy to us, yet as it is a Creature, it owes it ſelf to the power of God: His Eſſence is no more defil'd by being preſent with it, than his power by producing it: No Creature is foul in it ſelf, tho' it may ſeem ſo to us: Doth not an Infant lie in a Womb of filthineſs and rottenneſs? Yet is not the power of God preſent with it, in working it *curiouſly in the lower parts of the Earth*? Are his eyes defil'd by ſeeing the *Subſtance* when it is yet imperfect? Or his hand defiled by writing every Member in his *Book* *? Have not the vileſt and moſt noiſome things, excellent Medicinal Vertues? How are they endued with them? How are thoſe qualities preſerved in them? By any thing without God, or no? Every Artificer looks with pleaſure upon the work he hath wrought with Art and Skill; can his Eſſence be defil'd by being preſent with them, any more than it was in giving them ſuch vertues, and preſerving them in them? God meaſures the Heaven and the Earth with his hand, is his hand defil'd by the evil influences of the Planets, or the Corporeal impurities of the Earth? Nothing can be filthy in the eye of God but *Sin*, ſince every thing elſe owes its Being to him. What may appear deform'd and unworthy to us, is not ſo to the Creator; he ſees Beauty where we ſee Deformity; finds goodneſs where we behold what is nauſeous to us. All Creatures being the effects of his Power, may be the objects of his preſence; Can any place be more foul than *Hell*, if you take it either for the Hell of the Damned, or for the Grave where there is rottenneſs? yet there he is *. When *Satan* appear'd before God, and God ſpake with him *, Could God contract any impurity by being preſent where that filthy Spirit was, more impure than any corporeal, noiſome, and defiling thing can be? No, God is purity to himſelf in the midſt of noiſomneſs; a Heaven to himſelf in the midſt of Hell: Who ever heard of a Sunbeam ſtain'd by ſhining upon a Quag-mire, any more than ſweetned by breaking into a Perfum'd Room *? Tho' the Light ſhines upon pure and impure things, yet it mixes not its ſelf with either of them; ſo tho' God be preſent with Devils and wicked Men, yet without any mixture, he is preſent with their Eſſence to ſuſtain it and ſupport it; not in their defection, wherein lies their defilement; and which is not a Phyſical but a Moral evil; Bodily filth can never touch an incorporeal ſubſtance. Spirits are not preſent with us in the ſame manner that one body is preſent with another; bodies can by a touch only, defile bodies; Is the glory of an Angel ſtained by being in a Coal-mine? Or could the *Angel* that came into the Lions Den, to deliver *Daniel*, be any more diſturb'd by the ſtench of the place, than he could be ſcratch'd by the Paws, or torn by the Teeth of the Beaſts? Their ſpiritual Nature ſecures them againſt any infection, when they are *miniſtring Spirits* to Perſecuted Believers in their naſty Priſons *. The Soul is ſtraitly united with the Body, but it is not made white or black, by the whiteneſs or blackneſs of its habitation; is it infected by the corporeal impurities of the Body, while it continually dwells in a Sea of filthy Pollution? If the Body be caſt into a Common-ſhore, is the Soul defil'd by it? Can a diſeaſed Body derive a Contagion to the Spirit that animates it? Is it not often the purer by Grace, the more the Body is infected by Nature; *Hezekiah*'s Spirit was ſcarce ever more fervent with God, than when the *Sore*, which ſome think to be a Plague Sore, was upon him *; How can any corporeal filth impair the purity of the Divine Eſſence? It may as well be ſaid, that God is not preſent in Battels and *fights for his People* *, becauſe he would not be diſturbed by the noiſe of Cannons and claſhing of Swords, as that he is not preſent in the World, becauſe of the ill ſcents: Let us therefore conclude this with the expreſſion of a Learned Man of our own, * *To deny the Omnipreſence of God, becauſe of ill ſcented places, is to meaſure God rather by the nicety of Senſe, than by the ſagacity of Reaſon.*

* Pſal. 139. v. 15, 16.

*Pſal. 139. 8

* Job 1. 7.

** Shelford of the Attributes, p. 170.*

Dan. 6. 22.

* Acts 12. 7.

* Iſa. 38. 3.

* Joſhua 23 v. 10.

* Dr. *More.*

IV. *USE.*

1. *Of Information.*

1. *Chriſt hath a divine nature.* As Eternity and Immutability, two incommunicable Properties of the Divine Nature, are aſcrib'd to Chriſt; ſo alſo is this of Omnipreſence or Immenſity *. *No Man hath aſcended up to Heaven, but he that came down from Heaven, even the Son of Man which is in Heaven.* Not which *was*, but which *is*; He comes from Heaven by Incarnation, and remains in Heaven by his Divinity. He was, while he ſpake to *Nicodemus*, locally on Earth, in regard of his Humanity; but in Heaven according to his Deity, as well as upon Earth in the union of his Divine and Humane Nature. He deſcended upon Earth, but he left not Heaven; He was in the World before he came in the fleſh *. *He was in the World, and the World was made by him.* He was in the World, as the *light that enlightens every Man that comes into the World.* In the World as God, before he was in the World as Man. He was then in the World as Man, while he diſcourſed with *Nicodemus*; yet ſo, that he was alſo in Heaven as God. No Creature but is bounded in place, either circumſcribed as body, or determin'd as Spirit to be in one ſpace, ſo as not to be in another at the ſame time; to leave a place where they were, and poſſeſs a place where they were not. But Chriſt is ſo on Earth, that at the ſame time he is in Heaven; he is therefore infinite. To be in Heaven and Earth at the ſame moment of time, is a property ſolely belonging to the Deity, wherein no Creature can be a Partner with him. He was in the World before he came to the World, and *the World was made by him* *. His coming was not as the coming of Angels, that leave Heaven, and begin to be on Earth, where they were not before; but ſuch a preſence as can be aſcribed only to God, who fills Heaven and Earth. Again, If all things were made by him, then he was preſent with all things which were made: For where there is a preſence of Power, there is alſo a preſence of Eſſence; and therefore he is ſtill preſent: For the right and power of Conſervation, follows the Power of Creation.

* John 3. 13.

* John 1. 10

* John 1. 18

And according to this divine nature, he promiſeth his preſence with his Church. * *There am I in the midſt of them.* And ‖ *I am with you alway, even to the end of the World*, i.e. by his Divinity: For he had before told them, that they were not to have him always with them, *i.e.* according to his Humanity; but in his divine nature he is preſent with, and walks in the midſt of the golden Candleſticks. If we underſtand it of a preſence *by his* ſpirit in the midſt of the Church, doth it invalidate his eſſential preſence? No, he is no leſs than the Spirit whom he ſends; and therefore as little confin'd as the Spirit is, who dwells in every Believer. And this may alſo be inferr'd from *Joh.*10.30. *My Father and I are one*; not one by *conſent*, tho' that be included; but one in Power: For he ſpeaks not of their conſent, but of their *joynt Power* in keeping his People. Where there is a Unity of Eſſence, there is a Unity of Preſence.

*Mat.18.20 ‖Mat.28.20 Mat.26.11.

2. *Here is a confirmation of the ſpiritual nature of God.* If he were an Infinite body, he could not fill Heaven and Earth, but with the excluſion of all Creatures. Two bodies cannot be in the ſame ſpace; they may be near one another, but not in any of the ſame points together. A body bounded he hath not, for that would deſtroy his Immenſity; he could not then fill Heaven and Earth, becauſe a body cannot be at one and the ſame time in two different ſpaces; but God doth not fill Heaven at one time, and the Earth at another, but both at the ſame time. Beſides, a limited body cannot be ſaid to fill the whole Earth, but one particular ſpace in the Earth at a time. A body may fill the Earth with its vertue, as the Sun, but not with its ſubſtance. Nothing can be every where with a corporeal weight and maſs; but God being infinite, is not tied to any part of the World, but penetrates all, and equally acts by his infinite Power in all.

3. *Here is an argument for Providence.* His preſence is mention'd in the Text, in order to his government of the affairs of the World. Is he every where, to be unconcern'd with every thing? Before the World had a Being, God was preſent with himſelf; ſince the World hath a Being, he is preſent with his Creatures, to exerciſe his Wiſdom in the ordering, as he did his Power in the production of them. As the Knowledge of God is not a bare contemplation of a thing, ſo his Preſence is not a bare inſpection into a thing. Were it an idle careleſs Preſence, it were a Preſence to no purpoſe, which cannot be imagin'd of God. Infinite Power, Goodneſs, and Wiſdom, being every where preſent with his Eſſence, are never without their exerciſe. He never manifeſts any of his perfections, but the manifeſtation is full of ſome Indulgence and Benefit to his Creatures. It cannot be ſuppoſed God ſhould neglect thoſe things, wherewith he is conſtantly preſent in a way of efficiency and operation. He is not every where, without acting every where. Where-ever his Eſſence is, there is a power and vertue worthy of God every where diſpens'd. He governs by his preſence, what he made by his power; and is preſent as an Agent with all his Works. His Power and Eſſence are together, to preſerve them while he pleaſes, as his Power and his Eſſence are together to create them when he ſaw good to do it. Every Creature hath a ſtamp of God, and his preſence is neceſſary to keep the impreſſion ſtanding upon the Creature. As all things are his Works, they are the objects of his care; and the Wiſdom he employ'd in framing them, will not ſuffer him to be careleſs of them. His preſence with them, engageth him in honour not to be a negligent Governour. His Immenſity fits him for government; and where there is a fitneſs, there is an exerciſe of government, where there are objects for the exerciſe of it. He is worthy to have the Univerſal Rule of the World, he can be preſent in all places of his Empire, there is nothing can be done by any of his Subjects, but in his ſight. As his *Eternity* renders him King always, ſo his *Immenſity* renders him King every where. If he were only preſent in Heaven, it might occaſion a ſuſpicion that he minded only the things of Heaven, and had no concern for things below that vaſt Body; but if he be preſent here, his preſence hath a tendency to the government of thoſe things with which he is preſent. We are all in him as Fiſh in the Sea; and he bears all Creatures in the Womb of his Providence, and the arms of his Goodneſs. 'Tis moſt certain that his preſence with his People is far from being an idle one; for when he promiſes to be with them, he adds ſome ſpecial Cordial, as, *I will be with thee, and bleſs thee* *. *I am with thee, and I will ſtrengthen thee*; *I will help thee, I will uphold thee* *. Infinite goodneſs will never countenance a negligent preſence.

Cyril.

*Gen.26.3. Jer.15.20. * Iſa.41. v.10,14.

4. *The Omniſcience of God is inferr'd from hence.* If God be preſent every where, he muſt needs know what is done every where. 'Tis for this end he proclaims himſelf a God filling Heaven and Earth, in the Text. *Can any hide himſelf in ſecret places, that I ſhall not ſee him, ſaith the Lord?* I have heard what the Prophets ſay, that Propheſie Lyes in my Name: If I fill Heaven and Earth, the moſt ſecret thing cannot be hid from my ſight. An Intelligent Being cannot be every where preſent, and more intimate in every thing, than it can be in it ſelf; but he muſt know what is done without, what is thought within. Nothing can be obſcure to him, who is in every part of the World; in every part of his Creatures. Not a thought can ſtart up but in his ſight, who is preſent in the Souls and Minds of every thing. How eaſie is it with him, to whoſe Eſſence the World is but a point, to know and obſerve every thing done in this World, as any of us can know what is done in one point of place where we are preſent? If Light were an underſtanding Being, it would behold and know every thing done, where it diffuſeth it ſelf. God is light (as light in a Chryſtal Glaſs, all within it, all without it) and is not ignorant of what is done within and without; no ignorance can be faſtned upon him who hath an Univerſal preſence.

Hence, by the way, we may take notice of the wonderful patience of God, who bears with ſo many provocations; not from a Principle of Ignorance, for he bears with ſins that are committed near him, in his ſight; Sins that he ſees, and cannot but ſee.

5. *Hence may be inferr'd the Incomprehenſibility of God.* He that fills Heaven and Earth, cannot be contain'd in any thing; he fills the Underſtandings of Men, the Underſtandings of Angels, but is comprehended by neither; 'tis a raſhneſs to think to find out any bounds of God; there's no meaſuring of an infinite Being, if it were to be meaſured it were not infinite; but becauſe it is infinite, it is not to be meaſured. God ſits *above the Cherubims* *, above the fullneſs, above the brightneſs, not only of a humane, but a created underſtanding: Nothing is more preſent than God, yet nothing more hid; he is Light, and yet Obſcurity *; his Perfections are viſible, yet unſearchable; we know there is an infinite God, but it ſurpaſſeth the compaſs of our minds; we know there is no number ſo great, but another may be added to it; but no Man can put it in practice, without loſing himſelf in a maze of Figures. What is the reaſon we comprehend not many; nay, moſt things in the World? Partly from the Excellency of the object, and partly from the Imperfection of our underſtanding. How can we then comprehend God who exceeds all, and is exceeded by none; contains all, and is contained by none; is above our underſtanding, as well as above our ſenſe? As conſidered in himſelf infinite; as conſidered in compariſon with our underſtandings, incomprehenſible; who can with his eye meaſure the breadth, length and depth of the Sea, and at one caſt view every dimenſion of the Heavens? God is greater, and *we cannot know him* *; he fills the underſtanding as he fills Heaven and Earth; yet is above the underſtanding as he is above Heaven and Earth: He is known by Faith, enjoy'd by Love, but comprehended by no mind. God is not contain'd in that one Syllable, God; by it we apprehend an excellent and unlimited Nature: himſelf only underſtands himſelf, and can unveil himſelf.

* Ezek.10. v.1.

* Κρυφιότης *Dyoniſius* called God.

*Job36.26.

6. *How*

6. *How wonderful is God, and how nothing are Creatures! Aſcribe the Greatneſs to our God* *; He is admirable in the conſideration of his Power, in the extent of his Underſtanding, and no leſs wonderful in the Immenſity of his Eſſence; That as *Auſtin* ſaith, he is in the World, yet not confin'd to it; he is out of the World, yet not debarr'd from it; he is above the World, yet not elevated by it; he is below the World, yet not depreſt by it; he is above all, equall'd by none; he is in all, not becauſe he needs them, but they ſtand in need of him; this as well as Eternity, makes a vaſt diſproportion between God and the Creature: The Creature is bounded by a little ſpace, and no ſpace is ſo great as to bound the Creator. By this we may take a Proſpect of our own nothingneſs; as in the conſideration of God's Holineſs we are minded of our own Impurity; and in the thoughts of his Wiſdom have a view of our own Folly; and in the meditation of his Power, have a ſenſe of our Weakneſs; ſo his Immenſity ſhould make us according to our own Nature, appear little in our own eyes. What little, little, little things are we to God? Leſs than an Atome in the Beams of the Sun; poor drops to a God that fills Heaven and Earth, and yet dare we to ſtrut againſt him, and daſh our ſelves againſt a Rock? If the conſideration of our ſelves in compariſon with others, be apt to puff us up, the conſideration of our ſelves in compariſon with God, will be ſufficient to pull us down; If we conſider him in the greatneſs of his Eſſence, there is but little more proportion between him and us, than between being and not being, than between a Drop and the Ocean. How ſhould we never think of God without a Holy Admiration of his greatneſs, and a deep ſenſe of our own littleneſs! and as the Angels cover their faces before him; with what awe ſhould creeping Worms come into his Sight! and ſince God fills Heaven and Earth with his Preſence, we ſhould fill Heaven and Earth with his Glory; for this end he Created Angels to Praiſe him in Heaven, and Men to Worſhip him on Earth, that the Places he fills with his Preſence may be filled with his Praiſe: We ſhould be ſwallow'd up in Admirations of the Immenſity of God, as Men are at the firſt ſight of the Sea, when they behold a maſs of Waters, without beholding the bounds and immenſe depth of it.

*Deut. 33. 3.

7. *How much is this Attribute of God forgotten or contemned!* We pretend to believe him to be preſent every where, and yet many live as if he were preſent no where.

1. *'Tis commonly forgotten, or not believ'd.* All the Extravagancies of Men may be traced to the forgetfulneſs of this Attribute, as their Spring. The firſt Speech *Adam* ſpake in Paradiſe after his Fall, teſtified his unbelief of this *; *I heard thy Voice in the Garden, and I hid my ſelf*; his ear underſtood the voice of God, but his mind did not conclude the preſence of God; he thought the Trees could ſhelter him from him, whoſe Eye was preſent in the minuteſt parts of the Earth; he that thought after his Sin, that he could hide himſelf from the preſence of his Juſtice, thought before that he could hide himſelf from the preſence of his Knowledge; and being deceived in the one, he would try what would be the fruit of the other: In both he forgets, if not denies this Attribute; either corrupt Notions of God, or a ſlight belief of what in general Men aſſent unto, gives Birth to every Sin. In all Tranſgreſſions there is ſomething of Atheiſm; either denying the Being of God, or a daſh upon ſome Perfection of God; a not believing his Holineſs to hate it, his Truth that threatens, his Juſtice to puniſh it, and his Preſence to obſerve it. Tho' God be not afar off in his Eſſence, he is *afar off in the apprehenſion of the Sinner* *. There is no wicked man, but if he be an Atheiſt, he is a Heretick; and to gratifie his Luſt, will fanſie himſelf to be out of the preſence of his Judge: His Reaſon tells him, God is preſent with him, his Luſt preſſeth him to embrace the ſeaſon of a ſenſual Pleaſure; he will forſake his Reaſon, and prove a Heretick, that he may be an undiſturbed Sinner; and Sins doubly both in the error of his Mind, and the vileneſs of his Practice; he will conceit God with thoſe in *Job* *, *Veil'd with thick Clouds*, and not able to pierce into the lower World; as if his Preſence and Cares were confin'd to Cœleſtial things, and the Earth were too low a Sphere for his Eſſence to reach, at leaſt with any credit. 'Tis forgotten by good Men, when they fear too much the deſigns of their Enemies; *Fear not, for I am with thee* *. If the Preſence of God be enough to ſtrengthen againſt fear, then the prevailing of fear iſſues from our forgetfulneſs of it.

* *Drexel Nicet.* lib. 2 cap. 10.

* Job 22. 14.

* Iſa. 43. 5.

2. This Attribute of God's Omnipreſence is *for the moſt part contemn'd.* When Men will commit that in the Preſence of God which they would be afraid or aſhamed to do before the Eye of Man. Men do not practiſe that Modeſty before God, as before Men. He that would reſtrain his Tongue out of fear of mens Eye, will not reſtrain either Tongue or Hands out of fear of God's; What is the Language of this, but that God is not preſent with us, or his Preſence ought to be of leſs regard with us, and influence upon us, than that of a Creature? * Ask the *Thief* why he dares to ſteal? Will he not anſwer, *No eye ſees him?* Ask the *Adulterer* why he ſtrips himſelf of his Chaſtity, and invades the Rights of another? Will he not anſwer, * *No eye ſees me?* He *diſguiſeth himſelf* to be unſeen by Man, but ſlights the All-ſeeing Eye of God. If only a *man know them, they are in terror of the ſhadow of death*, they are Planet-ſtruck; but ſtand unſhaken at the Preſence of God. ‖ Is not this to account God as limited as Man, as ignorant, as abſenting, as if God were ſomething leſs than thoſe things which reſtrains us? 'Tis a debaſing God below a Creature. If we can forbear ſin from any awe of the preſence of Man, to whom we are equal in regard of Nature; or from the preſence of a very mean Man, to whom we are ſuperiour in regard of condition; and not forbear it becauſe we are within the ken of God; We reſpect him not only as our inferiour, but inferiour to the meaneſt Man or Child of his Creation, in whoſe ſight we would not commit the like Action. 'Tis to repreſent him as a ſleepy, negligent, or careleſs God; as tho' any thing might be concealed from him, *before whom* the leaſt fibres of *the heart* are anatomiz'd and *open*, who ſees as plainly Midnight as Noon-day ſins. Now this is a high aggravation of ſin: To break a King's Law in his ſight, is more bold than to violate them behind his back; as it was *Haman*'s Offence when he lay upon *Eſther*'s Bed, to force the Queen before the King's face. The leaſt Iniquity receives a high tincture from this. And no ſin can be little that is an affront in the face of God, and caſting the filth of the Creature before the Eyes of his Holineſs. As if a Wife ſhould commit Adultery before her Husband's face, or a Slave diſhonour his Maſter, and diſobey his Commands in his preſence. And hath it not often been thus with us? Have we not been diſloyal to God in his ſight, before his eyes, thoſe pure eyes that cannot behold Iniquity without anger and grief? * *Ye did evil before my eyes.* *Nathan* chargeth this home upon *David.* * *Thou haſt deſpiſed the Commandment of the Lord to do evil in his ſight.* And *David* in his Repentance, reflects upon himſelf for it, * *Againſt thee, thee only have I ſinned, and done this evil in thy ſight.* I obſerved not thy Preſence, I neglected

* *Drexel. Nicet.* lib. 2 cap. 10.

* Job 24. 15.

‖ Job 24. 17.

Heb. 4. 13.

* Iſa. 65. 12.

* 2 Sam. 12. 9.

* Pſal. 51. 4.

thee while thy Eye was upon me. And this conſideration ſhould ſting our hearts in all our Confeſſions of our Crimes. Men will be afraid of the preſence of others, whatſoever they think in their heart. How unworthily do we deal with God, in not giving him ſo much as an Eye-ſervice, which we do Man?

Quo fugis Encelade quaſcunq; acceſſeris oras, Sub Jove ſemper eris.

8. *How terrible ſhould the thoughts of this Attribute be to Sinners!* How fooliſh is it, to imagine any hiding-place from the Incomprehenſible God, who fills and contains all things, and is preſent in every point of the World! When Men have ſhut the Door, and made all darkneſs within, to meditate or commit a Crime, they cannot in the moſt intricate receſſes be ſheltered from the Preſence of God. If they could ſeparate themſelves from their own ſhadows, they could not avoid his company, or be obſcured from his ſight. * Hypocrites cannot diſguiſe their Sentiments from him, he is in the moſt ſecret nook of their hearts. No Thought is hid, no Luſt is ſecret, but the Eye of God beholds this, and that, and the other. He is preſent with our heart when we imagine, with our hands when we act. We may exclude the Sun from peeping into our Solitudes, but not the Eyes of God from beholding our Actions. *The eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the evil and good* *. He lies in the depths of our Souls, and ſees afar off our deſigns before we have conceived them. He is in the greateſt darkneſs, as well as the cleareſt light; in the cloſeſt thought of the mind, as well as the openeſt expreſſions. Nothing can be hid from him, no, not in the darkeſt Cells, or thickeſt Walls. *He compaſſeth our path where-ever we are,* * and *is acquainted with all our ways.* He is as much preſent with wicked Men to obſerve their ſins, as he is to deteſt them. Where he is preſent in his Eſſence, he is preſent in his Attributes: His Holineſs to hate, and his Juſtice to puniſh, if he pleaſe to ſpeak the word. 'Tis ſtrange Men ſhould not be mindful of this, when their very ſins themſelves might put them in mind of his Preſence. Whence haſt thou the power to act? Who preſerves thy Being, whereby thou art capable of committing that Evil? Is it not his Eſſential Preſence that ſuſtains us, and his Arm that ſupports us? And where can any Man *flie from his Preſence?* Not the vaſt Regions of Heaven could ſhelter a ſinning Angel from his Eye: How was *Adam* ferreted out of his hiding-places in Paradiſe? Nor can we find the depths of the Sea a ſufficient covering to us If we were with *Jonah* cloſeted up in the belly of a Whale; if we had the *wings of the morning*, as quick a motion as the light at the dawning of the day, that doth in an inſtant ſurprize and over-power the Regions of darkneſs; and could paſs to the *utmoſt parts of the Earth* or *Hell*, there we ſhould find him, *there his eye would be upon us*, there would his hand lay hold of us, and lead us as a Conqueror triumphing over a Captive *. Nay, if we could leap out of the compaſs of Heaven and Earth, we ſhould find as little reſerves from him. He is without the World in thoſe infinite ſpaces which the mind of Man can imagine. In regard of his Immenſity, nothing in being can be diſtant from him, whereſoever it is.

Pſal 139. 12. The darkneſs and light are both alike to him.

*Prov. 15. 3.

*Pſal. 139. 3.

*Pſal. 139. 8, 9, 10.

2d. Uſe is for *Comfort*. That God is preſent every where, is as much a Comfort to a good Man, as it is a Terror to a wicked one. He is every where for his People, not only by a neceſſary perfection of his Nature, but an immenſe diffuſion of his Goodneſs. He is in all Creatures as their Preſerver, in the damned as their Terror, in his people as their Protector. He fills Hell with his Severity, Heaven with his Glory, his People with his Grace. He is with his People as Light in Darkneſs, a Fountain in a Garden, a Manna in the Ark. God is in the World as a Spring of Preſervation, in the Church as his Cabinet, a Spring of Grace and Conſolation. A Man is preſent ſometimes in his Field, but more delightfully in his Garden. A Vineyard, as it hath more of coſt, ſo more of care, and a watchful Preſence of the Owner. Iſa. 27. 3. *I the Lord do keep it, viz.* his *Vineyard; I will water it every moment: Leſt any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.* As there is a preſence of Eſſence, which is *natural*; ſo there is a preſence of Grace, which is *fœderal*; A preſence by Covenant, *I will not leave thee, I will be with thee*; this latter depends upon the former; for take away the Immenſity of God, and you leave no Foundation for his univerſal gracious preſence with his People in all their emergencies, in all their hearts. And therefore where he is preſent in his Eſſence, he cannot be abſent in his Grace from them that fear him. 'Tis from his filling Heaven and Earth he proves his knowledge of the deſigns of the falſe Prophets; and from the ſame Topick may as well be inferr'd the employment of his Power and Grace for his People.

1. *The Omnipreſence of God is comfort in all violent Temptations.* No fiery Dart can be ſo preſent with us, as God is preſent both with that and the Marksman. The moſt raging *Devils* cannot be ſo near us, as God is to us and them. He is preſent with his People to *relieve* them, and preſent with the Devil to *manage* him to his own holy purpoſes: So he was with *Job*, defeating his Enemies, and bringing him triumphantly out of thoſe preſſing Tryals. This Preſence is ſuch a Terror, that whatſoever the Devil can deſpoil us of, he muſt leave this untouch'd. He might ſcratch the *Apoſtle* with a Thorn, but he could not riſle him of the preſence of Divine *Grace*, which God promiſed him. He muſt prevail ſo far, as to make God ceaſe to be God, before he can make him to be diſtant from us: And while this cannot be, the Devils and Men can no more hinder the emanations of God to the Soul, than a Child can cut off the Rays of the Sun from imbelliſhing the Earth; 'tis no mean ſupport for a good Man, at any time buffeted by a Meſſenger of *Satan*, to think God ſtands near him, and beholds how ill he is us'd. It would be a ſatisfaction to a King's Favourite in the midſt of the Violence ſome Enemies might uſe to him upon a Surprize, to underſtand that the King who loves him, ſtands behind a Curtain, and through a hole ſees the Injuries he ſuffers; and were the Devil as conſidering as he is malicious, he could not but be in great fear at God's being in the Generation of the Righteous, as his Serpentine Seed is *: *There were they in great fear, for God is in the generation of the Righteous.*

1 Cor. 17. 7. 9.

* Prov. 3. 6.

2. The Omnipreſence of God is a *comfort in ſharp afflictions.* Good Men have a Comfort in this Preſence in their naſty Priſons, oppreſſing Tribunals; in the overflowing *Waters*, or ſcorching *Flames*, *he is ſtill with them* *; and many times by his Preſence keeps the *Buſh from Conſuming*, when it ſeems to be all in a Flame: In Afflictions God ſhews himſelf moſt preſent, when Friends are moſt abſent; *When my Father and Mother forſake me, then the Lord ſhall take me up* *, then God will ſtoop and gather me into his Protection; *Hebr. ſhall gather me:* Alluding to thoſe Tribes that were to bring up the Rear in the *Iſraelites* March, to take care that none were left behind, and expos'd to Famine or wild Beaſts, by reaſon of ſome Diſeaſe that diſenabled them to keep pace with their Brethren; He that is the Sanctuary of his People in all Calamities, is more preſent with them to ſupport them, than their Adverſaries can be preſent with them to afflict them *, *A preſent help in time of Trouble*; He is preſent with all things for this end; tho' his Preſence be a neceſſary Preſence,

* Iſa. 43. 2.

* Pſal. 27. 10.

* Pſal. 46. 2.

in

in regard of the Immenſity of his Nature; yet the end of this Preſence, in regard that it is for the good of his People, is a voluntary Preſence. 'Tis for the good of Man he is preſent in the lower World, and principally for the good of his People, for whoſe ſake he keeps up the World *; *His eyes run to and fro throughout the whole Earth, to ſhew himſelf ſtrong in the behalf of them whoſe heart is perfect towards him.* If he doth not deliver good Men from Afflictions, he will be ſo preſent as to manage them in them, as that his Glory ſhall iſſue from them, and their Grace be brightned by them *.

*2 Chron. 16. 9.

* *Chryſoſtome.*

What a Man was *Paul* when he was lodg'd in a Priſon, or dragged to the Courts of Judicature, when he was torn with Rods, or laden with Chains! then did he ſhew the greateſt Miracles, made the Judge tremble upon the Bench, and brake the Heart, tho' not the Priſon, of the Jaylor; ſo powerful is the Preſence of God in the preſſures of his People. This Preſence outweighs all other Comforts, and is more valuable to a Chriſtian than *Barns* of *Corn*, or *Cellars* of *Wine* can be to a Covetous Man *: It was this Preſence was *David's* Cordial in the mutinying of his Soldiers *. What a *Comfort* is this in Exile, or a forced deſertion of our Habitations! Good Men may be Baniſh'd from their Country, but never from the Preſence of their Protector; Ye cannot ſay of any corner of the Earth, or of any Dungeon in a Priſon, God is not here; if you were caſt out of your Country 1000 Miles off, you are not out of God's Precinct; his Arm is there to cheriſh the good as well as to drag out the wicked; 'tis the ſame God, the ſame Preſence in every Country, as well as the ſame Sun, Moon, and Stars; and were not God every where, yet he could not be meaner than his Creature, the Sun in the Firmament, which viſits every part of the habitable World in twenty four hours.

* Pſal. 4. 7.

* 1 Sam. 30. 6.

3. The Omnipreſence of God is *a Comfort in all Duties of Worſhip.* He is preſent to obſerve, and preſent to accept our Petitions, and anſwer our Suits. Good Men have not only the Eſſential Preſence, which is common to all, but his Gracious Preſence; not only the Preſence that flows from his Nature, but that which flows from his Promiſe; his Eſſential Preſence makes no difference between this and that Man in regard of Spirituals, without this in conjunction with it; his Nature is the cauſe of the Preſence of his Eſſence; his Will engag'd by his Truth, is the cauſe of the Preſence of his Grace. He promis'd to meet the *Iſraelites* in the Place where he ſhould ſet his Name, and in all places where he doth Record it *. *In all places where I Record my Name, I will come unto thee, and I will Bleſs thee*; in every place where I ſhall manifeſt the ſpecial Preſence of my Divinity. In all places, hands may be lifted up, without doubting of his ability to hear; he dwells in the *contrite Hearts*, where-ever it is moſt in the exerciſe of Contrition; which is uſually in times of ſpecial Worſhip *, and that to revive and refreſh them. Habitation notes a ſpecial Preſence; tho' he dwell in the higheſt Heavens in the ſparklings of his Glory, he dwells alſo in the loweſt Hearts in the beams of his Grace; as none can expel him from his Dwelling in Heaven, ſo none can reject him from his Reſidence in the Heart. The *Tabernacle* had his *peculiar Preſence* fixed to it *; his Soul ſhould not abhor them as they are waſhed by Chriſt, tho' they are loathſom by Sin: In a greater diſpenſation there cannot be a leſs Preſence, ſince the Church under the New Teſtament, is called the Temple of the Lord, wherein he will both *dwell and walk* *; Or, *I will indwell in them*; as if he ſhould ſay, I will dwell in and in them; I will dwell in them by Grace, and walk in them by exciting their Graces; he will be more intimate with them than their own Souls, and converſe with them as the Living God, *i. e.* as a God that hath Life in himſelf, and Life to convey to them in their Converſe with him; and ſhew his Spiritual Glory among them in a greater meaſure than in the Temple; ſince that was but a heap of Stones, and the figure of the Chriſtian Church, the Myſtical Body of his Son. His Preſence is not leſs in the Subſtance than it was in the Shadow; this Preſence of God in his Ordinances, is the Glory of a Church; as the Preſence of a King is the Glory of a Court; the Defence of it too, as a *Wall of Fire* *; alluding to the Fire Travellers in a Wilderneſs made to fright away wild Beaſts. 'Tis not the meanneſs of the Place of Worſhip can exclude him; the ſecond Temple was not ſo magnificent as the firſt of *Solomon's* Erecting; and the Jews ſeem to deſpond of ſo Glorious a Preſence of God in the ſecond, as they had in the firſt; becauſe they thought it not ſo good for the Entertainment of him that inhabits Eternity; but God comforts them againſt this Conceit again and again *; *Be ſtrong, Be ſtrong, Be ſtrong, I am with you*; the meanneſs of the Place ſhall not hinder the grandeur of my Preſence; no matter what the Room is, ſo it be the Preſence-Chamber of the King, wherein he will favour our Suits; he can every where ſlide into our Souls with a perpetual ſweetneſs, ſince he is every where, and ſo intimate with every one that fears him: If we ſhould ſee God on Earth in his amiableneſs, as *Moſes* did, ſhould we not be encouraged by his Preſence, to preſent our Requeſts to him, to *Eccho* out our Praiſes of him? And have we not as great a ground now to do it, ſince he is as really preſent with us, as if he were viſible to us? He is in the ſame Room with us, as near to us as our Souls to our Bodies; not a word but he hears, not a motion but he ſees, not a breath but he perceives; he is through all; he is in all.

* Exod. 20. 4.

* Iſa. 57. 15.

* Lev. 26. 11.

* 2 Cor. 6. 6.

* Zech 2. 5.

* Hag. 2. 3, 4.

4. The Omnipreſence of God is a *Comfort in all ſpecial Services.* God never puts any upon a hard Task, but he makes Promiſes to encourage them and aſſiſt them; and the matter of the Promiſe is that of his Preſence; ſo he did aſſure the Prophets of Old when he ſet them difficult Tasks; and ſtrengthned *Moſes* againſt the Face of *Pharaoh*, by aſſuring him *he would be with his Mouth* *; and when Chriſt put his *Apoſtles* upon a Conteſt with the whole World, to Preach a Goſpel that would be Fooliſhneſs to the *Greeks*, and a Stumbling-block to the *Jews*; he gives them a Cordial only compos'd of his Preſence *, *I will be with you*; 'tis this Preſence that ſcatters by its Light the darkneſs of our Spirits; 'Tis this that is the cauſe of what is done for his Glory in the World; 'tis this that mingles its ſelf with all that is done for his Honour; 'tis this from whence ſprings all the aſſiſtance of his Creatures, mark'd out for ſpecial purpoſes.

* Exod. 4. 12.

Matth. 28. 20.

5. *This Preſence is not without the ſpecial Preſence of all his Attributes.* Where his Eſſence is, his Perfections are; becauſe they are one with his Eſſence; yea, they are his Eſſence, tho' they have their ſeveral degrees of manifeſtation. As in the Covenant, he makes over himſelf as our God, not a part of himſelf, but his whole Deity; ſo in promiſing of his Preſence, he means not a part of it, but the whole, the Preſence of all the Excellencies of his Nature to be manifeſted for our good. 'Tis not a piece of God is here, and another parcel there; but God in his whole Eſſence and Perfections; in his Wiſdom to guide us, his Power to protect and ſupport us, his Mercy to pity us, his Fulneſs to refreſh us, and his Goodneſs to relieve us: He is ready to ſparkle out in this or that Perfection, as the neceſſities of his People require, and his own Wiſdom directs

directs for his own Honour: So that being not far from us in any Excellency of his Nature, we can quickly have recourſe to him upon any emergency; ſo that if we are miſerable, we have the Preſence of his Goodneſs; if we want direction, we have the Preſence of his Wiſdom; if we are weak, we have the Preſence of his Power; and ſhould we not rejoyce in it, as a Man doth in the Preſence of a Powerful, Wealthy, and Compaſſionate Friend?

3 USE of *Exhortation.*

1. *Let us be much in the actual Thoughts of this Truth.* How ſhould we enrich our Underſtandings with the knowledge of the Excellency of God, whereof this is none of the leaſt; nor hath leſs of Honey in its Bowels, tho' it be more Terrible to the Wicked than the Preſence of a Lion; 'tis this that makes all other Excellencies of the Divine Nature ſweet: What would Grace, Wiſdom, Power ſignifie at a diſtance from us? Let us frame in our Minds a ſtrong *Idea* of it; 'tis this makes ſo great a difference between the Actions of one Man and another; one maintains actual thoughts of it, another doth not; tho' all believe it as a Perfection pertaining to the infiniteneſs of his Eſſence. *David*, or rather a greater than *David*, had God *always before him*; there was no time, no occaſion wherein he did not ſtir up ſome lively thoughts of him *. Let us have right Notions of it; imagine not God as a great King, ſitting only in his Majeſty in Heaven; acting all by his Servants and Miniſters. This, ſaith *one*, * is a Childiſh and unworthy conceit of God, and may in time bring ſuch a conceiver by degrees to deny his Providence; the denyal of this Perfection is an Ax at the Root of Religion; if it be not deeply imprinted in the Mind, perſonal Religion grows faint and feeble; who would fear that God that is not imagin'd to be a Witneſs of his Actions? Who would Worſhip a God at a diſtance both from the Worſhip and Worſhipper *? Let us believe this Truth, but not with an idle Faith, as if we did not believe it; Let us know, that as whereſoever the Fiſh moves, it is in the Water; whereſoever the Bird moves, it is in the Air; ſo whereſoever we move, we are in God: As there is not a moment but we are under his Mercy; ſo there is not a moment that we are out of his Preſence: Let us therefore look upon nothing, without thinking who ſtands by, without reflecting upon him in whom it Lives, Moves, and hath its Being. When you view a Man, you fix your Eyes upon his Body, but your Mind upon that inviſible part that acts every Member by life and motion, and makes them fit for your converſe. Let us not bound our thoughts to the Creatures we ſee, but pierce through the Creature to that boundleſs God we do not ſee; we have continual remembrancers of his Preſence, the Light whereby we ſee, and the Air whereby we live, give us perpetual notices of it, and ſome weak reſemblance; why ſhould we forget it? Yea, what a ſhame is our unmindfulneſs of it, when every caſt of our Eye, every motion of our Lungs, jogs us to remember it? Light is in every part of the Air, in every part of the World, yet not mixt with any, both remain entire in their own ſubſtance. Let us not be worſe than ſome of the Heathens, who preſſed this Notion upon themſelves for the ſpiriting their Actions with Vertue, *That all Places were full of God:* This was the means *Baſil* uſed to preſcribe, upon a Queſtion was ask'd him, How ſhould we do to be ſerious? *Mind God's Preſence.* How ſhall we avoid diſtractions in Service? *Think of God's Preſence.* How ſhall we reſiſt Temptations? Oppoſe to them the Preſence of God.

* Pſal. 16. 8.

* *Muſculus.*

* *Drexel.*

Omnia Dii plena.

1. *This will be a Shield againſt all Temptations.* God is preſent, is enough to blunt the Weapons of Hell; this will ſecure us from a ready complyance with any baſe and vile attractives, and curb that headſtrong Principle in our Nature, that would joyn hands with them; the Thoughts of this would, like the powerful Preſence of God with the *Iſraelites*, take off the Wheels from the Chariots of our ſenſitive Appetites, and make them, perhaps, move ſlower, at leaſt towards a Temptation. How did *Peter* fling off the Temptation which had worſted him, upon a look from Chriſt? The actuated Faith of this would ſtifle the Darts of Satan; and fire us with an anger againſt his ſolicitations, as ſtrong as the Fire that inflames the Darts. Moſes *his Sight of him that was inviſible*, ſtrengthned him againſt the coſtly Pleaſures and Luxuries of a Prince's Court *: We are utterly ſenſeleſs of a Deity, if we are not moved with this *Item* from our Conſciences, *God is preſent.* Had our firſt Parents actually conſider'd the nearneſs of God to them, when they were Tempted to Eat of the Forbidden Fruit, they had not probably ſo eaſily been overcome by the Temptation: What Soldier would be ſo baſe as to revolt under the Eye of a tender and obliging General? Or what Man ſo negligent of himſelf, as to Rob a Houſe in the Sight of a Judge? Let us conſider, That God is as near to obſerve us, as the Devil to ſolicite us, yea, nearer; the Devil ſtands by us, but God is in us, we may have a Thought the Devil knows not, but not a Thought but God is actually preſent with, as our Souls are with the Thoughts they think; nor can any Creature attract our heart, if our minds were fixed on that inviſible Preſence that contributes to that Excellency, and ſuſtains it, and conſidered that no Creature could be ſo preſent with us as the Creator is.

* Heb. 11. 27.

2. *It will be a Spur to Holy Actions.* What Man would do an unworthy Action, or ſpeak an unhandſome Word in the Preſence of his Prince? The Eye of the General inflames the Spirit of a Soldier. Why did *David keep God's Teſtimonies* *? becauſe he conſider'd that *all his ways were before him*; becauſe he was perſwaded his ways were preſent with God, God's Precepts ſhould be preſent with him. The ſame was the cauſe of *Job*'s Integrity *, *Doth he not ſee my ways?* To have God in our Eye is the way to be ſincere *; *walk before me* as in my Sight, *and be thou perfect.* Communion with God conſiſts chiefly in an ordering our Ways as in the Preſence of him that is Inviſible. This would make us ſpiritual, rais'd, and watchful in all our Paſſions, if we conſider'd that God is preſent with us in our Shops, in our Chambers, in our Walks, and in our Meetings, as preſent with us as with the Angels in Heaven; who, tho' they have a Preſence of Glory above us, yet have not a greater meaſure of his Eſſential Preſence than we have: What an awe had *Jacob* upon him when he conſider'd God was preſent in *Bethel* *! If God ſhould appear viſibly to us when we were alone, ſhould we not be reverent and ſerious before him? God is every where about us, he doth encompaſs us with his Preſence; ſhould not God's ſeeing, have the ſame influence upon us, as our ſeeing God? He is not more Eſſentially preſent if he ſhould ſo manifeſt himſelf to us, than when he doth not: Who would appear beſmear'd in the preſence of a great Perſon? Or not be aſham'd to be found in his Chamber in a naſty poſture, by ſome Viſitant? Would not a Man bluſh to be catched about ſome mean Action, though it were not an immoral Crime? If this Truth were impreſt upon our Spirits, we ſhould more bluſh to have our Souls daub'd with ſome loathſom Luſt, ſwarms of Sin, like *Egyptian* Lice and Frogs, creeping about our Heart in his Sight. If the moſt ſenſual Man be aſham'd to do a diſhoneſt

* Pſal. 119. 168.

* Job 31. 4.

* Gen. 17. 1.

* Gen. 28. 16, 17.

Action

Action in the ſight of a grave and holy Man, one of great Reputation for Wiſdom and Integrity; how much more ſhould we lift up our ſelves in the ways of God, who is Infinite and Immenſe, is every where, and infinitely ſuperior to Man, and more to be regarded! We could not ſeriouſly think of his Preſence, but there would paſs ſome entercourſe between us; we ſhould be putting up ſome Petition upon the ſenſe of our Indigence; or ſending up our Praiſes to him upon the ſenſe of his Bounty. The actual thoughts of the Preſence of God is the Life and Spirit of all Religion; we could not have ſluggiſh Spirits, and a careleſs watch, if we conſider'd that his Eye is upon us all the day.

3. *It will quell diſtractions in Worſhip.* The actual thoughts of this would eſtabliſh our thoughts, and pull them back when they begin to rove; The mind could not boldly give God the ſlip, if it had lively thoughts of it; the conſideration of this would blow off all the Froth that lies on the top of our Spirits. An Eye taken up with the preſence of one Object, is not at leiſure to be fill'd with another: He that looks intently upon the Sun, ſhall have nothing for a while but the Sun in his Eye. Oppoſe to every intruding Thought the *Idea* of the Divine Omnipreſence, and put it to ſilence by the awe of his Majeſty. When the Maſter is preſent, Scholars mind their Books, keep their Places, and run not over the Forms to play with one another: The Maſter's Eye keeps an Idle Servant to his Work, that otherwiſe would be gazing at every Straw, and prating to every Paſſenger. How ſoon would the remembrance of this, daſh all extravagant Fancies out of Countenance, juſt as the News of the approach of a Prince would make the Courtiers buſtle up themſelves, huddle up their vain ſports, and prepare themſelves for a Reverent Behaviour in his ſight. We ſhould not dare to give God a piece of our heart, when we apprehend him preſent with the whole; we ſhould not dare to mock one that we knew were more inwards with us than we are with our ſelves, and that beheld every motion of our Mind, as well as action of our Body.

2. *Let us endeavour for the more ſpecial and influential Preſence of God.* Let the Eſſential Preſence of God be the ground of our Awe, and his gracious influential Preſence the Object of our Deſire. The *Heathen* thought themſelves ſecure if they had their little petty Houſhold-Gods with them in their Journeys; ſuch ſeem to be the Images *Rachel* ſtole from her Father * to accompany her Travel with their Bleſſings; ſhe might not at that time have caſt off all reſpect to thoſe Idols, in the acknowledgment of which ſhe had been Educated from her Infancy; and they ſeem to be kept by her, till God called *Jacob* to *Bethel*, after the Rape of *Dinah* *, when *Jacob* called for the ſtrange Gods, and hid them under the Oak. The gracious Preſence of God we ſhould look after in our Actions; as Travellers that have a Charge of Money or Jewels, deſire to keep themſelves in Company that may protect them from High-way-men that would rifle them. Since we have the concerns of the Eternal Happineſs of our Souls upon our hands, we ſhould endeavour to have God's Merciful and Powerful Preſence with us in all our ways *; *In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he ſhall direct thy Paths*; acknowledge him before any Action, by imploring; acknowledge him after, by rendring him the Glory; acknowledge his Preſence before Worſhip, in Worſhip, after Worſhip: 'Tis this Preſence makes a kind of Heaven upon Earth, cauſeth Affliction to put off the Nature of Miſery. How much will the Preſence of the Sun out-ſhine the Stars of leſſer Comforts, and fully anſwer the want of them! The Ark of God going before us, can only make all things ſucceſsful: It was this led the *Iſraelites* over *Jordan*, and ſettled them in *Canaan*. Without this we ſignifie nothing, tho' we live without this, we cannot be diſtinguiſh'd for ever from *Devils*; his Eſſential Preſence they have, and if we have no more, we ſhall be no better. 'Tis the enlivening, fructifying preſence of the Sun, that revives the languiſhing Earth; and this only can repair our ruin'd Soul. Let it be therefore our deſire, That as he fills Heaven and Earth by his Eſſence, he may fill our Underſtandings and Wills by his Grace; that we may have another kind of Preſence with us, than Animals have in their bruiſh ſtate, or Devils in their Chains: His Eſſential Preſence maintains our Beings, but his gracious Preſence confers and continues a Happineſs.

* Gen. 31. 19.

* Gen. 35. 4.

* Pſal. 14. 5.

A DISCOURSE UPON God's Knowledge.

Pſal. CXLVII. ver. v.

Great is our Lord, and of great Power: his Underſtanding is Infinite.

'TIS uncertain who was the *Author* of this *Pſalm*, and when it was Penn'd; ſome think after the return from the *Babyloniſh* Captivity: 'Tis a Pſalm of Praiſe, and is made up of matter of Praiſe from the beginning to the end; God's benefits to the Church, his Providence over his Creatures; the Eſſential excellency of his Nature.

The Pſalmiſt doubles his Exhortation to Praiſe God, *v.* 1. *Praiſe ye the Lord, ſing Praiſe to our God*; to praiſe him from his Dominion as *Lord*; from his Grace and Mercy as *our God*; from the Excellency of the Duty it ſelf, *'tis good*, *'tis comely*: ſome read it *comely*, ſome *lovely* or *deſirable*, from the various derivation of the Word.

Nothing doth ſo much delight a gracious Soul, as an opportunity of Celebrating the Perfections and Goodneſs of the Creator.

The higheſt Duties a Creature can render to the Creator are pleaſant and delightful in themſelves, *'tis comely*. Praiſe is a Duty that affects the whole Soul.

The Praiſe of God is a decent thing; the Excellency of God's Nature deſerves it, and the Benefits of God's Grace require it.

'Tis comely when done as it ought to be, with the Heart as well as with the Voice: a Sinner Sings ill tho' his Voice be good; the Soul in it is to be elevated above Earthly things.

The *firſt* matter of Praiſe, is God's erecting and preſerving his Church, *v.* 2. *The Lord doth build up* Jeruſalem, *he gathers together the out-caſts of* Iſrael: The Walls of demoliſh'd *Jeruſalem* are now re-edified; God hath brought back the Captivity of *Jacob*, and reduced his People from their *Babyloniſh* Exile, and thoſe that were diſperſt into ſtrange Regions, he hath reſtor'd to their Habitations. Or it may be Prophetick of the calling of the Gentiles, and the gathering the out-caſts of the Spiritual *Iſrael*, that were before as without God in the World, and ſtrangers to the Covenant of Promiſe. Let God be praiſed, but eſpecially for Building up his Church, and gathering the *Gentiles*, before counted as *out-caſts**; he gathers them in this World to the Faith, and hereafter to Glory.

* Iſa. 11. 12.

Obſ. 1. From the *two firſt Verſes* obſerve.

1. *All People are under God's Care: but he has a particular regard to his Church.* This is the Signet on his hand, as a Bracelet upon his arm; this is his Garden which he delights to dreſs; if he prunes it, it is to purge it; if he Digs about his Vine, and wounds the Branches, 'tis to make it more Beautiful with new Cluſters, and reſtore it to a fruitful Vigour.

2. *All great deliverances are to be aſcrib'd to God, as the principal Author, whoſoever are the Inſtruments. The Lord doth build up* Jeruſalem, *he gathers together the out-caſts of* Iſrael. This great deliverance from *Babylon*, is not to be aſcrib'd to *Cyrus* or *Darius*, or the reſt of our favourers; 'tis the Lord that doth it; we had his Promiſe for it, we have now his Performance. Let us not aſcribe that which is the effect of his Truth, only to the good Will of Men; 'tis God's act, not by Might, nor by Power, nor by Weapons of War, or ſtrength of Horſes, but by the Spirit of the Lord. He ſent Prophets to Comfort us while we were exiles; and now he hath ſtretched out his own Arm to work our Deliverance, according to his Word; blind Man looks ſo much upon Inſtruments, that he hardly takes notice of God, either in Afflictions or Mercies, and this is the cauſe that robs God of ſo much Prayer and Praiſe in the World.

Verſe 3. *He heals the broken in Heart, and binds up their Wounds.* He hath now reſtored thoſe who had no hope but in his Word; he hath dealt with them as a tender and skilful Chirurgeon; he hath applied his curing Plaiſters, and dropped in his Sovereign Balſams; he hath now furniſh'd our fainting hearts with refreſhing Cordials, and comforted our wounds with ſtrengthning Ligatures.

How gracious is God, that reſtores Liberty to the Captives, and Righteouſneſs to the Penitent? Man's Miſery is the fitteſt opportunity for God to make his Mercy illuſtrious in it ſelf, and moſt welcome to the Patient.

He proceeds *verſe* 4. Wonder not that God calls together the out-caſts, and ſingles them out from every corner, for a return; why can he not do this as well as *tell the number of the Stars, and call them all by their Names**? * *Ver.* 4.

There are none of his People ſo deſpicable in the Eye of Man, but they are known and regarded by God; tho' they are clouded in the World, yet they are the Stars of the World; and ſhall God number the inanimate Stars in the Heavens, and make no account of his living Stars on the Earth? no, where-ever they are diſperſed, he will not forget them, however they are afflicted, he will not deſpiſe them; the Stars are ſo numerous, that they are innumerable by Man; ſome are viſible and known by Men, others lie more hid and undiſcovered in a confuſed Light, as thoſe in the *Milky-way*, Man cannot ſee one of them diſtinctly.

God

God knows all his People. As he can do what is above the power of Man to perform, ſo he underſtands what is above the skill of Man to diſcover; ſhall Man meaſure God by his ſcantineſs? Proud Man muſt not equal himſelf to God, nor cut God as ſhort as his own Line.

He tells the number of the Stars, and calls them all by their Names. He hath them all in his Liſt; as Generals the Names of their Soldiers in their Muſter-Roll, for they are his *Hoſt*, which he Marſhals in the Heavens, as *Iſa.* 40. 26. where you have the like Expreſſion; he knows them more diſtinctly than Man can know any thing, and ſo diſtinctly as to call *them all by their Names*: He knows their *Names*, that is, their natural offices, and influences, the different degrees of heat and light, their order and motion; and *all* of them, the leaſt glimmering Star as well as the moſt glaring Planet; this Man cannot do; *Tell the Stars if thou be able to number them*, Gen. 15. 5. ſaith God to *Abraham* (whom *Joſephus* repreſents as a great *Aſtronomer*) yea they cannot be numbr'd, *Jer.* 33. 22. and the uncertainty of the Opinions of Men, evidenceth their ignorance of their number; ſome reckoning 1022, others 1025, others 1098, others 7000, beſides thoſe that by reaſon of their mixture of Light with one another, cannot be diſtinctly diſcern'd, and others perhaps ſo high, as not to be reach'd by the Eye of Man. To impoſe Names on things, and Names according to their Natures, is both an Argument of Power and Dominion, and of Wiſdom and Underſtanding: from the impoſition of Names upon the Creatures by *Adam*, the Knowledge of *Adam* is generally concluded; and it was alſo a fruit of that Dominion God allowed him over the Creatures. Now he that Numbers and Names the Stars that ſeem to lie confus'd among one another, as well as thoſe that appear to us in an unclouded Night, may well be ſuppos'd accurately to know his People, tho' lurking in ſecret Caverns, and know thoſe that are fit to be Inſtruments of their deliverance; the one is as eaſie to him as the other; and the number of the one as diſtinctly known by him, as the multitude of the other.

For great is our Lord, and of great Power, his Underſtanding is Infinite *. He wants not Knowledge to know the objects, nor Power to effect his Will concerning them. *Of great Power* *. Much power, plenteous in Power; ſo the Word רב is rendred *Pſal.* 5. 15.*. A multitude of Power, as well as a multitude of Mercy; a Power that exceeds all Created Power and Underſtanding.

* *Ver.* 5.

רב כח

רב חסד

His Underſtanding is infinite. You may not imagine how he can call all the Stars by Name; the multitude of viſible being ſo great, and the multitude of the inviſible being greater; but you muſt know, that as God is Almighty, ſo he is Omniſcient; and as there is no end of his Power, ſo no account can exactly be given of his Underſtanding; *His Underſtanding is Infinite.* No number or account of it; and ſo the ſame Words are rendred, *Joel* 1. 6. *A Nation ſtrong*, and *without number*: No end of his underſtanding; *Syriack*, no meaſure, no bounds *. His Eſſence is infinite, and ſo is his Power and Underſtanding; and vaſt is his Knowledge, that we can no more comprehend it, than we can meaſure ſpaces that are without limits, or tell the minutes or hours of Eternity. Who then can fathom that whereof there is no number, but which exceeds all, that there is no *ſearching of it out* *? He knows Univerſals, he knows Particulars: We muſt not take underſtanding here, as noting a Faculty, but the uſe of the underſtanding in the knowledge of things, and the Judgment in the conſideration of them, and ſo it is often uſed.

אין מספר

תבונה

In the *Verſe* there is a deſcription of God.

1. In his *Eſſence*, *great is our Lord.*
2. In his *Power*, *of great Power.*
3. In his *Knowledge*, *his Underſtanding is infinite*; his Underſtanding is his Eye, and his Power is his Arm. Of his *Infinite Underſtanding*, I am to Diſcourſe.

Doctrine. *God hath an Infinite Knowledge and Underſtanding.* All Knowledge. Omnipreſence which before we ſpake of, reſpects his Eſſence; Omniſcience, reſpects his Underſtanding, according to our manner of Conception.

This is clear in *Scripture*; hence God is called a God of Knowledge, 1 *Sam.* 2. 3. *The Lord is a God of Knowledge*, Heb. *Knowledges* in the Plural Number, of all kind of Knowledge; 'tis ſpoken there to quell Man's Pride in his own reaſon and parts; what is the Knowledge of Man but a ſpark to the whole Element of Fire, a grain of Duſt, and worſe than nothing, in compariſon of the Knowledge of God, as his Eſſence is in compariſon of the Eſſence of God? *All kind of Knowledge.* He knows what Angels know, what Man knows, and infinitely more; he knows himſelf, his own operations, all his Creatures, the Notions and Thoughts of them; he is underſtanding above underſtanding, mind above mind, the mind of minds, the light of lights; this the *Greek* word Θεὸς ſignifies in the Etymology of it, of Θεάω to *ſee*, to contemplate; and δαίμων of δαίω *ſcio*. The *Names* of God ſignifie a nature viewing and piercing all things; and the attribution of our ſenſes to God in Scripture, as Hearing and Seeing, which are the Senſes whereby knowledge enters into us, ſignifies God's Knowledge.

1. *The Notion of God's Knowledge of all things lies above the ruines of Nature*; it was not obliterated by the Fall of Man. It was neceſſary offending Man was to know that he had a Creator whom he had injured, that he had a Judge to Try and Puniſh him; ſince God thought fit to keep up the World, it had been kept up to no purpoſe, had not this notion been continued alive in the minds of Men; there would not have been any practice of his Laws, no bar to the worſt of Crimes. If Men had thought they had to deal with an Ignorant Deity, there could be no practice of Religion. Who would lift up his eyes, or ſpread his hand towards Heaven, if he imagin'd his Devotion were directed to a God as blind as the Heathens imagin'd Fortune? To what boot would it be for them to make Heaven and Earth reſound with their Cries, if they had not thought God had an Eye to ſee them, and an Ear to hear them? And indeed the very notion of a God at the firſt bluſh, ſpeaks him a being endued with Underſtanding; no Man can imagine a Creator void of one of the nobleſt perfections belonging to thoſe Creatures that are the Flower and Cream of his Works.

2. Therefore *all Nations acknowledge this*, as well as the Exiſtence and Being of God. No Nation but had their Temples, particular Ceremonies of Worſhip, and preſented their Sacrifices, which they could not have been ſo vain as to do, without an acknowledgement of this Attribute. This notion of God's Knowledge owed not its riſe to Tradition, but to natural implantation; it was born and grew up with every rational Creature. Though the ſeveral Nations and Men of the World agreed not in one kind of Deity, or in their Sentiments of his Nature or other Perfections, ſome judging him Cloathed with a fine and pure Body; others judging him an uncompounded Spirit; ſome fixing him to a ſeat in the Heavens; others owning his Univerſal Preſence in all parts of the World; yet they all agreed in the Univerſality of his Knowledge; and their own Conſciences reflecting their Crimes, unknown to any but themſelves, would keep this notion in ſome vigour whether

ther they would or no. Now this being implanted in the minds of all Men by nature, cannot be false; for nature imprints not in the minds of all Men an assent to a falsity. Nature would not pervert the reason and minds of Men: Universal notions of God are from Original, not lapsed Nature, and preserved in Mankind in order to a restoration from a lapsed State. The Heathens did acknowledge this: in all the solemn Covenants, solemniz'd with Oaths and the Invocation of the Name of God, this Attribute was suppos'd. They confest knowledge to be peculiar to the Deity; *Scientia Deorum vita*, saith *Cicero*. Some called him Νῦς, *Mens*, *Mind*, pure understanding, without any more, Ἐπόπτης, the inspector of all. As they called him Life, because he was the Author of Life? so they called him *Intellectus*, because he was the Author of all Knowledge and Understanding in his Creatures? And one being ask'd, Whether any Man could be hid from God? No saith he, not so much as thinking: Some call him the Eye of the World*; and the *Egyptians* represented God by an Eye on the top of a Scepter, because God is all Eye, and can be ignorant of nothing.

Agamemnon, *Homer I.* 3. *v.* 8. making a Covenant with *Priam* invocates the Sun' Ηελίος ὃς πάντ' ἐφορᾷς καὶ πάντ' ἐπακούεις.

* *Gamach in* 1 *Pa. Aqui. Q.* 14. *cap.* 1. *p.* 119. *Clem. Alex. and Sroom. lib.* 6.

And the same Nation made Eyes and Ears of the most excellent Metals, Consecrating them to God, and hanging them up in the midst of their Temples, in signification of God's Seeing and Hearing all things; hence they called God Light, as well as the Scripture, because all things are visible to him.

For the better understanding of this, we will inquire,

1. *What kind of Knowledge or Understanding there is in God.*
2. *What God knows.*
3. *How God knows things.*
4. *The proof, that God knows all things.*
5. *The Use of all* to our selves.

I. *What kind of Understanding or Knowledge there is in God?*

The Knowledge of God in *Scripture* hath various Names, according to the various relations or objects of it: In respect of *present* things, 'tis called Knowledge or Sight, in respect of things *past*, Remembrance; in respect of things *future*, or to come, 'tis called Fore-Knowledge or Prescience. 1 *Pet.* 1. 2. In regard of the *Universality* of the Objects, it is called Omniscience; in regard of the *simple Understanding* of things 'tis called Knowledge; in regard of *acting* and modelling the ways of acting, 'tis called Wisdom and Prudence, *Eph.* 1. 8. He must have Knowledge, otherwise he could not be Wise; Wisdom is the Flower of Knowledge, and Knowledge is the Root of Wisdom.

As to what *this Knowledge* is; if we know what Knowledge is in Man, we may apprehend what it is in God, removing all Imperfection from it, and ascribing to him the most eminent way of understanding; because we cannot comprehend God, but as he is pleased to condescend to us in his own ways of discovery; that is, under some way of similitude to his perfectest Creatures; therefore we have a notion of God by his Understanding and Will; Understanding, whereby he conceives and apprehends things; Will, whereby he extends himself in acting according to his Wisdom, and whereby he doth approve or disapprove: Yet we must not measure his Understanding by our own, or think it to be of so gross a Temper as a Created mind; that he hath *Eyes of flesh*, or *sees* or knows *as Man sees**. We can no more measure his Knowledge by ours, than we can measure his Essence by our Essence: As he hath an incomprehensible Essence, to which ours is but as a drop of a Bucket; so he hath an incomprehensible Knowledge, to which ours it but as a grain of Dust, or meer Darkness: *His thoughts are above our thoughts, as the Heavens are above the Earth.*

* Job 10. 4.

The Knowledge of God is variously *divided* by the *Schools*, and acknowledg'd by all Divines.

1. A Knowledge *visionis & simplicis intelligentiæ*; the one we may call *Sight*, the other an *Understanding*; the one refers to sense, the other to the mind.

1. *A Knowledge of Vision or Sight*; Thus God knows himself and all things that really were, are, or shall be in time; all those things which he hath Decreed to be, tho' they are not yet actually sprung up in the World, but lie couchant in their Causes.

2. *A Knowledge of Intelligence, or simple Understanding*; the object of this is not things that are in being, or that shall by any Decree of God ever be existent in the World; but such things as are possible to be wrought by the Power of God, tho' they shall never in the least peep up into Being, but lie for ever wrapt up in Darkness and Nothing*. This also is a necessary knowledge to be allowed to God, because the object of this Knowledge is necessary. The possibility of more Creatures than ever were or shall be, is a conclusion that hath a necessary Truth in it; as it is necessary that the Power of God can produce more Creatures, tho' it be not necessary that it should produce more Creatures; so it is necessary that whatsoever the Power of God *can* work, is possible to be. And as God knows this possibility so he knows all the objects that are thus possible; and herein doth much consist the Infiniteness of his knowledge, as shall be shewn presently.

* *Suarez* de Deo lib. 3. cap. 4. p. 230.

These *two kinds* of Knowledge differ: That of *Vision*, is of things which God hath Decreed to be, tho' they are not yet. That of *Intelligence*, is of things which never shall be; yet they may be, or are possible to be, if God please to Will and Order their Being; one respects things that shall be; the other, things that may be, and are not repugnant to the nature of God to be: The Knowledge of *Vision* follows the Act of God's Will, and supposeth an act of God's Will before, Decreeing things to be. (If we could suppose any *first* or *second* in God's Decree, we might say God knew them as *possible* before he decreed them; he knew them as *future* because he Decreed them.) For without the Will of God Decreeing a thing to come to pass, God cannot know that it will infallibly come to pass. But the Knowledge of Intelligence stands without any Act of his Will, in order to the being of those things he knows; he knows possible things only in his Power; he knows other things both in his Power, as able to effect them; and in his Will, as determining the Being of them; such knowledge we must grant to be in God, for there is such a kind of knowledge in Man; for Man doth not only know and see what is before his Eyes in this World, but he may have a conception of many more Worlds, and many more Creatures, which he knows are possible to the Power of God.

2. Secondly, There is a *speculative and practical knowledge in God.*

1. A *speculative knowledge* is, when the truth of a thing is known without a respect to any working or practical operation. The knowledge of things possible is in God only speculative, * and some say God's knowledge of himself, is only speculative, because there is nothing for God to work in himself: And tho' he knows himself, yet this knowledge of himself doth not terminate there, but flowers into a love of himself, and delight in himself; yet this love of himself, and delight in himself, is not enough to make it a practical knowledge, because it is natural, and naturally and necessarily flows from the knowledge of himself and his own Goodness: He cannot but love himself, and delight in himself, upon the knowledge of himself. But that which is properly practice, is where there is a dominion over the action, and it is wrought not naturally and necessarily,

* *Suarez* de Deo lib. 3. cap. 4. p. 138.

but

but in a way of Freedom and Counsel. As when we see a beautiful Flower or other thing, there ariseth a delight in the mind; this no Man will call Practice, because it is a natural affection of the Will, arising from the vertue of the object, without any consideration of the Understanding in a practical manner by counselling, commanding, *&c.*

2. A *Practical knowledge*, which tends to operation and practice, and is the principle of working about things that are known; as the knowledge an Artificer hath in an Art or Mystery. This knowledge is in God: The knowledge he hath of the things he hath Decreed, is such a kind of knowledge; for it terminates in the act of Creation, which is not a natural and necessary act, as the loving himself, and delighting in himself is, but wholly free: For it was at his liberty whether he would create them or no; this is called *discretion*, Jer. 10. 12. *He hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion.* Such also is his knowledge of the things he hath created, and which are in being, for it terminates in the government of them for his own glorious ends. 'Tis by this knowledge *the depths are broken up, and the clouds drop down their dew* *. This is a knowledge whereby he knows the essence, qualities, and properties of what he creates and governs in order to his own Glory, and the common good of the World over which he resides; so that *speculative* knowledge is God's knowledge of himself and things possible; *practical* knowledge is his knowledge of his creatures and things governable; yet in some sort this practical knowledge is not only of things that are made, but of things which are possible, which God might make, tho' he will not: For as he knows that they can be created, so he knows how they are to be created, and how to be governed, tho' he never will create them. This is a practical knowledge: For it is not requisite to constitute a practical knowledge, actually to act, but that the knowledge in it self be referrible to action *.

* Prov. 3. 20.

* *Suarez* de Deo l. 3. cap. 4. p. 140.

3. There is a *knowledge of approbation, as well as apprehension.* This the *Scripture* often mentions: Words of understanding are used to signifie the acts of affection. This knowledge adds to the simple act of the understanding, the complacency and pleasure of the will; and is improperly knowledge, because it belongs to the Will, and not to the Understanding; only it is radically in the understanding, because affection implies knowledge; Men cannot approve of that which they are ignorant of. Thus knowledge is taken, *Amos* 3. 2. *You only have I known of all the families of the Earth.* And 2 Tim. 2. 19. *The Lord knows who are his*, that is, he loves them, he doth not only know them, but acknowledge them for his own: It notes not only an exact understanding, but a special care of them; and so is that to be understood, *Gen.* 1. *God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good:* That is, he *saw* it with an eye of approbation, as well as apprehension. This is grounded upon God's knowledge of *Vision*, his sight of his Creatures; for God doth not love or delight in any thing but what is actually in being, or what he hath decreed to bring into being. On the contrary also, when God doth not approve, he is said not to know, *Mat.* 25. 12. *I know you not:* And Mat. 7. 23. *I never knew you*: He doth not approve of their Works: 'tis not an ignorance of Understanding, but an ignorance of Will; for whiles he saith he never knew them, he testifies that he did know them, in rendring the reason of his disapproving them, because he knows all their Works: So he knows them, and doth not know them, in a different manner: He knows them so as to *understand* them; but he doth not know them so as to *love* them.

We must then ascribe an *universal* knowledge to God. If we deny him a speculative knowledge, or knowledge of intelligence, we destroy his Deity, we make him ignorant of his own Power: If we deny him practical knowledge, we deny our selves to be his Creatures: For as his creatures, we are the fruits of this his discretion discovered in Creation: If we deny his knowledge of *Vision*, we deny his governing Dominion. How can he exercise a sovereign and Uncontroulable Dominion, that is ignorant of the nature and qualities of the things he is to govern? If he had not Knowledge he could make no Revelation; he that knows not, cannot dictate; we could then have no Scripture. To deny God knowledge, is to dash out the Scripture, and demolish the Deity.

God is describ'd in *Zech.* 3. 9. *With seven eyes*, to shew his perfect Knowledge of all things, all occurrences in the World; and the *Cherubims*, or whatsoever is meant by the *Wings*, are described to be *full of eyes*, both *before* and *behind* *, round about them; much more is God all Eye, all Ear, all Understanding. The Sun is a natural Image of God if the Sun had an Eye, it would see; if it had an Understanding, it would know all visible things; it would see what it shines upon, and understand what it influenceth in the most obscure Powels of the Earth. Doth God excel his Creature the Sun in Excellency and Beauty, and not in Light and Understanding? Certainly more than the Sun excels an Atome or grain of Dust.

* Ezek. 1. 18.

We may yet make some representation of this Knowledge of God by a lower thing, a Picture, which seems to look upon every one, tho' there be never so great a multitude in the Room where it hangs; no Man can cast his Eye upon it, but it seems to behold him in particular, and so exactly as if there were none but him, upon whom the eye of it were fixt; and every Man finds the same cast of it; shall Art frame a thing of that nature, and shall not the God of Art and all Knowledge be much more in reality than that is in imagination? Shall not God have a far greater capacity to behold every thing in the World, which is infinitely less to him than a wide Room to Picture?

II. The second thing, *What God knows?* How far his understanding reaches?

1. *God knows himself, and only knows himself.* This is the first and original knowledge, wherein he excels all Creatures: No Man doth exactly know himself; much less doth he understand the full nature of a Spirit; much less still the Nature and Perfections of God; for what proportion can there be between a finite faculty and an infinite object? Herein consists the infiniteness of God's Knowledge, that he knows his own Essence, that he knows that which is unknowable to any else. It doth not so much consist in knowing the Creature which he hath made, as in knowing himself who was never made. 'Tis not so much infinite, because he knows all things which are in the World, or that shall be; or things that he can make, because the number of them is finite; but because he hath a perfect and comprehensive knowledge of his own infinite Perfections *. Tho' it be said that Angels *see his Face, Matth.* 18. 10. that sight notes rather their immediate Attendance, than their exact Knowledge; they see some signs of his Presence and Majesty, more illustrious and express than ever appear'd to Man in this Life; but the Essence of God is invisible to them, hid from them in the secret place of Eternity; none knows God but himself, 1 *Cor.* 2. 11. *What Man knows the things of a Man save the spirit of a Man? So the things of God knows no Man but the spirit of God; the spirit of God searches the deep things of God*; searcheth, that is, exactly knows, thoroughly understands, as those who have their eyes in every Chink and Crevice, to see

* *Voulin.*

what lies hid there; the word *ſearch*, notes not an Enquiry, but an exact Knowledge, ſuch as Men have of things upon a diligent ſcrutiny; as when God is ſaid to ſearch the Heart and the Reins, it doth not ſignifie a precedent Ignorance, but an exact Knowledge of the moſt intimate Corners of the Hearts of Men. As the Conceptions of Men are unknown to any but themſelves; ſo the Depths of the Divine Eſſence, Perfections and Decrees, are unknown to any but to God himſelf; he only knows what he is, and what he knows, what he can do, and what he hath Decreed to do.

1. For firſt, *If God did not know himſelf, he would not be perfect.* 'Tis the Perfection of a Creature to know it ſelf, much more a Perfection belonging to God. If God did not comprehend himſelf, he would want an Infinite Perfection, and ſo would ceaſe to be God, in being defective in that which intellectual Creatures in ſome meaſure poſſeſs. As God is the moſt perfect Being, ſo he muſt have the moſt perfect Underſtanding: If he did not underſtand himſelf, he would be under the greateſt Ignorance, becauſe he would be ignorant of the moſt excellent Object. Ignorance is the Imperfection of the Underſtanding; and Ignorance of ones ſelf is a greater Imperfection than ignorance of things without. If God ſhould know all things without himſelf, and not know himſelf, he would not have the moſt perfect Knowledge, becauſe he would not have the knowledge of the beſt of Objects.

2. *Without the Knowledge of himſelf, he could not be bleſſed.* Nothing can have any complacency in it ſelf, without the Knowledge of it ſelf. Nothing can in a rational manner enjoy it ſelf, without underſtanding it ſelf. The Bleſſedneſs of God conſiſts not in the knowledge of any thing without him, but in the knowledge of himſelf and his own Excellency, as the Principle of all things: If therefore he did not perfectly know himſelf and his own happineſs, he could not enjoy a happineſs; for to be, and not know to be, is as if a thing were not. *He is God bleſſed for ever*, Rom. 9. 5. And therefore for ever had a Knowledge of himſelf.

3. *Without the Knowledge of himſelf, he could Create nothing.* For he would be ignorant of his own Power, and his own Ability; and he that doth not know how far his Power extends, could not act: If he did not know himſelf, he could know nothing; and he that knows nothing, can do nothing: He could not know an Effect to be poſſible to him, unleſs he knew his own Power as a cauſe.

4. *Without the Knowledge of himſelf, he could govern nothing.* He could not without the knowledge of his own Holineſs and Righteouſneſs, preſcribe Laws to Men, nor without a knowledge of his own Nature, order himſelf a manner of Worſhip ſuitable to it.

All Worſhip muſt be congruous to the Dignity and Nature of the Object worſhipped; he muſt therefore know his own Authority, whereby Worſhip was to be enacted; his own Excellency, to which Worſhip was to be ſuited; his own Glory, to which Worſhip was to be directed. If he did not know himſelf, he did not know what to puniſh, becauſe he would not know what was contrary to himſelf: Not knowing himſelf, he would not know what was a Contempt of him, and what an Adoration of him; what was worthy of God, and what was unworthy of him. In fine, he could not know other things, unleſs he knew himſelf: Unleſs he knew his own Power, he could not know how he created things: Unleſs he knew his own Wiſdom, he could not know the beauty of his Works: Unleſs he knew his own Glory, he could not know the end of his Works: Unleſs he knew his own Holineſs, he could not know what was Evil: And unleſs he knew his own Juſtice, he could not know how to puniſh the Crimes of his offending Creatures. And therefore,

1. *God knows himſelf*, becauſe his Knowledge with his Will is the cauſe of all other things that can fall under his cognizance: He knows himſelf firſt, before he can know any other thing; that is, firſt according to our conceptions; for indeed God knows himſelf and all other things at once; He is the firſt Truth, and therefore is the firſt Object of his own Underſtanding. There is nothing more excellent than himſelf, and therefore nothing more known to him than himſelf. As he is all Knowledge, ſo he hath in himſelf the moſt excellent Object of Knowledge. To underſtand is properly to know ones ſelf. No Object is ſo intelligible to God as God is to himſelf; nor ſo intimately and immediately joyned with his Underſtanding as himſelf: For his Underſtanding is his Eſſence, himſelf.

2. *He knows himſelf by his own Eſſence.* He knows not himſelf and his own Power, by the Effect, becauſe he knows himſelf from Eternity, before there was a World, or any effect of his Power extant. 'Tis not a Knowledge by the Cauſe, for God hath no Cauſe; nor a Knowledge of himſelf by any ſpecies or any thing from without: If it were any thing from without himſelf, that muſt be created or uncreated; if uncreated, it would be God; and ſo we muſt either own many Gods, or own it to be his Eſſence, and ſo not diſtinct from himſelf: If created, then his knowledge of himſelf would depend upon a Creature; he could not then know himſelf from Eternity, but in time, becauſe nothing can be created from Eternity, but in time. God knows not himſelf by any Faculty, for there is no compoſition in God, he is not made up of parts, but is a ſimple Being; ſome therefore have called God, not *intellectus*, Underſtanding, becauſe that ſavours of a Faculty; but *intellectio*, Intellection. God is all act in the knowledge of himſelf, and his knowledge of other things.

3. *God therefore knows himſelf perfectly, comprehenſively.* Nothing in his own Nature is concealed from him, he reflects upon every thing that he is *. There is a poſitive comprehenſion, ſo God doth not comprehend himſelf; for what is comprehended, hath bounds; and what is comprehended by it ſelf, is finite to it ſelf: And there is a negative comprehenſion, God ſo comprehends himſelf; nothing in his own Nature is obſcure to him, unknown by him. For there is as great a perfection in the Underſtanding of God to know, as there is in the Divine Nature to be known. The Underſtanding of God, and the Nature of God, are both Infinite, and ſo equal to one another; his Underſtanding is equal to himſelf; he knows himſelf ſo well, that nothing can be known by him more perfectly, than himſelf is known to himſelf. He knows himſelf in the higheſt manner, becauſe nothing is ſo proportion'd to the Underſtanding of God as himſelf: He knows his own Eſſence, Goodneſs, Power, all his Perfections, Decrees, Intentions, Acts, the infinite capacity of his own Underſtanding, ſo that nothing of himſelf is in the dark to himſelf. And in this reſpect ſome uſe this Expreſſion, that the Infiniteneſs of God is in a manner finite to himſelf, becauſe it is comprehended by himſelf.

* *Magnus.*

Thus God tranſcends all Creatures; thus his Underſtanding is truly Infinite, becauſe nothing but himſelf is an infinite Object for it: What Angels may underſtand of themſelves perfectly, I know not; but no Creature in the World underſtands himſelf: Man underſtands not fully the Excellency and Parts of his own Nature: upon God's Knowledge of himſelf depends the Comfort of his People, and the

Terror

Terror of the Wicked; this is also a clear Argument for his Knowledge of all other things, without himself; he that knows himself, must needs know all other things less than himself, and which were made by himself: When the Knowledge of his own Immensity and Infiniteness is not an Object too difficult for him; the Knowledge of a finite and limited Creature in all his Actions, Thoughts, Circumstances, cannot be too hard for him. Since he knows himself who is Infinite, he cannot but know whatsoever is Finite; this is the Foundation of all his other Knowledge; the Knowledge of every thing present, past, and to come, is far less than the Knowledge of himself. He is more incomprehensible in his own Nature, than all things created, or that can be created, put together can be: If he then have a perfect comprehensive Knowledge of his own Nature, any Knowledge of all other things is less than the Knowledge of himself; this ought to be well considered by us, as the Fountain whence all his other Knowledge flows.

2. Therefore *God knows all other things, whether they be possible, past, present, or future.*

Whether they be things that he can do, but will never do; or whether they be things that he hath done, but are not now; things that are now in being, or things that are not now existing, that lie in the Womb of their proper and immediate Causes *; If his Understanding be Infinite, he then knows all things whatsoever that can be known, else his Understanding would have Bounds, and what hath Limits is not infinite, but finite; if he be ignorant of any one thing that is knowable, that is a bound to him, it comes with an Exception, a *but*, God knows all things *but* this, a Bar is then set to his Knowledge. If there were any thing, any particular Circumstance in the whole Creation, or Non-Creation, and possible to be known by him, and yet were unknown to him, he could not be said to be Omniscient. As he would not be Almighty, if any one thing that implyed not a repugnancy to his Nature, did transscend his Power.

* *Petav. Theol. Dogm. lib. 9. 257.*

1. First, *all things possible.* No Question but God knows what he could create, as well as what he hath created: What he would not create, as well as what he resolved to create; he knew what he would not do, before he willed to do it; this is the next thing which declares the Infiniteness of his Understanding: For as his Power is infinite, and can create innumerable Worlds and Creatures; so is his Knowledge infinite, in knowing innumerable things possible to his Power. Possibles are infinite; that is, there is no end of what God can do, and therefore no end of what God doth know; otherwise his Power would be more Infinite than his Knowledge: If he knew only what is created, there would be an end of his Understanding, because all Creatures may be numbred, but possible things cannot be reckoned up by any Creature: There is the same reason of this in Eternity; when never so many Numbers of Years are run out, there is still more to come, there still wants an end; and when Millions of Worlds are created, there is no more an end of God's Power, than of Eternity: Thus there is no end of his Understanding; that is, his Knowledge is not terminated by any thing.

This the Scripture gives us some accompt of; God knows things that are not, *for he calls things that are not, as if they were*, Rom 4. 17. He calls things that are not, as if they were in Being; what he calls is not unknown to him: If he knows things that are not, he knows things that may never be; as he knows things that shall be, because he Wills them; so he knows things that might be, because he is able to effect them: He knew that the Inhabitants of *Kelah* would betray *David* to *Saul*, if he remained in that place, 1 *Sam.* 23. 11. He knew what they would do upon that occasion, tho' it was never done; as he knew what was in their Power and in their Wills, so he must needs know what is within the compass of his own Power: As he can permit more than he doth permit; so he knows what he can permit, and what upon that Permission would be done by his Creatures; so God knew the possibility of the *Tyrians* Repentance, if they had the same Means, heard the same Truths, and beheld the Miracles which were offer'd to the Ears, and presented to the Eyes of the *Jews*, *Matth.* 11. 21.

This must needs be so, because,

1. *Man knows things that are possible to him, tho' he will never effect them.* A Carpenter knows a House in the model he hath of it in his Head, tho' he never build a House according to that model: A Watchmaker hath the frame of a Watch in his Mind, which he will never work with his Instruments: Man knows what he could do, tho' he never intends to do it. * As the Understanding of Man hath a Vertue, that where it sees one Man, it may imagine Thousands of Men of the same shape, stature, form, parts; yea taller, more vigorous, spritely, intelligent than the Man he sees; because it is possible such a Number may be. Shall not the Understanding of God much more know what he is able to effect, since the Understanding of Man can know what he is never able to produce, yet may be produced by God, *viz.* That he who produced this Man which I see, can produce a Thousand exactly like him? If the Divine Understanding did not know infinite things, but were confin'd to a certain Number; it may be demanded whether God can understand any thing farther than that Number, or whether he cannot? If he can, then he doth actually understand all those things which he hath a Power to understand: Otherwise there would be an increase of God's Knowledge, if it were actually now, and not before, and so he would be more perfect than he was before; if he cannot understand them, then he cannot understand what a human Mind can understand; for our Understandings can multiply Numbers *in infinitum*; and there is no Number so great, but a Man can still add to it: We must suppose the Divine Understanding more excellent in Knowledge. God knows all that a Man can imagine, tho' it never were, nor never shall be; he must needs know whatsoever is in the Power of Man to imagine or think, because God concurs to the support of the Faculty in that Imagination, and tho' it may be replied, an *Atheist* may imagine that there is no God; a Man may imagine that God can Lye, or that he can be destroy'd: doth God know therefore that he is not? Or that he can Lye, or cease to be? No, he knows he cannot! his Knowledge extends to things possible, not to things impossible to himself; he knows it as imaginable by man, not as possible in it self, because 'tis utterly impossible, and repugnant to the Nature of God, since he eminently contains in himself all things possible, past, present, and to come; he cannot know himself without knowing them.

* *Ficin de immort. lib. 2. cap. 10.*

Gamach.

2. *God knowing his own Power, knows whatsoever is in his Power to effect.* If he knows not all things possible, he could not know the extent of his own Power, and so would not know himself, as a Cause sufficient for more things than he hath created: How can he comprehend himself, who comprehends not all effluxes of things possible that may come from him and be wrought by him? How can he know himself as a Cause, if he know not the Objects and Works which he is able to produce *? Since the Power of God extends to numberless things,

* *Ficin: de immort. lib. 2 cap. 10.*

his Knowledge alſo extends to numberleſs objects; as if a Unite could ſee the numbers it could produce, it would ſee Infinite numbers; for a Unite is, as it were, all number. God knowing the fruitfulneſs of his own Vertue, knows a numberleſs multitude of things which he can do, more than have been done, or ſhall be done by him; he therefore knows innumerable Worlds, innumerable Angels, with higher Perfections than any of them which he hath Created, have: So that if the World ſhould laſt many Millions of Years, God knows that he can every Day create another World more capacious than this; and having created an unconceivable Number, he knows he could ſtill create more: So that he beholds infinite Worlds, infinite Numbers of Men and other Creatures in himſelf, infinite kinds of things, infinite Species and Individuals, under thoſe kinds, even as many as he can create, if his Will did order and determine it; for not being ignorant of his own Power, he cannot be ignorant of the Effects wherein it may diſplay and diſcover it ſelf. A comprehenſive Knowledge of his own Power, doth neceſſarily include the Objects of that Power; ſo he knows whatſoever he could effect, and whatſoever he could permit, if he pleaſed to do it.

If God could not underſtand more than he hath created, he could not create more than he hath created: For it cannot be conceiv'd how he can create any thing that he is ignorant of; what he doth not know, he cannot do: He muſt know alſo the extent of his own goodneſs, and how far any thing is capable to partake of it: ſo much therefore as any detract from the Knowledge of God, they detract from his Power.

3. 'Tis further evident that God knows all poſſible things, *becauſe he knew thoſe things which he has created, before they were created*, when they were yet in a poſſibility. If God knew things before they were created, he knew them when they were in a poſſibility, and not in actual reality. 'Tis abſurd to imagine that his Underſtanding did lacquey after the Creatures, and draw knowledge from them after they were created. 'Tis abſurd to think that God did create, before he knew what he could or would create. If he knew thoſe things he did create when they were poſſible, he muſt know all things which he can create, and therefore all things that are poſſible.

To conclude this, We muſt conſider that this Knowledge is of another kind than his knowledge of things that are or ſhall be. He ſees poſſible things as poſſible, not as things that ever are or ſhall be. If he ſaw them as exiſting or future, and they ſhall never be, this knowledge would be falſe, there would be a deceit in it, which cannot be. He knows thoſe things not in themſelves, becauſe they are not, nor in their cauſes becauſe they ſhall never be: he knows them in his own Power, not in his Will: He underſtands them as able to produce them, not as willing to effect them. Things poſſible he knows only in his Power, things future he knows both in his Power and his Will, as he is both able and determin'd in his own good pleaſure to give being to them. Thoſe that ſhall never come to paſs, he knows only in himſelf, as a ſufficient cauſe; thoſe things that ſhall come into being, he knows in himſelf as the efficient cauſe, and alſo in their immediate ſecond cauſes.

This ſhould teach us to ſpend our thoughts in the admirations of the excellency of God, and the divine Knowledge; his Underſtanding is infinite.

2. *God knows all things paſt.* This is an argument uſed by God himſelf to elevate his Excellency above all the commonly adored Idols, Iſa. 41. 22. *Let them ſhew the former things, what they be, that we may conſider them, and know the latter end of them.* He knows them as if they were now preſent, and not paſt: for indeed in his Eternity there is nothing paſt or future to his knowledge. This is called remembrance in Scripture, as when God remembred *Rachel*'s Prayer for a Child, *Gen.* 30 22. and he is ſaid to put *tears* into his *bottle*, and *write* them *in his Book* of Accompts, which ſignifies the exact and unerring knowledge in God of the minute circumſtances paſt in the World; and this knowledge is called a *book of remembrance*, Mal. 3. 16. ſignifying the perpetual preſence of things paſt, before him. There are two elegant expreſſions ſignifying the certainty and perpetuity of God's knowledge of ſins paſt. Job 14. 17. *My tranſgreſſion is ſealed up in a bag, and thou ſoweſt up my iniquity.* A Metaphor taken from Men that put up in a Bag the Money they would charily keep, tye the Bag, ſow up the holes, and bind it hard that nothing may fall out; or a Veſſel wherein they reſerve Liquors, and daub it with Pitch and glutinous ſtuff, that nothing may leak out, but be ſafely kept till the time of uſe. Or elſe, as ſome think, from the Bags *Attorneys* carry with them, full of Writings, when they are to manage a Cauſe againſt a Perſon. Thus we find God often in Scripture calling to Mens minds their paſt actions, upbraiding them with their ingratitude, wherein he teſtifies his remembrance of his own paſt benefits, and their Crimes. His knowledge in this regard hath ſomething of infinity in it, ſince tho' the ſins of all Men that have been in the World are finite in regard of number, yet when the ſins of one Man in thoughts, words, and deeds, are numberleſs in his own account, and perhaps in the account of any creature, the ſins of all the vaſt numbers of Men that have been, or ſhall be, are much more numberleſs, it cannot be leſs than infinite knowledge that can make a collection of them, and take a ſurvey of them all at once.

If paſt things had not been known by God, how could *Moſes* have been acquainted with the Original of things? How could he have declared the former Tranſactions, wherein all Hiſtories are ſilent but the Scripture? How could he know the cauſe of Man's preſent Miſery ſo many Ages after, wherewith all *Philoſophy* was unacquainted? How could he have writ the order of the Creation, the particulars of the ſin of *Adam*, the circumſtances of *Cain*'s Murder, the private Speech of *Lamech* to his Wives, if God had not revealed them? And how could a Revelation be made, if things paſt were forgotten by him? Do we not remember many things done among Men, as well as by our ſelves, and reſerve the forms of divers things in our minds, which riſe as occaſions are preſented to draw them forth? And ſhall not God much more, who hath no cloud of darkneſs upon his Underſtanding? A Man that makes a curious Picture, hath the form of it in his mind before he made it; and if the Fire burn it; the form of it in his mind is not deſtroyed by the Fire, but retained in it. God's Memory is no leſs perfect than his Underſtanding: If he did not know things paſt, he could not be a righteous Governour, or exerciſe any judicial act in a righteous manner; he could not diſpenſe Rewards and Puniſhments according to his promiſes and threatnings, if things that were paſt could be forgotten by him; he could not *require* that which is *paſt* *, if he *did not remember that which is paſt.*

* Eccleſ. 3. 15.

And tho' God be ſaid to *forget* in Scripture, and *not to know* his People, and his People pray to him to *remember them*, as if he had *forgotten them* *: This is improperly aſcrib'd to God *. As God is ſaid to repent, when he changes things according to his Counſel beyond the expectation of Men; ſo he is ſaid to forget, when he deferrs the making good his Promiſe to the Godly, or his Threatnings to the Wicked;

* Pſal. 119 49.
* Brad-ward.

Wicked; this is not a defect of Memory belonging to his mind, but an act of his Will: When he is said to remember his Covenant, 'tis to Will Grace according to his Covenant; when he is said to forget his Covenant, 'tis to intercept the influences of it, whereby to punish the Sin of his People; and when he is said not to know his People, 'tis not an absolute forgetfulness of them, but withdrawing from them the Testimonies of his Kindness, and clouding the Signs of his Favour; so God in Pardoning is said to forget Sin, not that he ceaseth to know it, but ceaseth to punish it: 'Tis not to be meant of a simple forgetfulness, or a lapse of his Memory, but of a Judicial Forgetfulness; so when his People in Scripture Pray, Lord *Remember thy Word* unto thy Servant; no more is to be understood, but Lord fulfil thy Word and Promise to thy Servant.

3. *He knows things Present.* Heb. 4. 13. *All things are naked and opened unto the Eyes of him with whom we have to do*; This is grounded upon the Knowledge of himself; 'tis not so difficult to know all Creatures exactly, as to know himself, because they are finite, but himself is infinite; he knows his own Power, and therefore every thing through which his Omnipotence is diffus'd, all the acts and objects of it; not the least thing that is the Birth of his Power, can be conceal'd from him; he knows his own Goodness, and therefore every object upon which the warm beams of his Goodness strike; he therefore knows distinctly the properties of every Creature, because every Property in them is a Ray of his Goodness; he is not only the efficient, but the exemplary cause; therefore as he knows all that his Power hath wrought, as he is the efficient, so he knows them in himself as the pattern: As a Carpenter can give an account of every part and passage in a House he hath built, by consulting the Model in his own mind, whereby he built it. *He looked upon all things after he had made them, and pronounc'd them good*, Gen. 1. 3. full of a natural goodness he had endowed them with; he did not ignorantly pronounce them so, and call them good, whether he knew them or not; and therefore he knows them in particular, as he knew them all in their first Presence. Is there any reason he should be ignorant of every thing now present in the World, or that any thing that derives an Existence from him as a free Cause, should be concealed from him? If he did not know things present in their Particularities, many things would be known by Man, yea by Beasts, which the infinite God were ignorant of; and if he did not know all things present, but only some; 'tis possible for the most Blessed God to be deceived and be miserable: Ignorance is a Calamity to the Understanding: He could not prescribe Laws to his Creatures, unless he knew their Natures, to which those Laws were to be suted; no, not natural Ordinances to the Sun, Moon, and Heavenly Bodies, and inanimate Creatures, unless he knew the Vigour and Vertue in them, to execute those Ordinances; for to prescribe Laws above the nature of things, is inconsistent with the Wisdom of Government; he must know how far they were able to obey; whether the Laws were suted to their Ability; And for his rational Creatures, Whether the Punishments annext to the Law, were proper, and suted to the Transgression of the Creature.

1. First, *He knows all Creatures from the highest to the lowest, the least as well as the greatest.* He knows
* Job 38. 41. the *Ravens* and their *young ones**; *the Drops of Rain and Dew which he hath begotten**, every Bird in the
* Job 38. 29. Air, as well as any Man doth what he hath in a Cage at home, *Psal.* 50. 11. *I know all the Fowls in the Mountains, and the wild Beasts in the Field*; which some read *creeping things. The Clouds are numbred in his Wisdom*, Job 28. 37. every Worm in the Earth, every drop of Rain that falls upon the Ground, the Flakes of Snow, and the Knots of Hail, the Sands upon the Sea-shoar, the Hairs upon the Head; 'tis no more absurd to imagine that God knows them, than that God made them; they are all the Effects of his Power, as well as the Stars, which he calls by their Names, as well as the most glorious Angel and blessed Spirit; he knows them as well as if there were none but them in particular for him to know; the least things were framed by his Art as well as the greatest; the least things partake of his Goodness as well as the greatest; he knows his own Arts, and his own Goodness, and therefore all the Stamps and Impressions of them upon all his Creatures; he knows the immediate Causes of the least, and therefore the Effects of those Causes. Since his Knowledge is infinite, it must extend to those things which are at the greatest Distance from him, to those which approach neareſt to not Being; since he did not want Power to create, he cannot want Understanding to know every thing he hath created, the Dispositions, Qualities, and Vertues of the minutest Creature.

Nor is the *Understanding of God* embas'd, and suffers a Diminution by the *Knowledge* of the vilest and most inconsiderable things: Is it not an Imperfection to be ignorant of the Nature of any thing? and can God have such a defect in his most perfect Understanding? Is the Understanding of Man of an impurer Alloy by knowing the Nature of the rankest Poysons; by understanding a Fly, or a small Insect, or by considering the Deformity of a Toad? Is it not generally counted a note of a dignified Mind, to be able to Discourse of the Nature of them? Was *Solomon*, who knew all from the *Cedar* to the *Hyssop*, debas'd by so Rich a Present of Wisdom from his Creator? Is any Glass defil'd by presenting a deformed Image? Is there any thing more vile than the *Imaginations, which are only Evil, and continually*? doth not the Mind of Man descend to the Mud of the Earth, play the Adulterer or Idolater with mean Objects, suck in the most unclean things? Yet God knows these in all their Circumstances, in every Appearance, inside and outside. Is there any thing viler than some Thoughts of Men? than some Actions of Men? their unclean Beds, and Gluttonous Vomiting, and *Luciferian* Pride? Yet do not these fall under the Eye of God, in all their Nakedness? The *Second Person*'s taking Human Nature, tho' it obscur'd, yet it did not disparage the Deity; or bring any Disgrace to it: Is Gold the worse for being formed into the Image of a Fly? doth it not still retain the nobleness of the Metal? When Men are despis'd for descending to the Knowledge of mean and vile things, 'tis because they neglect the Knowledge of the greater; and Sin in their Inquiries after lesser things, with a neglect of that which concerns more the Honour of God, and the Happiness of themselves; to be ambitious of such a Knowledge, and careless of that of more Concern, is criminal and contemptible. But God knows the greatest as well as the least; mean things are not known by him to exclude the Knowledge of the greater; nor are vile things govern'd by him to exclude the Order of the better. The Deformity of Objects known by God doth not deform him, nor defile him; he doth not view them without himself, but within himself, wherein all things in their *Ideas* are Beautiful and Comely: Our Knowledge of a deformed thing, is not a deforming of our Understanding, but is beautiful in the Knowledge, tho' it be not in the Object; nor is there any fear that the Understanding of God should become material by knowing material things, any more than our Understandings lose their Spirituality by knowing

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the Nature of Bodies; 'tis to be obſerved therefore, that only thoſe Senſes of Men, as ſeeing, hearing, ſmelling, which have thoſe Qualities for their Objects that come neareſt the Nature of ſpiritual things, as Light, Sounds, fragrant Odours, are aſcrib'd to God in Scripture; not Touching or Taſting, which are Senſes that are not exercis'd without a more immediate Commerce with groſs Matter; and the Reaſon may be, becauſe we ſhould have no groſs Thoughts of God, as if he were a Body, and made of Matter, like the things he knows.

2. As he knows all Creatures, ſo God knows *all the Actions of Creatures.* He counts in particular all the Ways of Men. *Doth he not ſee all my Ways, and count all my Steps?* Job 31. 4. He *tells* their *Wandrings*, as if one by one, *Pſal.* 56. 8. *His Eyes are upon all the Ways of Man, and he ſees all his Goings*, Job 34. 21. A Metaphor taken from Men, when they look wiſtly, with fixed Eyes upon a thing, to view it in every Circumſtance, whence it comes, whither it goes, to obſerve every little Motion of it. God's Eye is not a wandring, but a fixed Eye; and the Ways of Man are not only *before his Eyes*, but he doth exactly *ponder them* *; as one that will not be ignorant of the leaſt Mite in them, but weigh and examine them by the Standard of his Law; he may as well know the Motions of our Members, as the Hairs of our Heads; the ſmalleſt Actions before they be, whether Civil, Natural, or Religious, fall under his Cognizance; what meaner than a Man carrying a *Pitcher?* yet our Saviour foretells it, *Luke* 22. 10. God knows not only what Men do, but what they would have done, had he not reſtrained them; what *Abimilech* would have done to *Sarah*, had not God put a Bar in his way, *Gen.* 20. 6. What a Man that is taken away in his Youth, would have done, had he lived to a riper Age; yea he knows the moſt ſecret Words as well as Actions; the Words ſpoken by the *King of Iſrael* in his *Bed-Chamber*, were revealed to *Eliſha*, 2 Kings 6. 12. And indeed how can any Action of Man be conceal'd from God? Can we view the various Actions of a Heap of Ants, or a Hive of Bees in a Glaſs, without turning our Eyes; and ſhall not God behold the Actions of all Men in the World, which are leſs than Bees or Ants in his Sight, and more viſible to him than an Ant-Hill or Bee-Hive can be to the acuteſt Eye of Man?

* Prov. 5. 21.

3. As God knows all the Actions of Creatures, ſo *he knows all the Thoughts of Creatures.* The Thoughts are the moſt cloſeted acts of Man, hid from Men and Angels, unleſs diſclos'd by ſome outward Expreſſions; but God deſcends into the depths and abyſſes of the Soul, diſcerns the moſt inward contrivances; nothing is impenetrable to him, the Sun doth not ſo much enlighten the Earth, as God underſtands the Heart; all thoughts are as viſible to him, as Flies and Motes enclos'd in a body of tranſparent Cryſtal; this Man naturally allows to God. Men often ſpeak to God by the motions of their Minds and ſecret Ejaculations, which they would not do, if it were not naturally implanted in them, that God knows all their inward motions; the Scripture is plain and poſitive in this, *He tries the Heart and the Reins*, Pſal. 7. 9. as men by the uſe of Fire diſcern the droſſie and purer parts of Metals: The ſecret intentions and aims, the moſt lurking affections ſeated in the Reins; he knows that which no Man, no Angel is able to know; which a Man himſelf knows not, nor makes any particular reflection upon; yea, *he weighs the Spirit*, Prov. 16. 2. he exactly numbers all the devices and inclinations of men, as men do every Piece of Coin they tell out of a heap. *He diſcerns the thoughts and intents of the heart*, Heb. 4. 12. all that is in the Mind, all that is in the Affections, every ſtirring and purpoſe; ſo that not one *thought* can be with-held *from him*, Job 42. 2. yea, *Hell and Deſtruction are before him, much more then the Hearts of the Children of men*, Prov. 15. 11. he works all things in the Bowels of the Earth, and brings forth all things out of that Treaſure, ſay ſome: But more naturally, God knows the whole ſtate of the dead, all the receptacles and Graves of their Bodies, all the Bodies of men conſumed by the Earth, or devoured by living Creatures; things that ſeem to be out of all Being: He knows the Thoughts of the Devils and Damned Creatures, whom he hath caſt out of his care for ever, into the Arms of his Juſtice, never more to caſt a delightful glance towards them; not a Secret in any Soul in Hell, (which he hath no need to know, becauſe he ſhall not judge them by any of the Thoughts they now have, ſince they were condemned to Puniſhment) is hid from him; much more is he acquainted with the Thoughts of living men, the Counſels of whoſe hearts are yet to be manifeſted, in order to their Tryal and Cenſure; yea, he knows them before they ſpring up into actual being, *Pſal.* 139. 2. *Thou underſtandeſt my Thoughts afar off*; *my Thoughts*, that is, every Thought; tho' innumerable Thoughts paſs through me in a day, and that in the Source and Fountain, when it is yet in the Womb, before it is our Thought; if he knows them before their Exiſtence, before they can properly be called ours; much more doth he know them when they actually ſpring up in us; he knows the tendency of them, where the Bird will light when it is in its flight; he knows them exactly, he is therefore called a *diſcerner* or criticizer *of the Heart*, Heb. 4. 12. As a Critick diſcerns every Letter, Point, and Stop; he is more intimate with us than our Souls with our Bodies, and hath more the Poſſeſſion of us than we have of our ſelves; he knows them by an inſpection into the heart, not by the Mediation of ſecond cauſes, by the looks or geſtures of men, as men may diſcern the Thoughts of one another.

1. *God diſcerns all good motions of the Mind and Will.* Theſe he puts into men, and needs muſt God know his own act; he knew the Son of *Jeroboam to have ſome good thing in him towards the Lord God of Iſrael*, 1 Kings 14. 13. and the Integrity of *David* and *Hezekiah*; the freeſt motions of the Will and Affections to him, *Lord, thou knoweſt that I love thee*, ſaith *Peter*, *John* 21. 17. Love can be no more reſtrain'd, than the Will it ſelf can. A man may make another to grieve and deſire, but none can force another to Love.

2. *God diſcerns all the evil motions of the Mind and Will. Every imagination of the heart*, Gen 6. 5. the vanity of *mens thoughts*, Pſal. 94. 11. their inward darkneſs and diſguiſes: No wonder that God who faſhion'd the heart, ſhould underſtand the motions of it, *Pſal.* 33. 13. 15. *He looks from Heaven, and beholds all the Children of men: He faſhioneth their hearts alike, and conſiders all their Works.* Doth any man make a Watch, and yet be ignorant of its motion? Did God fling away the Key to this ſecret Cabinet, when he framed it, and put off the power of unlocking it when he pleaſed? He did not ſurely frame it in ſuch a poſture, as that any thing in it ſhould be hid from his Eye; he did not faſhion it to be Privileged from his Government; which would follow, if he were ignorant of what was Minted and Coined in it.

He could not be a Judge to puniſh men, if the inward frames and principles of mens Actions were concealed from him; an outward Action may glitter to an outward Eye, yet the ſecret ſpring be a deſire of Applauſe, and not the Fear and Love of God.

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If the inward frames of the heart did lie covered from him in the ſecret receſſes of the heart, thoſe plauſible Acts, which in regard of their Principles would merit a Puniſhment, would meet with a Reward; and God ſhould beſtow Happineſs where he had denounced Miſery. As without the knowledge of what is juſt, he could not be a Wiſe Law-giver; ſo without the Knowledge of what is inwardly committed, he could not be a Righteous Judge; Acts that are rotten in the ſpring, might be judged good by the fair colour and appearance.

This is the glory of God at the laſt day, *to manifeſt the ſecrets of all hearts*, 1 Cor. 4. 5. And the Prophet *Jeremiah* links the Power of Judging, and the Prerogative of Trying the Hearts, together, *Jer.* 11. 20. *But thou, O Lord of Hoſts, that judgeſt Righteouſly, that tryeſt the Reins and the Heart.* And *Jer.* 17. 10. *I the Lord ſearch the Heart, I try the Reins*; to what end? even to *give every man according to his way, and according to the fruit of his doings.* And indeed his binding up the whole Law with that Command of not coveting, evidenceth that he will Judge men by the inward affections and frames of their hearts. Again, God ſuſtains the mind of man in every act of thinking: In him we have not only the Principle of Life, but every motion, the motion of our Minds as well as of our Members: *In him we live and move*, &c. *Acts* 17. 28. Since he ſupports the vigour of the faculty in every act, can he be ignorant of thoſe acts which ſpring from the faculty, to which he doth at that inſtant communicate Power and Ability?

Now this knowledge of the Thoughts of men is,

1. *An incommunicable Property, belonging only to the Divine Underſtanding.* Creatures indeed may know the thoughts of others by Divine Revelation, but not by themſelves; no Creature hath a Key immediately to open the minds of Men, and ſee all that lodgeth there; no Creature can Fathom the heart by the Line of Created Knowledge *. *Devils* may have a conjectural Knowledge, and may gueſs at them by the acquaintance they have with the Diſpoſition and Conſtitution of men, and the Images they behold in their Fancies; and by ſome marks which an inward Imagination may ſtamp upon the Brain, Blood, Animal Spirits, Face, *&c.* But the knowing the Thoughts meerly as Thought, without any Impreſſion by it, is a Royalty God appropriates to himſelf, as the main Secret of his Government, and a Perfection declarative of his Deity, as much as any elſe, *Jer.* 17. 9, 10. *The heart* of man *is deſperately wicked, who can know it?* Yes, there is one, and but one, *I the Lord ſearch the Heart, I try the Reins. Man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks upon the Heart*, 1 Sam. 16. 7. where God is diſtinguiſh'd by this Perfection from all men whatſoever; others may know by Revelation, as *Eliſha* did, what was in *Gehazi*'s heart, 2 Kings 5. 26. But God knows a man more than any man knows himſelf: What Perſon upon Earth underſtands the windings and turnings of his own heart, what reſerves it will have, what contrivances, what inclinations? All which God knows exactly.

* *Daille* Serm. Part 1. p. 230.

2. *God acquires no new Knowledge of the thoughts and heart, by the Diſcovery of them in the Actions.* He would then be but equal in this part of Knowledge to his Creature; no Man or Angel but may thus arrive to the Knowledge of them, God were then excluded from an abſolute Dominion over the prime Work of his lower Creation, he would have made a Creature ſuperiour in this reſpect to himſelf, upon whoſe Will to diſcover, his knowledge of their inward Intentions ſhould depend; and therefore when God is ſaid to ſearch the Heart, we muſt not underſtand it as if God were ignorant before, and was fain to make an exact ſcrutiny and enquiry, before he attained what he deſired to know; but God condeſcends to our Capacity in the expreſſion of his own Knowledge, ſignifying that his Knowledge is as compleat as any man's Knowledge can be, of the deſigns of others, after he hath ſifted them by a ſtrict and through Examination, and wrung out a Diſcovery of their Intentions; that he knows them as perfectly as if he had put them upon the Rack, and forced them to make a Diſcovery of their ſecret Plottings. Nor muſt we underſtand that in *Gen.* 22. 12. where God ſaith, after *Abraham* had ſtretched out his hand to Sacrifice his Son, *Now I know that thou feareſt God*, as though God was ignorant of *Abraham*'s gracious diſpoſition to him; did *Abraham*'s drawing his Knife, furniſh God with a new Knowledge? No, God knew *Abraham*'s pious Inclinations before, *Gen.* 18. 19. *I know him that he will command his Children after him*, &c. *Knowledge* is ſometimes taken for Approbation; then the ſenſe will be, now I approve this Fact as a Teſtimony of thy fear of me; ſince thy Affection to thy *Iſaac* is extinguiſh'd by the more powerful flame of Affection to my Will and Command; I now accept thee, and count thee a meet ſubject of my choiceſt Benefits; or *now I know*, that is, I have made known and manifeſted the Faith of *Abraham* to himſelf, [illegible] to the World. Thus *Paul* uſes the word *know*, 1 Cor. 2. 2. *I have determined to know nothing*; that is, to declare and teach nothing, to make known nothing but Chriſt crucified; or elſe, *now I know*, that is, I have an Evidence and Experiment in this Noble Fact, that thou feareſt me. God often condeſcends to our Capacity in ſpeaking of himſelf after the manner of Men, as if he had (as men do) known the inward Affections of others by their outward Actions.

4. *God knows all the Evils and Sins of Creatures.*

1. *God knows all Sin.* This follows upon the other. If he knows all the Actions and Thoughts of Creatures, he knows alſo all the Sinfulneſs in thoſe Acts and Thoughts: This *Zophar* infers from God's puniſhing Men, *Job* 11. 11. *for he knows vain man, he ſees his wickedneſs alſo*; he knows every Man, and ſees the wickedneſs of every Man: *He looks down from Heaven*, and beholds not only the filthy Perſons, but what is filthy in them *, all Nations in the World, and every Man of every Nation, none of their Iniquity is hid from his Eyes; *He ſearches* Jeruſalem *with Candles*, Jer. 16. 17. God follows Sinners ſtep by ſtep, with his Eye, and will not leave ſearching out till he hath taken them; a Metaphor taken from one that ſearches all Chinks with a Candle, that nothing can be hid from him. He knows it diſtinctly in all the parts of it, how an Adulterer riſes out of his Bed to commit Uncleanneſs, what contrivances he had, what ſteps he took, every circumſtance in the whole progreſs; not only evil in the bulk, but every one of the blacker ſpots upon it, which may moſt aggravate it. If he did not know *Evil*, how could he permit it, order it, puniſh it, or pardon it? Doth he permit he knows not what? Order to his own holy ends what he is ignorant of? Puniſh or Pardon that which he is uncertain whether it be a Crime or no? *Cleanſe me*, ſaith *David, from my ſecret faults*, Pſal. 19. 12. ſecret in regard of others, ſecret in regard of himſelf; how could God cleanſe him from that whereof he was ignorant? He knows Sins before they are committed, much more when they are in act; he foreknew the Idolatry and Apoſtacy of the *Jews*, what Gods they would ſerve, in what meaſure they would provoke him, and violate his Covenant *; he knew *Judas* his Sin long before *Judas* his actual exiſtence, fore-telling it in the *Pſalms*; and Chriſt predicts it before he acted it. He ſees Sins future in his own permitting

* Pſal. 14. 2, 3.

* Deut 31. 20, 21.

permitting Will, he ſees Sins preſent in his own ſupporting Act. As he knows things poſſible to himſelf, becauſe he knows his own Power; ſo he knows things practicable by the Creature, becauſe he knows the Power and Principles of the Creature *. This Sentiment of God is naturally writ in the fears of Sinners, upon Lightning, Thunder, or ſome Prodigious Operation of God in the World; what is the Langugae of them, but that he ſees their Deeds, hears their Words, knows the inward ſinfulneſs of their Hearts; that he doth not only behold them as a meer Spectator, but conſiders them as a juſt Judge. And the *Poets* ſay, that the Sins of Men leapt into Heaven, and were writ in Parchments of *Jupiter* *, *Scelus in terram geritur, in cælo ſcribitur: Sin is acted on Earth, and recorded in Heaven.* God indeed doth not behold Evil with the approving Eye, he knows it not with a Practical Knowledge to be the Author of it, but with a *ſpeculative* Knowledge, ſo as to underſtand the ſinfulneſs of it; or a knowledge *ſimplicis intellegentiæ*, of ſimple intelligence, as he permits them, not poſitively wills them; he knows them not with a knowledge of aſſent to them, but diſſent from them. Evil pertains to a diſſenting act of the Mind, and an averſive act of the Will; and what tho' evil formally taken, hath no diſtinct Conception, becauſe it is a privation; a Defect hath no Being, and all knowledge is by the apprehenſion of ſome Being; would not this lie as ſtrongly againſt our own knowledge of Sin? Sin is a privation of the rectitude due to an act; and who doubts Man's Knowledge of Sin? by his knowing the act, he knows the deficiency of the Act; the ſubject of evil hath a Being, and ſo hath a conception in the Mind; that which hath no Being cannot be known by it ſelf, or in it ſelf, but will it follow that it cannot be known by its contrary? as we know darkneſs to be a privation of Light, and folly to be a privation of Wiſdom. God knows all good by himſelf, becauſe he is the Sovereign good; Is it ſtrange then, that he ſhould know all evil, ſince all evil is in ſome natural good?

* *Fotherb.* Atheoma. p. 132.

* Ἐν Διὸς ἐλπὶς Cruſ. Antho. dec. 1. cap. 395. p. 161.

2. *The manner of God's knowing Evil, is not ſo eaſily known.* And indeed, as we cannot comprehend the Eſſence of God, tho' it is eaſily intelligible that there is ſuch a Being; ſo we can as little comprehend the manner of God's Knowledge, tho' we cannot but conclude him to be an intelligent Being, a pure Underſtanding, knowing all things: As God hath a higher manner of Being than his Creatures, ſo he hath another and higher manner of Knowing; and we can as little comprehend the manner of his Knowing, as we can the manner of his Being. But as to the manner.

Doth not God know his own Law, and ſhall he not know how much any action comes ſhort of his Rule? He cannot know his own Rule without knowing all the deviations from it. He knows his own Holineſs, and ſhall he not ſee how any action is contrary to the Holineſs of his own Nature? Doth not God know every thing that is true? and is it not true that this or that is evil? and ſhall God be ignorant of any Truth? How doth God know that he cannot Lye, but by knowing his own Veracity? How doth God know that he cannot Die, but by knowing his own Immutability? and by knowing thoſe, he knows what a Lye is, he knows what Death is; ſo if Sin never had been, if no Creature had ever been, God would have known what Sin was, becauſe he knows his own Holineſs; becauſe he knew what Law was fit to be appointed to his Creatures if he ſhould Create them, and that that Law might be tranſgreſt by them. God knows all good, all goodneſs in himſelf; he therefore hath a foundation in himſelf to know all that comes ſhort of that goodneſs, that is oppoſite to that Holineſs: As if Light were capable of Underſtanding, it would know Darkneſs only by knowing it ſelf; by knowing it ſelf, it would know what is contrary to it ſelf. God knows all Created goodneſs which he hath planted in the Creature; he knows then all defects from this goodneſs, what Perfection an act is deprived of; what is oppoſite to that goodneſs, and that is evil. As we know Sickneſs by Health, Diſcord by Harmony, Blindneſs by Sight, becauſe it is a privation of Sight; whoſoever knows one contrary knows the other; God knows unrighteouſneſs by the *Idea* which he hath of Righteouſneſs, and ſees an act deprived of that rectitude and goodneſs which ought to be in it; he knows evil becauſe he knows the cauſes whence evil proceeds *. A Painter knows a Picture of his own framing, and if any one daſhes any baſe Colour upon it, ſhall not he alſo know that? God by his Hand painted all Creatures, impreſt upon Man the fair ſtamp and colour of his own Image; the Devil defiles it, Man daubs it; Doth not God, that knows his own Work, know how this Piece is become different from his Work? Doth not God, that knows his Creatures goodneſs, which himſelf was the Fountain of, know the change of this goodneſs? Yea, he knew before, that the Devil would ſow Tares where he had ſown Wheat; and therefore that Controverſie of ſome in the Schools, Whether God knew evil by its oppoſition to Created or Uncreated goodneſs, is needleſs. We may ſay God knows Sin as it is oppoſite to Created goodneſs, yet he knows it radically by his own goodneſs, becauſe he knows the goodneſs he hath communicated to the Creature by his own Eſſential goodneſs in himſelf. To conclude this head.

* *Cuſan.* p. 245.

The knowledge of Sin doth not beſpot the Holineſs of God's Nature; for the bare knowledge of a Crime doth not infect the Mind of Man with the Filth and Pollution of that Crime; for then every Man that knows an act of Murder committed by another, would by that bare knowledge be tainted with his Sin; yea and a Judge that condemns a Malefactor, may as well Condemn himſelf, if this were ſo: The Knowledge of Sins infects not the underſtanding that knows them, but only the Will that approves them. 'Tis no diſcredit to us to know evil, in order to paſs a right Judgment upon it; ſo neither can it be to God.

4. *God knows all future things, all things to come.* The differences of time cannot hinder a knowledge of all things by him, who is before time, above time, that is not meaſured by Hours, or Days, or Years; If God did not know them, the hindrance muſt be in himſelf, or in the things themſelves, becauſe they are things to come: Not in himſelf; If it did, it muſt ariſe from ſome impotency in his own nature, and ſo we render him weak; or from an unwillingneſs to know, and ſo we render him lazy, and an Enemy to his own Perfection; for ſimply conſidered, the knowedge of more things is a greater Perfection than the Knowledge of a few; and if the knowledge of a thing includes ſomething of Perfection, the ignorance of a thing includes ſomething of Imperfection: The knowledge of future things is a greater Perfection than not to know them, and is accounted among Men a great part of Wiſdom, which they call fore-ſight; 'tis then ſurely a greater Perfection in God to know future things than to be ignorant of them. And would God rather have ſomething of imperfection than be poſſeſſor of all Perfection? Nor doth the hindrance lie in the things themſelves, becauſe their futurition depends upon his Will; for as nothing can actually be without his Will, giving it exiſtence; ſo nothing can be future without his Will, deſigning the futurity of it.

Certainly

Certainly if God knows all things possible, which he will not do, he must know all things future, which he is not only able, but resolved to do, or resolved to permit. God's perfect knowledge of himself, that is, of his own Infinite Power and concluding Will, necessarily includes a *fore-knowledge* of what he is able to do, and what he will do.

Again, if God doth not know future things, there was a time when God was ignorant of most things in the World; for before the Deluge he was more ignorant than after; the more things were done in the World, the more Knowledge did accrue to God, and so the more Perfection; then the Understanding of God was not perfect from Eternity, but in Time; nay, is not perfect yet, if he be ignorant of those things which are still to come to pass; he must tarry for a Perfection, he wants till those futurities come to be in act, till those things which are to come, cease to be future, and begin to be present. Either God knows them, or desires to know them; if he desires to know them, and doth not, there is something wanting to him; all desire speaks an absence of the Object desired, and a sentiment of want in the Person desiring: If he doth not desire to know them, nay, if he doth not actually know them, it destroys all Providence, all his Government of Affairs; for his Providence hath a concatenation of means with a prospect of something that is future: As in *Joseph*'s Case, who was put into the Pit, and sold to the *Egyptians* in order to his future Advancement, and the preservation both of his Father and his envious Brethren. If God did not know all the future Inclinations and Actions of Men, something might have been done by the Will of *Potiphar*, or by the Free-will of *Pharaoh*, whereby *Joseph* might have been cut short of his Advancement, and so God have been interrupted in the track and method of his designed Providences. He that hath decreed to Govern Man for that end he hath design'd him, knows all the means before, whereby he will govern him; and therefore hath a distinct and certain knowledge of all things; for a confused knowledge is an imperfection in Government; 'tis in this the Infiniteness of his Understanding is more seen than in knowing things past or present; his Eyes are as a *Flame of fire*, Rev. 1. 14. in regard of the penetrating Vertue of them into things impenetrable by any else.

To make it further appear, *That God knows all things future*, Consider;

1. First, *Every thing which is the Object of God's Knowledge without himself, was once only future.* There was a moment when nothing was in Being but himself; he knew nothing actually past, because nothing was past; nothing actually present, because nothing had any existence but himself, therefore only what was future; and why not every thing that is future now, as well as only what was future, and to come to pass just at the beginning of the Creation? God indeed knows every thing as present, but the things themselves known by him were not present, but future; the whole Creation was once future, or else it was from Eternity; if it begun in time, it was once future in it self, else it could never have begun to be: Did not God know what would be created by him, before it was created by him*? Did he create he knew not what, and knew not before, what he should create? Was he ignorant before he acted, and in his acting, what his Operation would tend to? Or did he not know the Nature of things, and the Ends of them, till he had produced them, and saw them in being? Creatures then did not arise from his Knowledge, but his Knowledge from them; he did not then Will that his Creatures should be, or he had then Willed what he knew not, and knew not what he Willed; they therefore must be known before they were made, and not known because they were made; he knew them to make them, and he did not make them to know them. By the same reason he knew what Creatures should be before they were, he knows still what Creatures shall be before they are *; for all things that are, were in God, not really in their own Nature, but in him as a cause; so the Earth and Heavens were in him, as a Model is in the Mind of a Workman, which is in his Mind and Soul, before it be brought forth into outward act. *Bradwar. lib. 3 cap. 14.*

* *Petavius* changed.

2. *The Predictions of future things evidence this.* There is not a Prophecy of any thing to come, but is a spark of his fore-knowledge, and bears Witness to the Truth of this Assertion, in the punctual accomplishment of it; this is a thing challenged by God, as his own peculiar, wherein he surmounts all the *Idols* that Man's Inventions have Goded in the World, Isa. 41. 21, 22. *Let them bring forth* (speaking of the Idols) *and shew us what shall happen, or declare us things to come: Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that you are Gods.* Such a fore-knowledge of things to come, is here ascribed to God by God himself, as a distinction of him from all false Gods; such a knowledge, that if any could prove that they were possessors of it, he would acknowledge them Gods as well as himself; *that we may know that you are Gods*: He puts his Deity to stand or fall upon this account, and this should be the point, which should decide the controversie, whether he or the Heathen Idols were the true God; the dispute is managed by this *medium*. He that knows things to come, is God; I know things to come, *ergo*, I am God. The *Idols* know not things to come, therefore they are not Gods. God submits the Being of his Deity to this Tryal. If God knew things to come, no more than the Heathen Idols, which were either *Devils* or men, he would be in his own account, no more a God than Devils or men; no more a God than the *Pagan Idols* he doth scoff at for this defect. If the Heathen Idols were to be stript of their Deity for want of this fore-knowledge of things to come, would not the true God also fall from the same excellency, if he were defective in Knowledge? He would in his own judgment no more deserve the Title and Character of a God than they. How could he reproach them for that, if it were wanting in himself? It cannot be understood of future things in their causes, when the effects necessarily arise from such causes, as Light from the Sun, and Heat from the Fire; many of these men know; more of them, Angels and Devils know; if God therefore had not a higher and farther Knowledge than this, he would not by this be proved to be God, any more than Angels and Devils, who know necessary effects in their causes. The Devils indeed did predict some things in the Heathen Oracles; but God is differenced from them here by the infiniteness of his Knowledge, in being able to predict things to come that they knew not, or things in their particularities, things that depended on the liberty of mans Will, which the Devils could lay no claim to a certain knowledge of. Were it only a conjectural knowledge that is here meant, the Devils might answer, they can conjecture, and so their Deity were as good as Gods; for tho God might know more things, and conjecture nearer to what would be, yet still it would be but conjectural, and therefore not a higher kind of Knowledge than what the Devils might challenge. How much then is God beholden to the *Socinians* for denying the knowledge of all future things to him, upon which here he puts the trial of his Deity? God asserts his knowledge of things to come, as a manifest evidence of his Godhead; those that deny therefore the Argument that proves it, deny the conclusion too;

too; for this will neceſſarily follow, that if he be God becauſe he knows future things, then he that doth not know future things is not God; and if God knows not future things but only by conjecture, then there is no God; becauſe a certain knowledge, ſo as infallibly to predict things to come, is an inſeparable Perfection of the Deity: It was therefore well ſaid of *Auſtin*, that it was as high a madneſs to deny God to be, as to deny him the foreknowledge of things to come.

Pacuvius ſaid, *Siqui quæ eventura ſunt providet, æqui pari.*

The whole *Prophetick* part of Scripture declares this Perfection of God; every *Prophets* Candle was lighted at this Torch, they could not have this foreknowledge of themſelves: Why might not many other Men have the ſame inſight, if it were by Nature? it muſt be from ſome ſuperior Agent; and all Nations owned Prophecy as a Beam from God, a fruit of Divine Illumination: Prophecy muſt be totally expunged if this be denied; for the ſubjects of Prophecy are things future; and no Man is properly a Prophet, but in Prediction; now prediction is nothing but fore-telling, and things fore-told are not yet come; and the fore-telling of them, ſuppoſeth them not to be yet, but that they ſhall be in time; ſeveral ſuch Predictions we have in Scripture, the event whereof hath been certain. The Years of Famine in *Egypt* fore-told that he would order ſecond cauſes for bringing that Judgment upon them; the Captivity of his People in *Babylon*, the calling of the *Gentiles*, the rejection of the *Jews*. *Daniel*'s Revelation of *Nebuchadnezzer*'s Dream, that Prince refers to God as the revealer of Secrets, *Dan.* 2. 47. By the ſame reaſon that he knows one thing future by himſelf, and by the infiniteneſs of his Knowledge before any cauſes of them appear, he doth know all things future.

3. *Some future things are known by Men, and we muſt allow God a greater Knowledge than any Creature.* Future things in their *Cauſes* may be known by *Angels* and Men, (as I ſaid before) whoſoever knows neceſſary cauſes and the efficacy of them, may foretel the effects; and when he ſees the meeting and concurrence of ſeveral cauſes together, he may preſage what the conſequent effect will be of ſuch a concurrence: So Phyſicians foretel the Progreſs of a Diſeaſe, the increaſe or diminution of it by natural Signs; and *Aſtronomers* foretel Eclipſes by their obſervation of the motion of Heavenly Bodies, many Years before they happen *, can they be hid from God, with whom are the reaſons of all things*? An expert Gardner by knowing the Root in the depth of Winter, can tell what Flowers and what Fruit it will bear, and the Month when they will peep out their heads; and ſhall not God much more, that knows the Principles of all his Creatures, and is exactly privy to all their natures and qualities, know what they will be, and what operations ſhall be from thoſe Principles? Now if God did know things only in their cauſes, his Knowledge would not be more excellent than the Knowledge of Angels and Men, tho' he might know more than they of the things that will come to paſs, from every cauſe ſingly, and from the concurrence of many. Now as God is more excellent in being than his Creature; ſo he is more excellent in the objects of his Knowledge and the manner of his Knowledge; well then, ſhall a certain knowledge of ſomething future, and a conjectural knowledge of many things, be found among Men; and ſhall a determinate and infallible knowledge of things to come, be found no where, in no Being? If the conjecture of things future ſavours of ignorance, and God knows them only by conjecture, there is then no ſuch thing in Being as a *perfect intelligent Being*, and ſo no God.

* *Cuſanus.* * *Fuller's Piſgab l.* 2. p. 281.

4. *God knows his own Decree and Will, and therefore muſt needs know all future things.* If any thing be future, or to come to paſs, it muſt be from it ſelf, or from God; not from it ſelf, then it would be independent and abſolute; if it hath its futurity from God, then God muſt know what he hath decreed to come to paſs; thoſe things that are future in neceſſary cauſes, God muſt know, becauſe he willed them to be cauſes of ſuch effects; he therefore knows them, becauſe he knows what he willed: The knowledge of God cannot ariſe from the things themſelves, for then the knowledge of God would have a cauſe without him; and Knowledge, which is an eminent Perfection, would be conferred upon him by his Creatures. But as God ſees things poſſible in the Glaſs of his own Power, ſo he ſees things future in the Glaſs of his own Will; in his effecting Will, if he hath Decreed to produce them; in his permitting Will, as he hath Decreed to ſuffer them and diſpoſe of them: Nothing can paſs out of the rank of things meerly poſſible into the order of things future, before ſome Act of God's Will hath paſſed for its futurition *.

'Tis not from the infiniteneſs of his own Nature ſimply conſidered, that God knows things to be future; for as things are not future becauſe God is infinite (for then all poſſible things ſhould be future) ſo neither is any thing known to be future only becauſe God is infinite, but becauſe God hath Decreed it; his declaration of things to come, is founded upon his appointment of things to come *. In *Iſa.* 44. 7. it is ſaid, *and who, as I, ſhall call and declare it, ſince I appointed the ancient people and the things that are coming* *? Nothing is created or ordered in the World, but what God Decreed to be Created and Ordered. God knows his own Decrees, and therefore all things which he hath decreed to exiſt in time; not the minuteſt part of the World could have exiſted without his Will, not an action can be done without his Will; as Life the Principle, ſo Motion the fruit of that Life, is by and from God; as he decreed Life to this or that thing, ſo he decreed motion as the effect of Life, and decreed to exert his Power in concurring with them, for producing effects natural from ſuch cauſes; for without ſuch a concourſe they could not have acted any thing, or produced any thing; and therefore as for natural things, which we call neceſſary cauſes, God foreſeeing them all particularly in his own Decree, foreſaw alſo all effects which muſt neceſſarily flow from them, becauſe ſuch cauſes cannot but act when they are furniſht with all things neceſſary for action: He knows his own Decrees, and therefore neceſſarily knows what he hath Decreed, or elſe we muſt ſay things comes to paſs whether God will or no; or, that he Wills he knows not what; but this cannot be, for *known unto God are all his Works from the beginning of the World*, Acts 15. 18. Now this neceſſarily flows from that Principle firſt laid down, That God knows himſelf, ſince nothing is future without God's Will: if God did not know future things, he would not know his own Will; for as things poſſible could not be known by him, unleſs he knew the fulneſs of his own Power; ſo things future could not be known by his Underſtanding, unleſs he knew the reſolves of his own Will.

* *Chequell.*

* *Coccei ſum Theol.* P. 50. * *Gamaul in Aquin.* Part 1. q. 24. cap. 3. p. 124.

Thus the Knowledge of God differs from the knowledge of Men; God's Knowledge of his Works precedes his Works, Man's knowledge of God's works follows his works; juſt as an Artificer's knowledge of a Watch, Inſtrument, or Engine, which he would make, is before his making of it; he knows the motions of it, and the reaſon of thoſe motions before it is made, becauſe he knows what he hath determin'd to Work; he knows not thoſe motions from the conſideration of them after they were made, as the Spectator doth, who

Maimonid. More Nevoch. Part 3. Cap. 21. p. 393, 394.

who by viewing the Instrument after it is made, gains a knowledge from the sight and consideration of it, till he understands the reason of the whole; so we know things from the consideration of them after we see them in being, and therefore we know not future things: But God's Knowledge doth not arise from things because they are, but because he wills them to be, and therefore he knows every thing that shall be, because it cannot be without his Will, as the Creator and Maintainer of all things; knowing his own substance he knows all his Works.

5. *If God did not know all future things, he would be mutable in his Knowledge.*

If he did not know all things that ever were or are to be, there would be upon the appearance of every new object, an addition of Light to his Understanding, and therefore such a Change in him, as every new knowledge causes in the mind of a Man, or as the Sun works in the World upon its rising every Morning, scattering the darkness that was upon the Face of the Earth; if he did not know them before they came, he would gain a Knowledge by them when they came to pass, which he had not before they were effected; his Knowledge would be new according to the newness of the objects, and multiplied according to the multitude of the objects. If God did not know things to come as perfectly as he knew things present and past, but knew those certainly, and the others doubtfully and conjecturally, he would suffer some Change, and acquire some perfection in his Knowledge, when those future things should cease to be future, and become present; for he would know it more perfectly when it were present, than he did when it was future, and so there would be a Change from Imperfection to a Perfection; but God is every way immutable.

Besides, that Perfection would not arise from the Nature of God, but from the Existence and Presence of the thing; but who will affirm that God acquires any Perfection of Knowledge from his Creatures, any more than he doth of Being? He would not then have had that Knowledge, and consequently that Perfection from Eternity, as he had when he created the World, and will not have a full Perfection of the Knowledge of his Creature till the end of the World, nor of Immortal Souls, which will certainly act as well as live to Eternity; and so God never was, nor ever will be perfect in Knowledge; for when you have conceived Millions of Years, wherein Angels and Souls live and act, there is still more coming than you can conceive, wherein they will act. And if God be always changing to Eternity, from Ignorance to Knowledge, as those acts come to be exerted by his Creatures, he will not be perfect in Knowledge, no not to Eternity, but will always be changing from one degree of Knowledge to another; a very unworthy Conceit to entertain of the most Blessed, Perfect, and Infinite God!

Hence then it follows that,

1. *God foreknows all his Creatures.* All kinds which he determin'd to make, all particulars that should spring out of every Species, the time when they should come forth of the Womb, the manner how, *In thy Book all Members were written*, Psal. 139. 16. *Members* is not in the *Hebr.* whence some refer *all*, to all living Creatures whatsoever, and all the parts of them which God did foresee; he knew the numbers of Creatures with all their parts, they were written in the Book of his fore-knowledge; the duration of them, how long they shall remain in Being, and act upon the Stage; he knows their strength, the links of one cause with another, and what will follow in all their Circumstances, and the series, and combination of effects with their causes.

The duration of every thing is fore-known, because determin'd, *Job* 14. 5. *Seeing his Days are determin'd, the number of his Months are with thee; thou hast appointed his Bounds that he cannot pass*; bounds are fixed, beyond which none shall reach; he speaks of *Days* and *Months*, not of *Years*, to give us notice of God's particular fore-knowledge of every thing, of every Day, Month, Year, Hour of a Man's Life.

2. *All the acts of his Creatures are foreknown by him.* All natural acts because he knows their causes; voluntary acts I shall speak of afterwards.

3. *This foreknowledge was certain.* For it is an unworthy notion of God to ascribe to him a conjectural Knowledge; if there were only a conjectural Knowledge, he could but conjecturally foretell any thing; and then it is possible the events of things might be contrary to his Predictions. It would appear then that God were deceived and mistaken, and then there could be no rule of trying things whether they were from God or no; for the Rule God sets down to discern his Words from the Words of false Prophets, is the event and certain accomplishment of what is Predicted. *Deut.* 18. 21. To that question, *How shall we know whether God hath spoken or no?* He answers, that *if the thing doth not come to pass, the Lord hath not spoken.* If his Knowledge of future things were not certain, there were no stability in this Rule, it would fall to the ground: We never yet find God deceiv'd in any Prediction, but the event did answer his fore-Revelation; his fore-Knowledge therefore is certain and infallible. We cannot make God uncertain in his Knowledge, but we must conceive him fluctuating and wavering in his Will; but if his Will be not *Yea* and *Nay*, but *Yea*, his Knowledge is certain, because he doth certainly Will and Resolve.

4. *This foreknowledge was from Eternity.* Seeing he knows things possible in his Power, and things future in his Will; if his Power and Resolves were from Eternity, his Knowledge must be so too; or else we must make him ignorant of his own Power, and ignorant of his own Will from Eternity; and consequently not from Eternity Blessed and Perfect. His knowledge of possible things must run Parallel with his Power, and his Knowledge of future things run Parallel with his Will. If he Willed from Eternity, he knew from Eternity what he Willed; but that he did Will from Eternity, we must grant, unless we would render him changeable, and conceive him to be made in time of not Willing, Willing. The Knowledge God hath in time, was always one and the same, because his Understanding is his proper Essence, as perfect as his Essence, and of an immutable Nature.

* And indeed the actual existence of a thing is not simply necessary to its being perfectly known; we may see a thing that is past out of Being, when it doth not actually exist; and a Carpenter may know the House he is to Build, before it be built, by the model of it in his own mind; much more we may conceive the same of God whose Decrees were before the Foundation of the World*; and to be before time was, and to be from Eternity, hath no difference. As God in his Being exceeds all beginning of time, so doth his Knowledge all motions of time.

* *Gmatch* in Aquin. Part 1. q. 14. c. 3. p. 124.

* *Eph.* 1. 3. and in other places.

5. *God foreknows all things as present with him from Eternity.** As he knows mutable things with an immutable and firm Knowledge, so he knows future things with a present Knowledge; not that the things which are produced in time, were actually and really present with him in their own Beings from Eternity; for then they could not be produced in time; had they a real existence, then they would

* *Gerhard* Exeget. ch. 8. de Deo sect. 13. p. 303.

not be Creatures, but God; and had they actual Being, then they could not be future, for future ſpeaks a thing to come that is not yet: If things had been actually preſent with him, and yet future, they had been made before they were made, and had a being before they had a Being; but they were all preſent to his Knowledge as if they were in actual being, becauſe the reaſon of all things that were to be made, was preſent with him.

*Baldwin 1. 3. c. 14.

* The reaſon of the Will of God that they ſhall be, was equally Eternal with him, wherein he ſaw what, and when, and how he would Create things, how he would govern them, to what ends he would direct them. Thus all things are preſent to God's Knowledge, tho' in their own nature they may be paſt or future, not in *eſſe reali*, but in *eſſe intelligibili*, ob-

*Hornbeck jectively; not actually preſent *; for as the unchangableneſs and infiniteneſs of God's Knowledge of changeable and finite things, doth not make the things he knows immutable and infinite, ſo neither doth the Eternity of his Knowledge, make them actually preſent with him from Eternity; but all things are preſent to his Underſtanding, becauſe he hath at once a view of all ſucceſſions of times; and his knowledge of future things is as perfect as of preſent things, or what is paſt; 'tis not a certain knowledge of preſent things, and an uncertain knowledge of future; but his knowledge of one is as certain and unerring as his knowledge of the other;

*Pugio Fidei part 1. ch. 19.

* as a Man that beholds a Circle with ſeveral lines from the Center, beholds the lines as they are joyned in the Center, beholds them alſo as they are diſtant and ſever'd from one another, beholds them in their extent and in their point all at once, tho' they may have a great diſtance from one another: He ſaw from the beginning of time to the laſt Minute of it, all things coming out of their cauſes, marching in their order according to his own appointment; as a Man may ſee a multitude of Ants, ſome creeping one way, ſome another, employ'd in ſeveral buſineſſes for their Winter Proviſion. The Eye of God at once runs through the whole Circle of Time; as the Eye of Man upon a Tower ſees all the Paſſengers at once, tho' ſome be paſt, ſome under the Tower, ſome coming at a farther diſtance: *God* ſaith *Job*, *looks to the end of the Earth, and ſees under the whole Heaven*, Job 28. 24. The Knowledge of God is expreſt by ſight in Scripture, and futurity to God is the ſame thing as diſtance to us; we can with a Perſpective-glaſs make things that are a far off, appear as if they were near; and the Sun, ſo many Thouſand Miles diſtant from us, to appear as if it were at the end of the Glaſs; Why ſhould then future things be at ſo great a diſtance from God's Knowledge, when things ſo far from us may be made to approach ſo near to us?

God conſiders all things in his own ſimple Knowledge, as if they were now acted; and therefore ſome have choſen to call the knowledge of things to come, not *preſcience* or fore-knowledge, but *Knowledge*, becauſe God ſees all things in one inſtant, *ſa-*

* Boet. conſolat. lib. 5. proſ. 6.

cienti â nullarum deficientis inſtantiâ *. Upon this account things that are to come, are ſet down in Scripture as preſent, and ſometimes as paſt, *Iſa.* 9. 6. *Unto us a Child is Born*, tho' not yet born; ſo of the Sufferings of Chriſt, *Iſa* 53. 4. &c. *He hath born our griefs, he was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, he was taken from Priſon*, &c. not ſhall be; and *Pſal.* 22. 18. *They part my Garments among them*, as if it were preſent; all to expreſs the certainty of God's fore-knowledge, as if things were actually preſent before him.

6. This is proper to God, and incommunicable to any Creature. Nothing but what is Eternal can know all things that are to come: Suppoſe a Creature might know things that are to come, after he is in being; he cannot know things ſimply as future, becauſe there were things future before he was in Being. The Devils know not Mens Hearts, therefore cannot foretel their actions with any certainty; they may indeed have a knowledge of ſome things to come, but it is only conjectural, and often miſtaken; as the *Devil* was in his Predictions among the *Heathen*, and in his preſage of *Job*'s *Curſing God to his Face* upon his preſſing Calamities, *Job* 1. 11. Sometimes indeed they have a certain knowledge of ſome things future by the Revelation of God, when he uſes them as Inſtruments of his Vengeance, or for the Trial of his People, as in the Caſe of *Job*, when he gave him a Commiſſion to ſtrip him of his Goods; or as the Angels have, when he uſes them as Inſtruments of the deliverance of his People.

7. *Tho' this be certain, that God foreknows all things and actions; yet the manner of his knowing all things before they come, is not ſo eaſily reſolved.* We muſt not therefore deny this Perfection in God, becauſe we underſtand not the manner how he hath the knowledge of all things: It were unworthy for us to own no more of God than we can perfectly conceive of him; we ſhould then own no more of him than that he doth exiſt. *Canſt thou*, ſaith *Job*, *by ſearching, find out God? Canſt thou find out the Almighty unto Perfection?* Job 11. 7. Do we not ſee things unknown to inferior Creatures, to be known to our ſelves? Irrational Creatures do not apprehend the nature of a Man, nor what we conceive of them when we look upon them; nor do we know what they fancy of us when they look wiſtly upon us; for ought as I know, we underſtand as little the manner of their imaginations, as they do of ours; and ſhall we aſcribe a darkneſs in God as to future things, becauſe we are ignorant of them, and of the manner how he ſhould know them *? Shall we doubt whether God doth certainly know thoſe things which we only conjecture? As our Power is not the Meaſure of the Power of God, ſo neither is our Knowledge the Judge of the Knowledge of God, no better nor ſo well as an irrational nature can be the Judge of our Reaſon: Do we perfectly know the manner how we know? Shall we therefore deny that we know any thing? We know we have ſuch a faculty which we call Underſtanding, but doth any Man certainly know what it is? And becauſe he doth not, ſhall he deny that which is plain and evident to him? Becauſe we cannot aſcertain our ſelves of the cauſes of the ebbing and flowing of the Sea, of the manner how Minerals are ingendred in the Earth, ſhall we therefore deny that which our eyes convince us of?

* *Ficinus* in Procl. cap. 19.

And this will be a preparation to the laſt thing.

5. *God knows all future contingencies*, that is, *God knows all things that ſhall accidentally happen*, or as we ſay, *by Chance*; *and he knows all the free motions of Mens Wills that ſhall be to the end of the World.*

If *all things* be open to him, *Heb.* 4. 13. Then all contingencies are, for they are in the number of *things*; and as, according to Chriſt's Speech, thoſe things that are impoſſible to Man, are poſſible to God; ſo thoſe things which are unknown to Man, are known to God, becauſe of the infinite fulneſs and perfection of the Divine Underſtanding.

Let us ſee *what a Contingent is.*

That is *contingent* which we commonly call accidental, as when a Tile falls ſuddenly upon a mans head as he is walking in the Street; or when one letting off a Muſket at random, ſhoots another he did not intend to hit; ſuch was that Arrow whereby *Ahab* was killed, ſhot by a Soldier at a *venture* *, this 1 Kings 22. 39. ſome call a mixt contingent, made up partly of neceſſity, and partly of acci-dent; 'tis neceſſary the

Bullet,

Bullet, when sent out of the Gun, or Arrow out of the Bow, should fly and light some where, but it is an accident that it hits this or that man, that was never intended by the Archer. Other things, as voluntary actions, are purely contingents, and have nothing of necessity in them; all free actions that depend upon the Will of man, whether to do, or not to do, are of this nature, because they depend not upon a necessary cause, as burning doth upon the Fire, moistning upon Water, or as descent or falling down is necessary to a heavy body; for those cannot in their own nature do otherwise; but the other actions depend upon a free Agent, able to turn to this or that point and determine himself as he pleases.

Now we must know, that what is accidental in regard of the Creature, is not so in regard of God, the manner of *Ahab*'s Death was accidental, in regard the hand by which he was slain, but not in regard of God who foretold his Death, and foreknew the Shot, and directed the Arrow. God was not uncertain before of the manner of his fall, nor hovered over the Battel to watch for an opportunity to accomplish his own Prediction; what may be or not be, in regard of us, is certain in regard of God; to imagin that what is accidental to us, is so to God, is to measure God by our short line. how many events following upon the results of Princes in their Counsels, seem to persons ignorant of those Counsels to be a hap-hazard, yet were not contingencies to the Prince and his assistants, but foreseen by him as certainly to issue so as they do, which they knew before would be the fruit of such causes and instruments they would knit together? That may be necessary in regard of Gods foreknowledge, which is meerly accidental in regard of the natural disposition of the immediate causes which do actually produce it; Contingent in its own nature, and in regard of us; but fixed in the Knowledge of God: *Zanch. *One illustrates it by this *similitude*: A Master sends two Servants to one and the same place, two several ways, unknown to one another, they meet at the place which their Master had appointed them; their meeting is accidental to them, one knows not of the other, but it was foreseen by the Master that they should so meet, and that in regard of them it would seem a meer accident, till they came to explain the business to one another: Both the necessity of their meeting in regard of their Masters Order, and the accidentalness of it in regard of themselves, were in both their circumstances foreknown by the Master that employ'd them.

For the clearing of this, take it in this method.

1. *'Tis an unworthy conceit of God in any to exclude him from the knowledge of these things.*

1. *It will be a strange contracting of him, to allow him no greater a Knowledge than we have our selves.*

Contingencies are known to us when they come into Act, and pass from Futurity to Reality; and when they are present to us, we can order our Affairs accordingly; shall we allow God no greater a measure of Knowledge than we have, and make him as blind as our selves, not to see things of that nature before they come to pass? Shall God know them no more? Shall we imagine God knows no otherwise than we know? and that he doth, like us, stand gazing with Admiration at Events? Man can conjecture many things; is it fit to ascribe the same uncertainty to God, as though he, as well as we, could have no assurance till the issue appear in the view of all? If God doth not certainly foreknow them, he doth but conjecture them; but a conjectural Knowledge is by no means to be fastened on God; for that is not Knowledge, but guess, and destroys a Deity by making him subject to mistake; for he that only guesseth, may guess wrong; so that this is to make God like our selves, and strip him of an universally acknowledged Perfection of Omniscience. A conjectural Knowledge, saith one *, is as unworthy of God, as the Creature is unworthy of Omniscience? 'Tis certain Man hath a Liberty to act many things this or that way as he pleases; to walk to this or that quarter, to speak or not to speak, to do this or that thing, or not to do it; which way a Man will certainly determine himself, is unknown before to any Creature, yea often at the present to himself, for he may be in suspence; but shall we imagine this future Determination of himself is conceal'd from God? Those that deny God's foreknowledge in such Cases, must either say, that God hath an opinion that a Man will resolve rather this way than that; but then if a Man by his Liberty determine himself contrary to the Opinion of God, is not God then deceived? and what rational Creature can own him for a God, that can be deceived in any thing? or else they must say, that God is at uncertainty, and suspends his Opinion without determining it any way; then he cannot know free Acts till they are done; he would then depend upon the Creature for his Information; his Knowledge would be every Instant encreased, as things, he knew not before, came into act; and since there are every minute an innumerable multitude of various Imaginations in the Minds of Men, there would be every minute an accession of new Kowledge to God, which he had not before; besides, this Knowledge would be mutable according the Wavering and Weather-cock Resolutions of Men, one while standing to this Point, another while to that, if he depended upon the Creatures Determination for his Knowledge. * *Scotus.*

2. *If the free Acts of Men were unknown before to God, no Man can see how there can be any Government of the World by him.* Such Contingencies may happen, and such Resolves of Men's Free-Wills unknown to God, as may perplex his Affairs, and put him upon new Counsels and Methods for attaining those Ends which he settled at the first Creation of things; if things happen, which God knows not of before, this must be the Consequence; where there is no Fore-sight, there is no Providence; things may happen so sudden, if God be ignorant of them, that they may give a check to his Intentions and Scheme of Government, and put him upon changing the model of it. How often doth a small intervening Circumstance unforeseen by Man, dash in pieces a long meditated and well-formed Design? To govern necessary Causes, as Sun and Stars, whose Effects are natural and constant in themselves, is easie to be imagin'd; but how to govern the World, that consists of so many Men of Free-Will, able to determine themselves to this or that, and which have no constancy in themselves, as the Sun and Stars have, cannot be imagind, unless we will allow in God as great a certainty of Foreknowledge of the Designs and Actions of Men, as there is Inconstancy in their Resolves: God must be altering the Methods of his Government every day, every Hour, every Minute, according to the Determinations of Men, which are so various and changable in the whole compass of the World in the space of one Minute; he must wait to see what the Counsels of Men will be, before he could settle his own Methods of Government; and so must govern the World according to their mutability, and not according to any certainty in himself. But his *counsel is stable* in the midst of multitudes of free *devices* in the Heart of Man, *Prov.* 19. 21. and knowing them all before, Orders them to be subservient to his own stable Counsel. If he cannot know what to Morrow will bring forth in the Mind of a Man,

how

how can he certainly ſettle his own Determination of Governing him? his Decrees and Reſolves muſt be Temporal, and ariſe *pro re nata*, and he muſt alway be in Council what he ſhould do upon every change of Men's Minds. This is an unworthy Conceit of the Infinite Majeſty of Heaven to make his Government depend upon the Reſolves of Men, rather than their Reſolves upon the Deſign of God.

2. *'Tis therefore certain, that God doth foreknow the free and voluntary Acts of Man.* How could he elſe order his People to ask of him *things to come*, in order to their Deliverance, ſuch things as depended upon the Will of Man, if he foreknew not the Motions of their Will? *Iſa.* 45. 11.

3. *Actions good or indifferent depending upon the Liberty of Man's Will as much as any whatſoever.* Several of theſe he hath foretold: Not only a *Perſon* to build up *Jeruſalem* was predicted by him, but the *Name* of that Perſon, *Cyrus*, *Iſa.* 44. 28. What is more contingent, or is more the effect of the Liberty of Man's Will than the Names of their Children? Was not the Deſtruction of the *Babyloniſh* Empire foretold, which *Cyrus* undertook, not by any Compulſion, but by a free Inclination and Reſolve of his own Will? And was not the Diſmiſſion of the *Jews* into their own Country, a voluntary Act in that Conqueror? If you conſider the Liberty of Man's Will, might not *Cyrus* as well have continued their Yoke, as have ſtruck off their Chains, and kept them Captive as well as diſmiſt them? Had it not been for his own Intereſt, rather to have ſtrengthned the Fetters of ſo turbulent a People, who being tenacious of their Religion and Laws, different from that profeſt by the whole World, were like to make diſturbances more when they were linkt in a body in their own Country, than when they were tranſplanted and ſcatter'd into the ſeveral parts of his Empire? It was in the Power of *Cyrus*, (take him as a Man) to chuſe one or the other; his Intereſt invited him to continue their Captivity, rather than grant their Deliverance; yet God knew that he would willingly do this rather than the other; he knew this which depended upon the Will of *Cyrus*; and why may not an infinite God foreknow the free Acts of all Men, as well as of one? If the Liberty of *Cyrus*'s Will was no hinderance to God's certain and infallible foreknowledge of it, how can the contingency of any other thing be a hinderance to him? for there is the ſame Reaſon of one and all; and his Government extends to every Village, every Family, every Perſon, as well as to Kingdoms and Nations.

So God foretold by his *Prophet*, not only the Deſtruction of *Jeroboam*'s *Altar*, but the Name of the Perſon that ſhould be the Inſtrument of it, 1 *Kings* 13. 2. and this about Three hundred Years before *Joſiah*'s Birth. 'Tis a wonder that none of the Pious Kings of *Judah* in Deteſtation of Idolatry, and hopes to recover again the Kingdom of *Iſrael*, had in all that ſpace named one of their Sons by that Name of *Joſiah*, in hopes that that Prophecy ſhould be accompliſht by him: That *Manaſſeh* only ſhould do this, who was the greateſt Imitator of *Jeroboam*'s Idolatry among all the *Jewiſh* Kings, and indeed went beyond them; and had no mind to deſtroy in another Kingdom what he propagated in his own. What is freer than the Impoſition of a Name, yet this he foreknew, and this *Joſiah* was *Manaſſes*'s Son, 2 *Kings* 21. 26. Was there any thing more voluntary than for *Pharaoh* to Honour the *Butler* by reſtoring him to his place, and puniſh the *Baker* by hanging him on a Gibbet? yet this was foretold, *Gen.* 40, 8. And were not all the voluntary Acts of Men, which were the means of *Joſeph*'s Advancement, foreknown by God, as well as his Exaltation, which was the end he aimed at by thoſe Means? Many of theſe may be reckon'd up.

Can all the free Acts of Man ſurmount the infinite Capacity of the Divine Underſtanding? If God ſingles out one voluntary Action in Man, as contingent as any, and lying among a vaſt Number of other Deſigns and Reſolutions, both antecedent and ſubſequent; why ſhould he not know the whole maſs of Mens Thoughts and Actions, and pierce into all that the Liberty of Man's Will can effect? Why ſhould he not know every Grain, as well as one that lies in the midſt of many of the ſame kind?

And ſince the *Scripture* gives ſo large an Account of Contingents, predicted by God; no Man can certainly prove that any thing is un-foreknown to him. 'Tis as reaſonable to think he knows every contingent; as that he knows ſome that lie as much hid from the Eye of any Creature, ſince there is no more difficulty to an infinite Underſtanding to know all, than to know ſome*. Indeed, if we deny God's foreknowledge of the voluntary Actions of Men, we muſt ſtrike our ſelves off from the belief of Scripture Predictions, that yet remain unaccompliſht, and will be brought about by the voluntary Engagements of Men, as the ruin of *Antichriſt*, &c. If God foreknows not the ſecret Motions of Man's Will, how can he foretel them? If we ſtrip him of this Perfection of Preſcience, why ſhould we believe a Word of Scripture-Predictions? all the Credit of the Word of God is torn up by the Roots. If God were uncertain of ſuch Events, how can we reconcile God's Declaration of them to his Truth; and his demanding our Belief of them, to his Goodneſs? Were it good and righteous in God to urge us to the Belief of that he were uncertain of himſelf? How could he be True in Predicting things he were not ſure of? Or Good in requiring Credit to be given to that which might be falſe? This would neceſſarily follow, if God did not foreknow the Motions of Mens Wills, whereby many of his Predictions were fulfilled, and ſome remain yet to be accompliſht.

* *The Stoicks that thought their Souls to be ſome particle of God* Ἀποσπάσματα, *pieces pull'd off from him, did conclude from thence that he knew all the Motions of their Souls as his own mover, as things coherent with him.* Arrian Epicte. lib. 1. chap. 14. p. 60.

2. *God foreknows the voluntary ſinful Motions of Mens Wills.*

1. *God hath foretold ſeveral of them*, Were not all the minute ſinful Circumſtances about the Death of our Bleſſed Redeemer, as the piercing him, giving him Gall to drink, foretold, as well as the not breaking his Bones, and parting his Garments? What were thoſe but the free Actions of Men, which they did willingly without any conſtraint? And thoſe foretold by *David*, *Iſaiah*, and other *Prophets*, ſome above a *thouſand*, ſome *eight hundred*, and ſome more, ſome fewer Years, before they came to paſs; and Events punctually anſwered the Prophecies. Many ſinful Acts of Men, which depended upon their Free-Will, have been foretold: The *Egyptians* voluntary oppreſſing *Iſrael*, *Gen.* 15. 13. *Pharaoh*'s *hardening his heart* againſt the Voice of *Moſes*, Exod 3. 19. That *Iſaiah*'s Meſſage would be in vain to the People, *Iſa.* 6. 9. that the *Iſraelites* would be rebellious after *Moſes* his Death, and turn Idolaters, *Deut.* 31. 16. *Judas* his betraying of our *Saviour*, a voluntary Action, *John* 6. *ult.* he was not forced to do what he did, for he had ſome kind of Repentance for it; and not Violence, but voluntarineſs falls under Repentance.

2. *His Truth hath depended upon this fore-ſight.* Let us conſider that in *Gen.* 5. 16. but *the fourth Generation they ſhall come hither again*; that is, the Poſterity of *Abraham* ſhall come into *Canaan*; *for the iniquity of the*

Vid. *Rivet* in loc. exer. 86. p. 379.

the Amorites *is not yet full**. God makes a Promiſe to *Abraham*, of giving his Poſterity the Land of *Canaan*, not preſently, but in the Fourth Generation; if the Truth of God be infallible in the performance of his Promiſe, his Underſtanding is as infallible in the foreſight of the *Amorites* ſin; the fulneſs of their iniquity was to precede the *Iſraelites* Poſſeſſion. Did the Truth of God depend upon an uncertainty? did he make the Promiſe hand over head (as we ſay)? How could he with any Wiſdom and Truth aſſure *Iſrael* of the Poſſeſſion of the Land in the Fourth Generation, if he had not been ſure that the *Amorites* would fill up the meaſure of their Iniquities by that time? If *Abraham* had been a *Socinian*, to deny God's Knowledge of the free acts of Men, had he not had a fine excuſe for unbelief? What would his reply have been to God? Alas, Lord, this is not a Promiſe to be relied upon, the *Amorites* iniquity depends upon the acts of their Free-Will, and ſuch thou canſt have no Knowledge of; thou canſt ſee no more than a likelihood of their iniquity being full, and therefore there is but a likelihood of thy performing thy Promiſe, and not a certainty: Would not this be judged not only a ſawcy, but a Blaſphemous Anſwer? And upon theſe Principles the Truth of the moſt faithful God had been daſht to uncertainty and a peradventure.

3. *God provided a remedy for Man's Sin, and therefore foreſaw the entrance of it into the World by the fall of* Adam. He had a Decree before the Foundation of the World, to manifeſt his Wiſdom in the Goſpel by *Jeſus Chriſt*, an *Eternal purpoſe in Jeſus Chriſt*, Eph. 3. 11. And a Decree of Election paſt before the Foundation of the World; a ſeparation of ſome to redemption, and forgiveneſs of Sin in the Blood of Chriſt, in whom they were from Eternity *choſen*, as well as in time *accepted* in Chriſt, *Eph.* 1. 4, 6, 7. which is called a *purpoſe in himſelf*, v. 9. had not Sin entred, there had been no occaſion for the Death of the Son of God, it being every where in Scripture laid upon that ſcore; a Decree for the ſhedding of Blood, ſuppoſed a Decree for the Permiſſion of Sin, and a certain foreknowledge of God, that it would be committed by Man. An uncertainty of foreknowledge, and a fixedneſs of purpoſe, are not conſiſtent in a wiſe Man, much leſs in the only Wiſe God. God's purpoſe to manifeſt his Wiſdom to Men and Angels in this way, might have been defeated, had God had only a conjectural foreknowledge of the fall of Man; and all thoſe ſolemn purpoſes of diſplaying his Perfections in thoſe Methods had been to no purpoſe*; the Proviſion of a remedy ſuppoſed a certainty of the Diſeaſe: If a *Sparrow* fall not to the ground without the Will of God, how much leſs could ſuch a Deplorable ruin fall upon Mankind, without God's Will permitting it, and his knowledge foreſeeing it?

* *Mareſ.* cont. Volkel. lib. 1. cap. 24. p. 343.

'Tis not hard to conceive how God might foreknow it*; he indeed decreed to Create Man in an excellent State; the goodneſs of God could not but furniſh him with a Power to ſtand; yet in his Wiſdom he might foreſee, that the Devil would be envious to Man's Happineſs, and would out of Envy attempt his ſubverſion. As God knew of what temper the faculties were he had endued Man with, and how far they were able to endure the aſſaults of a Temptation; ſo he alſo foreknew the grand ſubtility of *Satan*, how he would lay his Mine, and to what Point he would drive his Temptation; how he would propoſe and manage it, and direct his Battery againſt the ſenſitive Appetite, and aſſault the weakeſt part of the Fort; might he not foreſee that the efficacy of the Temptation would exceed the meaſure of the reſiſtance? cannot God know how far the Malice of *Satan* would extend, what *Shots* he would according to his nature uſe, how high he would charge his Temptation without his powerful reſtraint, as well as an Engineer judge how many ſhots of a Cannon will make a breach in a Town, and how many Casks of Powder will blow up a Fortreſs, who never yet built the one nor founded the other; We may eaſily conclude God could not be deceived in the Judgment of the iſſue and event, ſince he knew how far he would let *Satan* looſe, how far he would permit Man to act; and ſince he dives to the bottom of the nature of all things, he foreſaw that *Adam* was endued with an ability to ſtand; as he foreſaw that *Benhadad* might naturally recover of his Diſeaſe; but he foreſaw alſo that *Adam* would ſink under the allurements of the Temptation, as he foreſaw that *Hazael* would not let *Benhadad* live, 2 *Kings* 8. 10.

* *Amyrald.* de Prædeſtin. cap. 6.

Now ſince the whole Race of Mankind lies in Corruption, and is ſubject to the power of the *Devil*, 1 *John* 3. 18. may not God that knows that Corruption in every Man's nature, and the force of every Man's ſpirit, and what every particular nature will encline him to upon ſuch objects propoſed to him, and what the reaſons of the Temptation will be, know alſo the iſſues? is there any difficulty in God's foreknowing this, ſince Man knowing the nature of one he is well acquainted with, can conclude what ſentiments he will have, and how he will behave himſelf upon preſenting this or that object to him.

If a Man that underſtands the diſpoſition of his Child or Servant, knows before what he will do upon ſuch an occaſion; may not God much more, who knows the inclinations of all his Creatures, and from Eternity run with his Eyes over all the works he intended? Our Wills are in the number of cauſes; and ſince God knows our Wills, as cauſes, better than we do our ſelves, why ſhould he be ignorant of the effects.

God determines to give Grace to ſuch a Man; not to give it to another, but leave him to himſelf, and ſuffer ſuch Temptations to aſſault him; now God knowing the Corruption of Man in the whole maſs, and in every part of it; is it not eaſie for him to foreknow what the future actions of the Will will be, when the Tinder and Fire meet together, and how ſuch a Man will determine himſelf both as to the ſubſtance and manner of the action? It is not eaſie for him to know, how a corrupted Temper and a Temptation will ſuit? God is exactly privy to all the gall in the hearts of Men, and what Principles they will have, before they have a Being. *He knows their thoughts afar off*, Pſal. 139. 2. as far off as Eternity, as ſome explain the words, and thoughts are as voluntary as any thing; he knows the power and inclinations of Men in the order of ſecond cauſes; he underſtands the corruption of Men, as well as *the Poyſon of Dragons, and the Venom of Aſps*; this is *laid up in ſtore with him and ſealed among his Treaſures*, Deut 32. 33, 34. Among the Treaſures of his foreknowledge, ſay ſome.

What was the cruelty of *Hazael*, but a free act? yet God knew the frame of his heart, and what acts of Murder and Oppreſſion would ſpring from that bitter Fountain, *before Hazael* had conceived them in himſelf, 2 *Kings* 8. 12. as a Man that knows the Mineral through which Waters paſs, may know what reliſh they will have before they appear above the Earth; ſo our *Saviour* knew how *Peter* would deny him; he knew what quantity of Powder would ſerve for ſuch a Battery; in what meaſure he would let looſe *Satan*, how far he would leave the Reins in *Peter*'s Hands, and then the iſſue might eaſily be known; and ſo in every act of Man, God knows in his own Will what meaſure of Grace he will give, to determine the Will to good, and what meaſure

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of Grace he will withdraw from ſuch a Perſon, or not give to him, and conſequently, how far ſuch a Perſon will fall or not. God knows the inclinations of the Creature; he knows his own Permiſſions, what degrees of Grace he will either allow him, or keep from him, according to which will be the degree of his Sin. This may in ſome meaſure help our conceptions in this, tho', as was ſaid before, the manner of God's foreknowledge is not ſo eaſily explicable.

3. *God's foreknowledge of Man's voluntary actions doth not neceſſitate the Will of Man.* The foreknowledge of God is not deceived, nor the liberty of Man's Will diminiſh'd. I ſhall not trouble you with any *School diſtinctions*, but be as plain as I can, laying down ſeveral Propoſitions in this caſe.

Propoſition I. 'Tis certain *all neceſſity doth not take away liberty.* Indeed a compulſive neceſſity takes away liberty; but a neceſſity of immutability removes not liberty from God; why ſhould then a neceſſity of Infallibility in God remove liberty from the Creature? God did neceſſarily create the World, becauſe he Decreed it; yet freely, becauſe his Will from Eternity ſtood to it; he freely Decreed it, and freely Created it; as the *Apoſtle* ſaith in regard of God's Decrees, *who hath been his Counſellor?* Rom. 11. 34. ſo in regard of his actions I may ſay, who hath been his compeller? he freely decreed, and he freely created. *Jeſus Chriſt* neceſſarily took our fleſh, becauſe he had covenanted with God ſo to do, yet he acted freely and voluntarily according to that Covenant, otherwiſe his Death had not been efficacious for us. A good Man doth naturally, neceſſarily love his Children, yet voluntarily: 'Tis part of the happineſs of the Bleſſed, to love God unchangeably, yet freely, for it would not be their happineſs if it were done by compulſion. What is done by force, cannot be called felicity, becauſe there is no delight or complacency in it; and tho' the Bleſſed love God freely, yet if there were a poſſibility of change, it would not be their Happineſs, their Bleſſedneſs would be dampt by their fear of falling from this Love, and conſequently from their nearneſs to God, in whom their happineſs conſiſts: God foreknows that they will Love him for ever; but are they therefore compell'd for ever to love him? If there were ſuch a kind of conſtraint, Heaven would be rendered burdenſome to them, and ſo no Heaven.

Again, God's foreknowledge of what he will do, doth not neceſſitate him to do: he foreknew that he would Create a World, yet he freely created a World. God's foreknowledge doth not neceſſitate himſelf, why ſhould it neceſſitate us more than himſelf? We may inſtance in our ſelves: When we Will a thing, we neceſſarily uſe our faculty of Will; and when we freely Will any thing, 'tis neceſſary that we freely Will; but this neceſſity doth not exclude but include liberty; or more plainly, when a Man writes or ſpeaks, whilſt he writes or ſpeaks, thoſe actions are neceſſary, becauſe to ſpeak and be ſilent, to write and not to write at the ſame time, are impoſſible; yet our writing or ſpeaking doth not take away the power, not to write or to be ſilent at that time if a Man would be ſo; for he might have choſe whether he would have ſpoke or writ. So there is a neceſſity of ſuch actions of Man which God foreſees; that is, a neceſſity of infallibility, becauſe God cannot be deceived; but not a coactive neceſſity, as if they were compelled by God to act thus or thus.

2. *No Man can ſay in any of his voluntary actions that he ever found any force upon him.* When any of us have done any thing according to our Wills, can we ſay we could not have done the contray to it? were we determin'd to it in our own intrinſick nature, or did we not determine our ſelves? Did we not act either according to our reaſon, or according to outward allurements; did we find any thing without us or within us, that did force our Wills to the embracing this or that? Whatever action you do, you do it becauſe you judge it fit to be done; or becauſe you will do it. What tho' God foreſaw that you would do ſo, and that you would do this or that, did you feel any force upon you? Did you not act according to your nature? God foreſees that you will Eat or Walk at ſuch a time; do you find any thing that moves you to Eat, but your own Appetite? or to Walk, but your own Reaſon and Will? If *Preſcience* had impos'd any neceſſity upon Man, ſhould we not probably have found ſome kind of Plea from it in the Mouth of *Adam?* he knew as much as any Man ever ſince knew of the nature of God, as diſcoverable in Creation; he could not in Innocence fancy an ignorant God, a God that knew nothing of future things; he could not be ſo ignorant of his own action, but he muſt have perceived a force upon his Will, had there been any; had he thought that God's Preſcience impos'd any neceſſity upon him, he would not have omitted the Plea, eſpecially when he was ſo daring as to charge the Providence of God in the *Gift of the Woman* to him, to be the cauſe of his Crime, *Gen.* 3. 12. How came his Poſterity to invent new charges againſt God, which their Father *Adam* never thought of, who had more knowledge than all of them? He could find no cauſe of his Sin but the liberty of his own Will; he charges it not upon any neceſſity from the Devil or any neceſſity from God; nor doth he alledge the Gift of the Woman as a neceſſary cauſe of his Sin, but on occaſion of it, by giving the Fruit to him. *Judas* knew that our *Saviour* did foreknow his Treachery, for he had told him of it in the hearing of his Diſciples, *John* 13. 21, 26. yet he never charg'd the neceſſity of his Crime upon the foreknowledge of his Maſter; if *Judas* had not done it freely; he had no Reaſon to repent of it; his Repentance juſtifies Chriſt from impoſing any neceſſity upon him by that foreknowledge. No Man acts any thing, but he can give an account of the motives of his action; he cannot father it upon a blind neceſſity; the Will cannot be compelled, for then it would ceaſe to be Will: God doth not root up the foundations of Nature, or change the order of it, and make Men unable to act like Men, that is, as free Agents. God foreknows the actions of irrational Creatures, this concludes no violence upon their Nature; for we find their actions to be according to their nature, and ſpontaneous.

3. *God's foreknowledge is not (ſimply conſidered) the cauſe of any thing.* It puts nothing into things, but only beholds them as preſent, and ariſing from their proper cauſes: The knowledge of God is not the Principle of things, or the cauſe of their Exiſtence, but directive of the action; nothing is becauſe God Knows it, but becauſe God Wills it, either poſitively or permiſſively; God knows all things poſſible, yet becauſe God knows them, they are not brought into actual exiſtence, but remain ſtill only as things poſſible; Knowledge only apprehends a thing, but acts nothing; 'tis the rule of acting, but not the cauſe of acting; the Will is the immediate Principle, and the Power the immediate cauſe; to know a thing, is not to do a thing, for then we may be ſaid to do every thing that we know; but every Man knows thoſe things which he never did, nor never will do; Knowledge in it ſelf is an apprehenſion of a thing, and is not the cauſe of it. A Spectator of a thing is not the cauſe of that thing which he ſees,

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that is, he is not the Cauſe of it as he beholds it: We ſee a Man Write, we know before that he will Write at ſuch a time; but this Foreknowledge is not the Cauſe of his Writing. We ſee a Man Walk, but our Viſion of him brings no neceſſity of Walking upon him; he was free to Walk, or not to walk*. We foreknow that Death will ſeize upon all Men, we foreknow that the Seaſons of the Year will ſucceed one another; yet is not our Foreknowledge the cauſe of this Succeſſion of Spring after Winter, or of the Death of all Men, or any Man: We ſee one Man fighting with another, our Sight is not the cauſe of that conteſt, but ſome Quarrel among themſelves exciting their own Paſſions. As the Knowledge of preſent things impoſeth no neceſſity upon them while they are acting and preſent; ſo the Knowledge of future things impoſeth no neceſſity upon them while they are coming. We are certain there will be Men in the World to Morrow, and that the Sea will ebb and flow; but is this Knowledge of ours the Cauſe that thoſe things will be ſo; I know that the Sun will riſe to Morrow, 'tis true that it ſhall riſe; but 'tis not true, that my Foreknowledge makes it to riſe. If a Phyſician Prognoſticates upon ſeeing the Intemperances and Debaucheries of Men, that they will fall into ſuch a Diſtemper, is his Prognoſtication any cauſe of their Diſeaſe, or of the Sharpneſs of any Symptoms attending it? The Prophet foretold the Cruelty of *Hazael*, before he committed it; but who will ſay that the Prophet was the cauſe of his Commiſſion of that Evil? And thus the Foreknowledge of God takes not away the Liberty of Man's Will, no more than a Foreknowledge that we have of any Man's Actions, takes away his Liberty: We may upon our Knowledge of the Temper of a Man, certainly foreknow, that if he falls into ſuch Company, and get among his Cups, he will be Drunk; but is this Foreknowledge the cauſe that he is Drunk? no, the cauſe is the Liberty of his own Will, and not reſiſting the Temptation. God purpoſes to leave ſuch a Man to himſelf and his own Ways; and Man being ſo left, God foreknows what will be done by him according to that corrupt Nature which is in him; though the Decree of God of leaving a Man to the Liberty of his own Will be certain, yet the Liberty of Man's Will as thus left, is the cauſe of all the Extravagancies he doth commit. Suppoſe *Adam* had ſtood, would not God certainly have foreſeen that he would have ſtood? Yet it would have been concluded that *Adam* had ſtood, not by any neceſſity of God's Foreknowledge, but by the Liberty of his own Will: Why ſhould then the Foreknowledge of God add more neceſſity to his falling than to his ſtanding? * And though it be ſaid ſometimes in Scripture, that ſuch a thing was done *that the Scripture might be fulfilled*, as John 12. 38. *that the ſaying of* Eſaias *might be fulfilled, Lord who hath believed our Report?* The Word *That*, doth not infer that the Prediction of the Prophet was the cauſe of the *Jews* unbelief, but infers this, that the Prediction was manifeſted to be true by their Unbelief, and the Event anſwered the Prediction; this Prediction was not the cauſe of their Sin, but their foreſeen Sin was the cauſe of this Prediction; and ſo the Particle *That*, is taken, *Pſal.* 51. 6. *Againſt thee, thee only have I ſinned, that thou mighteſt be juſtified*, &c. The juſtifying God, was not the end and intent of the Sin, but the event of it upon his Acknowledgment.

* *Rawley* of the World, lib. 1. cap. 1. ſect. 12.

* *Rivet.* in Iſa. 53. 1. p. 16.

4. *God foreknows things, becauſe they will come to paſs; but things are not future, becauſe God knows them.* Foreknowledge preſuppoſeth the Object which is foreknown; a thing that is to come to paſs, is the Object of the Divine Knowledge, but not the Cauſe of the Act of Divine Knowledge; and though the Foreknowledge of God doth in Eternity precede the actual Preſence of a thing which is foreſeen as future; yet the future thing in regard of its Futurity, is as Eternal as the Foreknowledge of God: As the Voice is uttered before it be heard, and a thing is viſible before it be ſeen, and a thing knowable before it be known. But how comes it to be knowable to God? It muſt be anſwered, either in the Power of God as a thing poſſible, or in the Will of God as a thing future, he firſt willed, and then knew what he willed; he knew what he willed to effect, and he knew what he willed to permit; as he willed the Death of Chriſt by a determinate Counſel, and willed the Permiſſion of the *Jews* Sin, and the ordering of the Malice of their Nature to that end, *Acts* 2. 22. God decrees to make a rational Creature, and to govern him by a Law; God decrees not to hinder this rational Creature from tranſgreſſing his Law; and God foreſees that what he would not hinder, would come to paſs. Man did not Sin becauſe God foreſaw him; but God foreſaw him to Sin, becauſe Man would Sin. If *Adam* and other Men would have acted otherwiſe, God would have foreknown that they would have acted well; God foreſaw our Actions becauſe they would ſo come to paſs by the motion of our Free-Will, which he would permit, which he would concur with, which he would order to his own holy and glorious Ends, for the manifeſtation of the Perfection of his Nature. If I ſee a Man lie in a Sink, no neceſſity is inferred upon him from my Sight to lie in that filthy Place, but there is a neceſſity inferr'd by him that lies there, that I ſhould ſee him in that Condition if I paſs by, and caſt my Eye that way.

5. *God did not only foreknow our Actions, but the manner of our Actions.* That is, he did not only know that we would do ſuch Actions, but that we would do them freely; he foreſaw that the Will would freely determine it ſelf to this or that; the Knowledge of God takes not away the Nature of things; though God knows poſſible things, yet they remain in the Nature of Poſſibility; and though God knows contingent things, yet they remain in the Nature of Contingencies; and though God knows free Agents, yet they remain in the Nature of Liberty. God did not foreknow the Actions of Man, as neceſſary, but as free; ſo that Liberty is rather eſtabliſhed by this Foreknowledge, than removed: God did not foreknow that *Adam* had not a Power to ſtand, or that any Man hath not a Power to omit ſuch a ſinful Action, but that he would not omit it. Man hath a Power to do otherwiſe than that which God foreknows he will do: *Adam* was not determin'd by any inward neceſſity to Fall, nor any Man by any inward neceſſity to commit this or that particular Sin; but God foreſaw that he would Fall, and Fall freely; for he ſaw the whole Circle of Means and Cauſes, whereby ſuch and ſuch Actions ſhould be produced; and can be no more ignorant of the Motions of our Wills, and the manner of them, than an Artificer can be ignorant of the Motions of his Watch, and how far the Spring will let down the String in the ſpace of an Hour; he ſees all Cauſes leading to ſuch Events in their whole order, and how the Free-Will of Man will comply with this, or refuſe that; he changes not the manner of the Creature's Operation, whatſoever it be.

6. *But what if the Foreknowledge of God, and the Liberty of the Will, cannot be fully reconciled? ſhall we therefore deny a Perfection in God to ſupport a Liberty in our ſelves?* Shall we rather faſten Ignorance upon God, and accuſe him of Blindneſs, to maintain our Liberty? That God doth foreknow every thing, and yet that there is Liberty in the rational Creature, are both certain; but how fully to reconcile them, may

ſurmount the Underſtanding of Man. Some Truths the Diſciples were not capable of bearing in the Days of Chriſt; and ſeveral Truths our Underſtandings cannot reach as long as the World doth laſt; yet in the mean time we muſt on the one hand take heed of conceiving God ignorant, and on the other hand of imagining the Creature neceſſitated; the one will render God imperfect, and the other will ſeem to render him unjuſt, in puniſhing Man for that Sin which he could not avoid, but was brought into by a fatal Neceſſity. God is ſufficient to render a Reaſon of his own Proceedings, and clear up all at the Day of Judgment; 'tis a part of Man's Curioſity, ſince the Fall, to be prying into God's Secrets, things too high for him; whereby he ſinges his own Wings, and confounds his own Underſtanding. 'Tis a curſed Affectation that runs in the Blood of *Adam*'s Poſterity, *to know as God*, though our firſt Father ſmarted and ruin'd his Poſterity in that Attempt; the Ways and Knowledge of God are as much *above our thoughts* and Conceptions, as the *Heavens are above the Earth*, Iſa. 55. 9. * and ſo ſublime, that we cannot comprehend them in their true and juſt Greatneſs; his Deſigns are ſo myſterious, and the Ways of his Conduct ſo profound, that it is not poſſible to dive into them: The force of our Underſtandings is below his infinite Wiſdom, and therefore we ſhould adore him with an humble Aſtoniſhment, and cry out with the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 11. 33. *Oh the depth of the Riches of the Wiſdom and Knowledge of God! how unſearchable are his Judgments! and his Ways paſt finding out!* whenever we meet with Depths that we cannot fathom, let us remember that he is God, and we his Creatures, and not be guilty of ſo great Extravagance, as to think that a Subject can pierce into all the Secrets of a Prince, or a Work underſtand all the Operations of the Artificer. Let us only reſolve not to faſten any thing on God that is unworthy of the Perfection of his Nature, and diſhonourable to the Glory of his Majeſty; nor imagine that we can ever ſtep out of the Rank of Creatures to the Glory of the Deity, to underſtand fully every thing in his Nature.

Daille Melang. part. 1. p. 712. 725.

So much for the *ſecond general*, What God knows.

III. The *third* is, *How God knows all things?* As it is neceſſary we ſhould conceive God to be an Underſtanding Being, elſe he could not be God; ſo we muſt conceive his Underſtanding to be infinitely more pure and perfect than ours in the Act of it, elſe we liken him to our ſelves, and debaſe him as low as his Foot-ſtool. * As among Creatures there are Degrees of Being and Perfection; Plants above Earth and Sand, becauſe they have a Power of growth; Beaſts above Plants, becauſe to their Power of growth, there is an addition of Excellency of Senſe; rational Creatures above Beaſts, becauſe to Senſe there is added the Dignity of Reaſon: The Underſtanding of Man is more noble than all the vegetative Power of Plants, or the ſenſitive Power of Beaſts: God therefore muſt be infinitely more excellent in his Underſtanding, and therefore in the manner of it. As Man differs from a Beaſt in regard of his Knowledge; ſo doth God alſo from Man, in regard of his Knowledge. As God therefore is in Being and Perfection, infinitely more above a Man than a Man is above a Beaſt, the manner of his Knowledge muſt be infinitely more above a Man's Knowledge, than the Knowledge of a Man is above that of a Beaſt; our Underſtandings can claſp an Object in a moment, that is at a great diſtance from our Sence; our Eye by one elevated Motion can view the Heavens; the manner of God's Underſtanding muſt be unconceivably above our glimmerings; as the manner of his Being is infinitely more perfect than all Beings, ſo muſt the manner of his Underſtanding be infinitely more perfect than all created Underſtandings. * Indeed the manner of God's Knowledge can no more be known by us, than his Eſſence can be known by us; and the ſame incapacity in Man, which renders him unable to comprehend the Being of God, renders him as unable to comprehend the manner of God's Underſtanding: As there is a vaſt diſtance between the Eſſence of God, and our Beings, ſo there is between the Thoughts of God and our Thoughts; the Heavens are not ſo much higher than the Earth, as the Thoughts of God are *above the thoughts of men*, yea, and of the higheſt Angel, *Iſa.* 55. 8, 9. Yet tho' we know not the manner of God's Knowledge, we know that he knows; as tho' we know not the infiniteneſs of God, yet we know that he is infinite. 'Tis God's ſole Prerogative to know himſelf, what he is; and it is equally his Prerogative to know how he knows; the manner of God's Knowledge therefore muſt be conſidered by us, as free from thoſe Imperfections our Knowledge is encumbred with.

Maxim. Tyrius Diſſert. 1. p. 9, 10.

* *Maimonides More Nevochim.* part. 3. c. 20. p. 391, 392, 393.

In *general*, God doth neceſſarily know all things; he is neceſſarily Omnipreſent, becauſe of the immenſity of his Eſſence; ſo he is neceſſarily Omniſcient, becauſe of the infiniteneſs of his Underſtanding. 'Tis no more at the Liberty of his Will, whether he will know all things; than whether he will be able to create all things; 'tis no more at the Liberty of his Will, whether he will be Omniſcient, than whether he will be Holy; he can as little be ignorant, as he can be impure; he knows not all things, becauſe he will know them, but becauſe it is Eſſential to his Nature to know them.

In *particular*.

Propoſition I. *God knows by his own Eſſence*; that is, He ſees the Nature of things in the Ideas of his own Mind, and the Events of things in the Decrees of his own Will; he knows them not by viewing the things, but by viewing himſelf; his own Eſſence is the Mirrour and Book, wherein he beholds all things that he doth ordain, diſpoſe and execute; and ſo he knows all things in the firſt and Original Cauſe; which is no other than his own Eſſence Willing, and his own Eſſence executing what he Wills; he knows them in his Power, as the Phyſical Principle; in his Will, as the moral Principle of things, as ſome ſpeak.

He borrows not the Knowledge of Creatures from the Creatures, nor depends upon them for means of Underſtanding, as we poor Worms do, who are beholden to the Objects abroad to aſſiſt us with Images of things, and to our Senſes to convey them into our Minds; God would then acquire a Perfection from thoſe things which are below himſelf, and an Excellency from thoſe things that are vile; his Knowledge would not precede the Being of the Creatures, but the Creatures would be before the Act of his Knowledge. If he underſtood by Images drawn from the Creatures, as we do, there would be ſomething in God which is not God, *viz.* the Images of things drawn from outward Objects: God would then depend upon Creatures for that which is more noble than a bare Being; for to be Underſtanding, is more excellent than barely to be. Beſides, if God's Knowledge of his Creatures were derived from the Creatures by the Impreſſion of any thing upon him, as there is upon us, he could not know from Eternity, becauſe from Eternity there was no actual Exiſtence of any thing but himſelf; and therefore there could not be any Images ſhot out from any thing, becauſe there was not any thing in Being but God; as there is no Principle of Being to any thing but by his Eſſence; ſo there is no Principle of the Knowledge of any thing by himſelf but

but his Eſſence: If the knowledge of God were diſtinct from his Eſſence, his Knowledge were not Eternal, becauſe there is nothing Eternal but his Eſſence.

His underſtanding is not a faculty in him as it is in us, but the ſame with his Eſſence, becauſe of the ſimplicity of his nature; God is not made up of various parts, one diſtinct from another as we are, and therefore doth not underſtand by a part of himſelf, but by himſef; ſo that to be, and to underſtand is the ſame with God; his Eſſence is not one thing, and the power whereby he underſtands, another; he would then be compounded, and not be the moſt ſimple Being. This alſo is neceſſary for the Perfection of God; for the more perfect and noble the way and manner of knowing is, the more perfect and noble is the knowledge. The perfection of knowledge depends upon the excellency of the medium whereby we know. As a knowledge by reaſon, is a more noble way of knowing than knowledge by ſenſe; ſo 'tis more excellent for God to know by his Eſſence, than by any thing without him, any thing mixt with him; the firſt would render him dependant, and the other would demoliſh his ſimplicity.

Again, the natures of all things are contained in God; not formally; for then the nature of the Creatures would be God: But eminently; *he that planted the ear, ſhall he not hear, he that formed the eye, ſhall he not ſee?* Pſal. 94. 9. He hath in himſelf eminently the Beauty, Perfection, Life and Vigour of all Creatures; he created nothing contrary to himſelf, but every thing with ſome foot-ſteps of himſelf in them; he could not have pronounced them good, as he did, had there been any thing in them contrary to his own goodneſs; and therefore as his Eſſence primarily repreſents it ſelf, ſo it repreſents the Creatures, and makes them known to him. As the Eſſence of God is eminently all things, ſo by underſtanding his Eſſence, he eminently underſtands all things. And therefore he hath not one knowledge of himſelf, and another knowledge of the Creatures; but by knowing himſelf, as the original and exemplary cauſe of all things, he cannot be ignorant of any Creature which he is the cauſe of; ſo that he knows all things, not by an underſtanding of them, but by an underſtanding of himſelf; by underſtanding his own Power as the efficient of them, his own Will as the order of them, his own Goodneſs as the adorner and beautifier of them, his own Wiſdom as the diſpoſer of them, and his own Holineſs, to which many of their actions are contrary.

Dionyſ.

**Kendal against Goodwin of Foreknowledge.*

*As he ſees all things poſſible in his own Power, becauſe he is able to produce them; ſo he ſees all things future in his own Will; decreeing to effect them, if they be good; or Decreeing to permit them, if they be evil. In this Glaſs he ſees what he will give Being to, and what he will ſuffer to fall into a deficiency, without looking out of himſelf, or borrowing Knowledge from his Creatures; he knows all things in himſelf. And thus his Knowledge is more noble and of a higher elevation than ours, or the knowledge of any Creature can be; he knows all things by one comprehenſion of the cauſes in himſelf.

Propoſition II. *God knows all things by one act of intuition.* This the Schools call an intuitive knowledge. This follows upon the other; for if he know by his own Eſſence, he knows all things by one act, there would be otherwiſe a diviſion in his Eſſence, a firſt and a laſt, a nearneſs and a diſtance. As what he made, he made by one word; ſo what he ſees, he pierceth into by one glance from Eternity to Eternity: As he wills all things by one act of his Will, ſo he knows all things by one act of his Underſtanding: He knows not ſome things *diſcurſively* from other things, nor knows one thing *ſucceſſively* after another. As by one act he imparts Eſſence to things; ſo by one act he knows the Nature of things.

1. *He doth not know by Diſcourſe, as we do.* That is, By deducing one thing from another, and from common notions drawing out other rational concluſions, and arguing one thing from another, and ſpringing up various conſequences from ſome Principle aſſented to; but God ſtands in no need of reaſonings; the making inferences and abſtracting things, would be ſtains in the infinite Perfection of God; here would be a mixture of knowledge and ignorance; while he knew the Principle, he would not know the conſequence and concluſion, till he had actually deduc'd it; one thing would be known after another, and ſo he would have an ignorance, and then a knowledge; and there would be different conceptions in God, and knowledge would be multiplyed according to the multitude of Objects; as it is in humane underſtandings. But God knows all things before they did exiſt, and never was ignorant of them, *Acts* 15. 18. *Known unto God are all his Works from the beginning of the World.* He therefore knows them all at once; the knowledge of one thing was not before another, nor depended upon another, as it doth in the way of humane reaſoning. *Tho' indeed ſome make a vertual Diſcourſe in God that is, tho' God hath a ſimple knowledge, yet it doth vertually contain a Diſcourſe by the flowing of one knowledge from another; as from the knowledge of his own Power, he knows what things are poſſible to be made by him; and from the knowledge of himſelf, he paſſes to the knowledge of the Creatures; but this is only according to our conception, and becauſe of our weakneſs they are apprehended as two diſtinct acts in God, one of which is the reaſon of another: As we ſay that one Attribute is the reaſon of another; as his Mercy, may be ſaid to be the reaſon of his Patience; and his Omnipreſence, to be the reaſon of the knowledge of preſent things done in the World. God indeed by one ſimple act, knows himſelf and the Creatures; but when that Act whereby he knows himſelf, is conceived by us to paſs to the knowledge of the Creatures, we muſt not underſtand it to be a new Act, diſtinct from the other; but the ſame act upon different Terms or Objects, ſuch an order is in our underſtandings and conceptions, not in God's.

* *Suarez.* vol. 1. de Deo, lib. 3. cap. 2. p. 133, 134.

2. *Nor doth he know ſucceſſively, as we do.* That is, not by drops, one thing after another. This follows from the former; a knowledge of all things without Diſcourſe, is a knowledge without Succeſſion.* The knowledge of one thing is not in God before another, one act of Knowledge doth not forego another; in regard of the objects, one thing is before another, one Year before another, one Generation of Men before another, one is the cauſe, the other is the effect: In the Creatures there is ſuch a Succeſſion, and God knows there will be ſuch a Succeſſion; but there is no ſuch order in God's Knowledge; for he knows all thoſe Succeſſions by one glance, without any Succeſſion of knowledge in himſelf.

* *Gamach in Aquin. q. 14. cap. 1 p. 119.*

Man in his view of things, muſt turn ſometimes his Body, ſometimes only his Eyes; he cannot ſee all the Contents of a Letter at once, and tho' he beholds all the Lines in the Page of a Book at once, and a whole Country in a Map, yet to know what is contain'd in them, he muſt turn his Eye from word to word, and line to line, and ſo ſpin out one thing after another by ſeveral acts and motions. We behold a great part of the Sea at once*, but not all the dimenſions of it; for to know the length of the Sea we move our Eyes one way; to ſee the breadth of it, we turn our Eyes another way; to behold the depth of it, we have another motion of them And when we caſt our Eyes up to Heaven, we ſeem to

* ſaith *Epiphanius.*

receive in at an inſtant the whole extent of the Hemiſphere; yet there is but one Object the Eye can attentively pitch upon, and we cannot diſtinctly view what we ſee in a lump, without various motions of our Eyes, which is not done without ſucceſſion of Time *. And certainly the Underſtanding of Angels is bounded, according to the meaſure of their Beings; ſo that it cannot extend it ſelf at one time, to a quantity of Objects, to make a diſtinct application of them, but the Objects muſt preſent themſelves one by one: But God is all Eye, all Underſtanding; as there is no ſucceſſion in his Eſſence, ſo there is none in his Knowledge; *his underſtanding* in the nature, and in the act, *is infinite*, as it is in the Text. He therefore ſees Eternally and Univerſally, all things, by one act, without any motion, much leſs various motions; the various changes of things, in their ſubſtance, qualities, places, and relations, withdraw not any thing from his Eye, nor bring any new thing to his knowledge; he doth not upon conſideration of preſent things turn his mind from paſt; or when he beholds future things, turn his mind from preſent; but he ſees them not one after another, but all at once and all together; the whole Circle of his own Counſels, and all the various lines drawn forth from the Center of his Will, to the circumference of his Creatures; Juſt as if a Man were able in one moment to read a whole Library; or, as if you ſhould imagine a tranſparent Chryſtal Globe, hung up in the midſt of a Room, and ſo framed as to take in the Images of all things in the Room, the Fret-work in the Cieling, the In-laid parts of the Floor, and the particular parts of the Tapeſtry about it, the Eye of a Man would behold all the Beauty of the Room at once in it. As the Sun by one light and heat frames ſenſible things; ſo God by one ſimple act knows all things: As he knows mutable things by an immutable knowledge, bodily things by a ſpiritual knowledge; ſo he knows many things by one knowledge, *Heb.* 4. 13. *All things are open and naked to him*, more than any one thing can be to us; and therefore he views all things at once, as well as we can behold and contemplate one thing alone. As he is the *Father of Lights*, a God of infinite Underſtanding, there is *no variableneſs in his mind, nor any ſhadow of turning* of his Eye, as there is of ours, to behold various things, *James* 1. 17. His Knowledge being Eternal, includes all times; there is nothing paſt or future with him, and therefore he beholds all things by one and the ſame manner of Knowledge, and comprehends all knowable things by one act, and in one moment.

* *Amyrant morale chreſti. Tom.* 3. p. 137.

This muſt needs be ſo,

1. *Becauſe of the eminency of God.* God is above all, and therefore cannot but ſee the motions of all. He that ſits in a Theater, or at the top of a place, ſees all things, all perſons, by one aſpect he comprehends the whole Circle of the Place; whereas he that ſits below, when he looks before, he cannot ſee things behind; God being above all, about all, in all, ſees at once the motions of all. The whole World in the Eye of God, is leſs than a Point that divides one Sentence from another in a Book; as a Cypher, a *grain of Duſt*, Iſa. 40. 15. So little a thing can be ſeen by Man at once; and all things being as little in the Eye of God, are ſeen at once by him. As all time is but a moment to his Eternity; ſo all things are but as a point to the immenſity of his Knowledge, which he can behold with more eaſe than we can move or turn our eye.

2. *Becauſe all the Perfections of Knowing, are united in God.* * As particular ſenſes are divided in Man, by one he ſees, by another he hears, by another he ſmells, yet all thoſe are united in one common ſenſe, and this common ſenſe apprehends all; ſo the various and diſtinct ways of knowledge in the Creatures, are all eminently united in God. A Man when he ſees a grain of Wheat, underſtands at once all things that can in time proceed from that Seed; ſo God by beholding his own Vertue and Power, beholds all things which ſhall in time be unfolded by him. We have a ſhadow of this way of knowledge in our own Underſtanding; the ſenſe only perceives a thing preſent, and one Object only proper and ſutable to it; as the *Eye* ſees *Colour*, the *Ear* hears *Sounds*; we ſee this and that Man, one time this, another minute that; but the underſtanding abſtracts a notion of the common nature of Man, and frames a conception of that nature wherein all Men agree; and ſo in a manner beholds and underſtands all Men at once, by underſtanding the common nature of Man, which is a degree of knowledge above the ſenſe and fancy; we may then conceive an infinite vaſter Perfection in the Underſtanding of God. As to know, is ſimply better than not to know at all; ſo to know by one act comprehenſive, is a greater Perfection than to know by divided acts, by ſucceſſion to receive information, and to have an increaſe or decreaſe of knowledge, to be like a Bucket, always deſcending into the Well, and fetching Water from thence. 'Tis a Man's weakneſs that he is fixed on one object only at a time; 'Tis God's Perfection that he can behold all at once, and is fixed upon one no more than upon another.

* *Cuſan* p. 646.

Propoſition III. *God knows all things independently.* This is Eſſential to an infinite Underſtanding. He receives not his knowledge from any thing without him, he hath no Tutor to inſtruct him, or Book to inform him; *who hath been his Counſellor?* ſaith the Prophet, *Iſa.* 40. 13. He hath no need of the Counſels of others, nor of the inſtructions of others. This follows upon the *firſt and ſecond Propoſitions*; if he knows things by his Eſſence, then as his Eſſence is independent from the Creatures, ſo is his knowledge; he borrows not any images from the Creature, hath no ſpecies or pictures of things in his underſtanding, as we have; no Beams from the Creature ſtrike upon him, to enlighten him, but beams from him upon the World; the Earth ſends not light to the Sun, but the Sun to the Earth.

Our knowledge indeed depends upon the Object; but all created Objects depend upon God's Knowledge and Will: We could not know Creatures, unleſs they were; but Creatures could not be, unleſs God knew them. As nothing that he Wills is the cauſe of his Will; ſo nothing that he Knows is the cauſe of his Knowledge, he did not make things to know them, but he knows them to make them; Who will imagine, that the mark of the Foot in the Duſt, is the cauſe that the Foot ſtands in this or that particular Place?

If his knowledge did depend upon the things, then the exiſtence of things did precede God's knowledge of them; to ſay that they are the cauſe of God's Knowledge, is to ſay, that God was not the cauſe of their Being; and if he did Create them, it was effected by a blind and ignorant Power, he created he knew not what, till he had produced it. If he be beholden for his Knowledge to the Creatures he hath made, he had then no knowledge of them before he made them. If his knowledge were dependant upon them, it could not be Eternal, but muſt have a beginning when the Creatures had a beginning, and be of no longer a date than ſince the Nature of things was in actual exiſtence; for whatſoever is a cauſe of knowledge, doth precede the knowledge it cauſes, either in order of Time, or order of Nature; Temporal things therefore cannot be the cauſe of that knowledge which is Eternal.

Eternal. His *Works* could not be *foreknown* to him, if his Knowledge commenc'd with the exiſtence of his Works, if he knew them before he made them, he could not derive a Knowledge from them after they were made. He made all things *in Wiſdom*, Pſal. 104. 24. How can this be imagin'd, if the things known were the cauſe of his Knowledge, and ſo before his knowledge, and therefore before his action *? God would not then be the firſt in the order of knowing Agents, becauſe he would not act by Knowledge, but act before he knew, and know after he had acted, and ſo the Creature which he made, would be before the act of his Underſtanding, whereby he knew what he made.

Acts 15. 18.

* Bradwardin, lib. 1. cap. 15.

Again, ſince Knowledge is a *Perfection*, if God's knowledge of the Creatures depended upon the Creatures, he would derive an Excellency from them, they would derive no Excellency from any *Idea* in the Divine Mind; he would not be infinitely perfect in himſelf; if his Perfection in knowledge were gained from any thing without himſelf and below himſelf, he would not be ſufficient of himſelf, but be under an Indigence, which wanted a ſupply from the things he had made; and could not be eternally perfect till he had created, and ſeen the Effects of his own Power, Goodneſs, and Wiſdom, to render him more wiſe and knowing in Time than he was from Eternity; Who can fancy ſuch a God as this, without deſtroying the Deity he pretends to adore? For if his Underſtanding be perfected by ſomething without him, why may not his Eſſence be perfected by ſomething without him; that as he was made knowing by ſomething without him, he might be made God by ſomething without him?

How could his Underſtanding be infinite, if it depended upon a finite Object, as upon a Cauſe? Is the Majeſty of God to be debas'd to a Mendicant condition, to ſeek for a ſupply from things inferior to himſelf? Is it to be imagin'd that a Fool, a Toad, a Fly ſhould be aſſiſtant to the Knowledge of God? That the moſt noble Being ſhould be perfected by things ſo vile, that the ſupream cauſe of all things ſhould receive any addition of Knowledge, and be determin'd in his Underſtanding by the Notion of things ſo mean? To conclude this Particular, all things depend upon his knowledge, his knowledge depends upon nothing, but is as independent as himſelf, and his own Eſſence.

Propoſition IV. *God knows all things diſtinctly.* His Underſtanding is infinite in regard of clearneſs; *God is light, and in him is no darkneſs at all*, John 1. 5. He ſees not through a Miſt or Cloud; there's no Blemiſh in his Underſtanding, no Mote or Beam in his Eye, to render any thing obſcure to him. Man diſcerns the ſurface and outſide of things, little or nothing of the Eſſence of things; we ſee the nobleſt things, but *as in a glaſs darkly*, 1 Cor. 13. 12. The too great nearneſs, as well as the too great diſtance of a thing, hinders our ſight; the ſmallneſs of a mote eſcapes our Eye, and ſo our Knowledge; alſo the weakneſs of our Underſtanding is troubled with the multitude of things, and cannot know many things but confuſedly. But God knows the Forms and Eſſence of things, every Circumſtance; nothing is ſo deep, but he ſees to the bottom; he ſees the maſs, and ſees the motes of Beings; his Underſtanding being infinite, is not offended with a multitude of things, or diſtracted with the variety of them; he diſcerns every thing infinitely more clearly and perfectly than *Adam* or *Solomon* could any one thing in the Circle of their knowledge: What knowledge they had, was from him; he hath therefore infinitely a more perfect knowledge than they were capable in their Natures to receive a communication of. All things are *open to him*, *Heb.* 4. 13. The leaſt fibre in its nakedneſs and diſtinct frame, is tranſparent to him; as by the help of Glaſſes, the Mouth, Feet, Hands of a ſmall Inſect, are viſible to a Man, which ſeem to the Eye, without that aſſiſtance, one entire piece, not diverſified into parts. All the Cauſes, Qualities, Natures, Properties of things are open to him, *he brings out the Hoſt of Heaven by number, and calleth them by Names*, Iſa. 40. 26. He numbers the Hairs of our heads; what more diſtinct than Number? Thus God beholds things in every Unity, which makes up the heap: He knows, and none elſe can, every thing in its true and intimate cauſes, in its original and intermediate cauſes; in himſelf, as the cauſe of every Particular of their Being, every Property in their Being.

Knowledge by the cauſes is the moſt noble and perfect Knowledge, and moſt ſuited to the Infinite Excellency of the Divine Being; he created all things, and ordered them to an univerſal and particular end; he therefore knows the Eſſential Properties of every thing, every activity of their Nature, all their fitneſs for thoſe diſtinct Ends, to which he orders them, and for which he governs and diſpoſeth them; and underſtands their darkeſt and moſt hidden qualities, infinitely clearer than any Eye can behold the clear Beams of the Sun. He knows all things as he made them; he made them diſtinctly, and therefore knows them diſtinctly, and that every individual; therefore God is ſaid, *Gen.* 1. 31. To *ſee every thing that he hath made*; he took a review of every particular Creature he had made, and upon his view pronounced it good: To pronounce that good, which was not exactly known in every Creek, in every Mite of its Nature, had not conſiſted with his veracity; for every one that ſpeaks Truth ignorantly, that knows not that he ſpeaks Truth, is a Liar in ſpeaking that which is true. God knows every act of his own Will, whether it be poſitive or permiſſive, and therefore every effect of his Will. We muſt needs aſcribe to God a perfect Knowledge; but a confuſed Knowledge cannot challenge that Title. To know things only in a heap, is unworthy of the Divine Perfection; for if God knows his own ends in the Creation of things, he knows diſtinctly the means whereby he will bring them to thoſe ends for which he hath appointed them: No Wiſe Man intends an end, without a knowledge of the means conducing to that end; an ignorance then of any thing in the World, which falls under the nature of a means to a Divine end (and there is nothing in the World but doth,) would be inconſiſtent with the Perfection of God; it would aſcribe to him a blind Providence in the World. As there can be nothing imperfect in his Being and Eſſence, ſo there can be nothing imperfect in his Underſtanding and Knowledge; and therefore not a confus'd Knowledge, which is an Imperfection. *Darkneſs and Light are both alike to him*, Pſal. 139. 12. He ſees diſtinctly into the one, as well as the other; what is Darkneſs to us, is not ſo to him.

Propoſition V. *God knows all things infallibly.* His Underſtanding is infinite, in regard of certainty; every Tittle of what he knows, is as far from failing, as what he ſpeaks; our *Saviour* affirms the *one*, Mat. 5. 18. And there is the ſame reaſon of the certainty of *one* as well as the *other*; his Eſſence is the meaſure of his Knowledge; whence it is as impoſſible that God ſhould be miſtaken in the knowledge of the leaſt thing in the World, as it is that he ſhould be miſtaken in his own Eſſence; for knowing himſelf

himſelf comprehenſively, he muſt know all other things infallibly. Since he is eſſentially Omniſcient, he is no more capable of Error in his Underſtanding, than of Imperfection in his Eſſence; his Counſels are as unerring as his Eſſence is perfect, and his Knowledge as infallible as his Eſſence is free from defect.

Again, ſince God knows all things with a *knowledge of Viſion*, becauſe he Wills them; his Knowledge muſt be as infallible as his Purpoſe; now his Purpoſe will certainly be effected; *what he hath thought ſhall come to paſs, and what he hath purpoſed ſhall ſtand*, Iſa. 14. 24. *His Counſel ſhall ſtand, and he will do all his pleaſure*, Iſa. 46. 10. There may be interruptions of Nature, the Foundations of it may be out of courſe, but there can be no bar upon the Author of Nature; he hath an infinite Power to carry on and perfect the reſolves of his own Will; he can effect what he pleaſes by a Word. Speech is one of the leaſt motions; yet when God ſaid, *let there be Light*, *there was Light*, ariſing from Darkneſs. No Reaſon can be given why God knows a thing to be, but becauſe he infallibly Wills it to be.

* *Suarez.* Vol. 2. p. 228.

Again, * The *Schools* make this difference between the knowledge of the good and bad Angels, that the good are never deceived; for that is repugnant to their Bleſſed State; for deceit is an evil and an imperfection, inconſiſtent with that perfect Bleſſedneſs the good Angels are poſſeſſed of; and would it not much more be a ſtain upon the Bleſſedneſs of that God that is bleſſed for ever, to be ſubject to deceit? His Knowledge therefore is not an Opinion, for an Opinion is uncertain; a Man knows not what to think, but leans to one part of the Queſtion propos'd, rather than to the other. If things did not come to paſs therefore as God knows them, his knowledge would be imperfect; and ſince he knows by his Eſſence, his Eſſence alſo would be imperfect, if God were expos'd to any Deceit in his knowledge; he knows by himſelf, who is the higheſt Truth; and therefore it is impoſſible he ſhould err in his Underſtanding.

Propoſition VI. *God knows immutably.* His Underſtanding elſe could not be infinite; every thing and every Act that is mutable, is *finite*, it hath its Bounds; for there is a Term from which it changeth, and a Term to which it changes. * There is a change in the Underſtanding when we gain the Knowledge of a thing, which was unknown to us before; or when we actually conſider a thing which we did not know before, though we had the Principles of the Knowledge of it; or, when we know that diſtinctly, which we before knew confuſedly. None of theſe can be aſcribed to God, without a manifeſt Diſparagement of his Infiniteneſs: Our Knowledge indeed is alway arriving to us or flowing from us; we paſs from one Degree to another, from worſe to better, or from better to worſe; but God loſes nothing by the Ages that are run, nor will gain any thing by the Ages that are to come. If there were a Variation in the Knowledge of God, by the daily and hourly Changes in the World, he would grow wiſer than he was, he was not then perfectly wiſe before. A Change in the Objects known, infers not any change in the Underſtanding exerciſed about them; the Wheel moves round, the Spokes that are loweſt are preſently higheſt, and preſently return to be low again; but the Eye that beholds them, changes not with the Motion of the Wheels. God's Knowledge admits no more of encreaſe or decreaſe, than his Eſſence doth; ſince God knows by his Eſſence, and the Eſſence of God is God himſelf, his Knowledge muſt be void of any change. The Knowledge of poſſible things ariſing from the Knowledge of his own Power cannot be changed, unleſs his Power be changed, and God become weak and impotent; the Knowledge of future things cannot be chang'd, becauſe that Knowledge ariſeth from his Will, which is irreverſible, *the Counſel of the Lord that ſhall ſtand*, Prov. 19. 21. So that if God can never decay into Weakneſs, and never turn to Inconſtancy, there can be no variation of his Knowledge. He knows what he can do, and he knows what he will do, and both theſe being immutable, his Knowledge muſt conſequently be ſo too. It was not neceſſary that this or that Creature ſhould be, and therefore it was not neceſſary that God ſhould know this or that Creature with a Knowledge of Viſion; but after the Will of God had determin'd the Exiſtence of this or that Creature, his Knowledge being then determin'd to this or that Object, did neceſſarily continue unchangeable. God therefore knows no more now, than he did before; and at the end of the World he ſhall know no more than he doth now; and from Eternity he knows no leſs than he doth now, and ſhall do to Eternity. Though things paſs into Being and out of Being, the Knowledge of God doth not vary with them, for he knows them as well before they were, as when they are; and knows them as well when they are paſt, as when they are preſent.

* *Tileni Syntagma* Part 1. Diſp. 13. Theſ. 13.

Propoſition VII. *God knows all things perpetually*, i. e. *in Act.* Since he knows by his Eſſence, he always knows, becauſe his Eſſence never ceaſeth, but is a pure Act; ſo that he doth not know only in Habit, but in Act. Men that have the Knowledge of ſome Art or Science, have it always in Habit, though when they are aſleep they have it not in Act; A Muſician hath the Habit of Muſick, but doth not ſo much as think of it when his Senſes are bound up. But God is *an unſleepy Eye* *, he never ſlumbers nor ſleeps; he never ſlumbers, in regard of his Providence, and therefore never ſlumbers in regard of his Knowledge. He knows not himſelf, nor any other Creature more perfectly at one time than at another; he is perpetually in the Act of knowing, as the Sun is in the Act of ſhining; the Sun never ceas'd to ſhine in one or other part of the World, ſince it was firſt fixed in the Heavens; nor God to be in the Act of Knowledge, ſince he was God; and therefore ſince he always was, and always will be God, he always was, and always will be in the Act of Knowledge; always knowing his own Eſſence, he muſt alway actually know what hath been gone and ceas'd from Being, and what ſhall come and ariſe into Being. As a Watchmaker knows what Watch he intends to make; and after he hath made it, though it be broken to Pieces or conſumed by the Fire, he ſtill knows it, becauſe he knows the Copy of it in his own Mind. Some therefore in regard of this perpetual Act of the Divine Knowledge, have called God not *Intellectus*, but the *Intellection of Intellections*; we have no proper *Engliſh* Word to expreſs the Act of the *Underſtanding*; as his Power is co-eternal with him, ſo his Knowledge; all times paſt, preſent and to come, are embrac'd in the Boſom of his Underſtanding; he fixed all things in their Seaſons, that nothing new comes to him, nothing old paſſes from him *. What is done in a Thouſand Years, is as actually preſent with his Knowledge, as what is done in one Day, or in one Watch in the Night, is with ours: Since a *Thouſand Years are no more to God than a Day*, or a *Watch in the Night is to us*, Pſal. 90. 4. God is in the higheſt degree of Being, and therefore in the higheſt degree of Underſtanding. Knowledge is one of the moſt perfect Acts in any Creature. God therefore hath all

* *Plato*, ἀκοίμητος θεός.

* *Dimit.*

all actual, as well as Eſſential and Habitual Knowledge, *his Underſtanding is infinite.*

IV. The *fourth general*, is *Reaſons* to prove this.

Reaſ. 1. *God muſt know what any Creature knows, and more than any Creature knows.* There is nothing done in the World, but is known by ſome Creature or other; every Action is at leaſt known by the Perſon that Acts, and therefore known by the Creator, who cannot be exceeded by any of the Creatures, or all of them together; and every Creature is known by him, ſince every Creature is made by him. * And as God works all things by an infinite Power, ſo he knows all things by an infinite Underſtanding.

* *Gerhard.*

* *Gamach in 1. part. Aquin. q. 14. cap. 1. pag. 118, 119.*

1. *The Perfection of God requires this.* * All Perfections that include no Eſſential Defect, are formally in God; but Knowledge includes no Eſſential Defect in it ſelf, therefore it is in God. Knowledge in it ſelf, is deſirable, and an Excellency; Ignorance is a Defect; 'tis impoſſible that the leaſt Grain of Defect can be found in the moſt perfect Being. Since God is Wiſe, he muſt be Knowing; for Wiſdom muſt have Knowledge for the *Baſis* of it, A Creature can no more be wiſe without Knowledge, than he can be active without Strength. Now God is *only Wiſe*, Rom. 16. 27. And therefore only knowing in the higheſt degree of Knowledge, incomprehenſibly beyond all Degrees of Knowledge, becauſe infinite.

Again, the more Spiritual any thing is, the more Underſtanding it is. The dull Body underſtands nothing; Senſe perceives, but the Underſtanding Faculty is ſeated in the Soul, which is of a ſpiritual Nature, which knows things that are preſent, remembers things that are paſt, foreſees many things to come. What is the Property of a ſpiritual Nature, muſt be in a moſt eminent manner, in the ſupream Spirit of the World, that is, in the higheſt degree of Spirituality, and moſt remote from any matter.

Again, nothing can enjoy other things, but by ſome kind of underſtanding them; God hath the higheſt enjoyment of himſelf, of all things he hath created, of all the Glory that accrues to him by them; nothing of Perfection and Bleſſedneſs can be wanting to him. Felicity doth not conſiſt with Ignorance, and all imperfect Knowledge is a degree of Ignorance? God therefore doth perfectly know himſelf, and all things from whence he deſigns any Glory to himſelf. The moſt noble manner of acting muſt be aſcribed to God, as being the moſt noble and excellent Being; to act by Knowledge, is the moſt excellent manner of acting; God hath therefore, not only Knowledge, but the moſt excellent manner of Knowledge; for as it is better to know than to be ignorant, ſo it is better to know in the moſt excellent manner, than to have a mean and low kind of Knowledge; his Knowledge therefore muſt be every way as perfect as his Eſſence, infinite as well as that. An infinite Nature muſt have an infinite Knowledge: A God ignorant of any thing, cannot be counted infinite, for he is not infinite to whom any degree of Perfection is wanting.

2. *All the knowledge in any Creature is from God.* And you muſt allow God a greater and more perfect knowledge than any Creature hath, yea, than all Creatures have. All the drops of knowledge any Creature hath, come from God; and all the knowledge in every Creature, that ever was, is, or ſhall be in the whole Maſs, was derived from him. If all thoſe ſeveral Drops in particular Creatures, were collected into one Spirit, into one Creature, it would be an unconceivable knowledge, yet ſtill lower than what the Author of all that knowledge hath; for God cannot give more knowledge than he hath himſelf; nor is the Creature capable of receiving ſo much knowledge as God hath. As the Creature is uncapable of receiving ſo much Power as God hath, for then it would be Almighty; ſo it is uncapable of receiving ſo much knowledge as God hath, for then it would be God. Nothing can be made by God equal to him in any thing; if any thing could be made as knowing as God, it would be eternal as God, it would be the cauſe of all things as God. The Knowledge that we poor Worms have, is an Argument God uſes for the aſſerting the greatneſs of his own knowledge, *Pſal.* 94. 10. *He teaches man knowledge, ſhall he not know?* Man hath here Knowledge aſcribed to him, the Author of this knowledge is God, he furniſh'd him with it, and therefore doth in a higher manner poſſeſs it; and much more than can fall under the comprehenſion of any Creature; as the Sun enlightens all things, but hath more Light in it ſelf than it darts upon the Earth or the Heavens; and ſhall not God eminently contain all that knowledge he imparts to the Creatures, and infinitely more exact and comprehenſive?

3. *The Accuſations of Conſcience, evidence God's knowledge of all Actions of all his Creatures.* Doth not Conſcience check for the moſt ſecret Sins, to which none are privy but a man's ſelf; the whole World beſide being ignorant of his Crime? Do not the fears of another Judge gall the heart? If a Judgment above him be fear'd, an Underſtanding above him diſcerning their Secrets is confeſs'd by thoſe fears; whence can thoſe horrors ariſe, if there be not a Superiour that underſtands and records the Crime? What Perfection of the Divine Being can this relate unto, but Omniſcience? What other Attribute is to be feared, if God were defective in this?

The condemnation of us by our own Hearts, when none in the World can condemn us, renders it legible, that there is *one greater than our hearts*, in reſpect of Knowledge, who *knows all things*, 1 John 3. 20. Conſcience would be a vain Principle, and ſtingleſs without this; it would be an eaſie matter to ſilence all its Accuſations, and mockingly laugh in the face of its ſevereſt frowns. What need any trouble themſelves, if none knows their Crimes but themſelves? Conceal'd Sins, gnawing the Conſcience, are Arguments of God's Omniſcience of all preſent and paſt Actions.

4. *God is the firſt cauſe of every thing, every Creature in his Production.* Since all Creatures, from the higheſt Angel to the loweſt Worm, exiſt by the Power of God; if God underſtands his own Power and Excellency, nothing can be hid from him, that was brought forth by that Power, as well as nothing can be unknown to him, that that Power is able to produce. * If God knows nothing beſides himſelf, he may then believe there is nothing beſides himſelf; we ſhall then fancy a God miſerably miſtaken: If he knows nothing beſides himſelf, then things were not Created by him, or not underſtandingly and voluntarily Created, but drop'd from him before he was aware. To think that the firſt cauſe of all ſhould be ignorant of thoſe things he is the cauſe of, is to make him not a voluntary, but natural Agent, and therefore neceſſary; and then that the Creature came from him as Light from the Sun, and Moiſture from the Water; this would be an abſurd Opinion of the World's Creation; if God be a voluntary Agent, as he is, he muſt be an intelligent Agent. The Faculty of Will is not in any Creature, without that of Underſtanding alſo: If God be an intelligent Agent, his knowledge muſt extend as far as his operation, and every object of his operation, unleſs we imagine God hath loſt his Memory,

* *Bradwar-din.* p. 6.

mory, in that long Tract of time ſince the firſt Creation of them. An *Artificer* cannot be ignorant of his own Work; If God knows himſelf, he knows himſelf to be a Cauſe; how can he know himſelf to be a Cauſe, unleſs he know the Effects he is the cauſe of? One relation implies another; a Man cannot know himſelf to be a Father, unleſs he hath a Child, becauſe it is a name of relation, and in the Notion of it refers to another. The name of cauſe is a name of relation, and implies an effect; If God therefore know himſelf in all his Perfections, as the Cauſe of things, he muſt know all his acts, what his Wiſdom contriv'd, what his Counſel determin'd, and what his Power effected. The knowledge of God is to be ſuppos'd in a free determination of himſelf; and that knowledge muſt be perfect, both of the object, act, and all the circumſtances of it. How can his Will freely produce any thing that was not firſt known in his Underſtanding? From this the *Prophet* argues the underſtanding of God, and the unſearchableneſs of it, becauſe he is the *Creator of the ends of the Earth*, Iſa. 40. 28. and the ſame reaſon *David* gives of God's Knowledge of him, and of every thing he did, and that *afar off*, becauſe he was *formed by him*, Pſal. 139. 2, 15, 16. As the perfect making of things only belongs to God; ſo doth the perfect knowledge of things; 'tis abſurd to think, that God ſhould be ignorant of what he hath given Being to; that he ſhould not know all the Creatures and their qualities, the Plants and their vertues; as that a Man ſhould not know the Letters that are formed by him in Writing. Every thing bears in it ſelf the mark of God's Perfections; and ſhall not God know the repreſentation of his own vertue?

5. *Without this Knowledge, God could no more be the Governour, than he could be the Creator of the World.* Knowledge is the *Baſis* of Providence; to Know things, is before the Government of things, a *practical* knowledge cannot be without a *theoretical* knowledge. Nothing could be directed to its proper end, without the knowledge of the nature of it, and its ſuitableneſs to anſwer that end for which it is intended. As every thing, even the minuteſt, falls under the conduct of God, ſo every thing falls under the knowledge of God. A Blind Coach-man is not able to hold the Reins of his Horſes, and direct them in right Paths: Since the Providence of God is about particulars, his Knowledge muſt be about particulars; he could not elſe govern them in particular; nor could all things be ſaid to depend upon him in their Being and Operations. Providence depends upon the knowledge of God, and the exerciſe of it upon the Goodneſs of God; it cannot be without Underſtanding and Will; Underſtanding to know what is convenient, and Will to perform it. When our *Saviour* therefore ſpeaks of Providence, he intimates theſe two, in a ſpecial manner, *Your Heavenly Father knows that you have need of theſe things*, Matt. 6. 32. *and goodneſs*, in *Luke* 11. 13. The reaſon of Providence is ſo joyned with Omniſcience, that they cannot be ſeparated: What a kind of God would he be that were ignorant of thoſe things that were governed by him? The aſcribing this Perfection to him, aſſerts his Providence; for it is as eaſie for one that knows all things, to look over the whole World, if writ with Monoſyllables, in every little particular of it; as it is with a Man to take a view of one Letter in an Alphabet.

* *Sa'und* Tit. 84. much changed.

* Again if God were not Omniſcient, how could he reward the Good, and puniſh the Evil? the works of Men are either rewardable or puniſhable; not only according to their outward circumſtances, but inward Principles and Ends, and the degrees of Venom lurking in the Heart. The exact diſcerning of theſe, without a poſſibility to be deceived, is neceſſary to paſs a right and infallible Judgment upon them, and proportion the cenſure and puniſhment to the Crime: Without ſuch a Knowledge and Diſcerning, Men would not have their due; nay, a Judgment juſt for the matter, would be unjuſt in the manner, becauſe unjuſtly paſt, without an underſtanding of the merit of the Cauſe. 'Tis neceſſary therefore that the Supream Judge of the World ſhould not be thought to be blindfold, when he diſtributes his Rewards and Puniſhments, and muffle his Face when he paſſes his Sentence. 'Tis neceſſary to aſcribe to him the knowledge of mens thoughts and intentions; the ſecret wills and aims; the hidden works of Darkneſs in every Man's Conſcience, becauſe every Man's work is to be meaſured by the Will and inward Frame. 'Tis neceſſary that he ſhould perpetually retain all thoſe things in the indelible and plain Records of his Memory, that there may not be any work without a juſt proportion of what is due to it. This is the glory of God to diſcover the ſecrets of all Hearts at laſt, as 1 *Cor.* 4. 5. *the Lord ſhall bring to light the hidden things of darkneſs, and will make manifeſt the Counſels of all Hearts, and then ſhall every Man have praiſe of God.* This knowledge fits him to be a Judge; the reaſon why the *ungodly ſhall not ſtand in Judgment*, is becauſe God *knows* their ways, which is implyed in his *knowing the way of the righteous* *. * Pſal. 1. 5, 6.

I now proceed to the *Uſe*.

USE the firſt, is of *information or inſtruction.* If God hath all Knowledge; then,

I. *Jeſus Chriſt is not a meer Creature.* The two Titles of *Wonderful Counſellor* and *Mighty God*, are given him in conjunction, *Iſa.* 9. 6. not only the *Angel of the Covenant*, as he is called, *Malach.* 3. 1. or the Executor of his Counſels, but a Counſellor, in conjunction with him in Counſel as well as Power: This Title is ſuperior to any Title given to any of the Prophets in regard of their Predictions; and therefore I ſhould take it rather as the note of his perfect underſtanding, than of his perfect teaching and diſcovering; as *Calvin* doth: He is not only the Revealer of what he knows, ſo were the *Prophets* according to their meaſures; but the Counſellor of what he revealed, having a perfect underſtanding of all the Counſels of God, as being intereſted in them, as the Mighty God. He calls himſelf by the peculiar Title of God, and declares that he will manifeſt himſelf by this Prerogative to all the Churches, *Rev.* 2. 23. *And all the Churches ſhall know that I am he, which ſearches the Reins and Hearts*, the moſt hidden Operations of the Minds of Men that lie locked up from the view of all the World beſides. And this was no new thing to him, after his Aſcenſion; for the ſame Perfection he had in the time of his earthly Fleſh, *Luke* 6. 8. *he knew their Thoughts*; his Eyes are therefore compar'd, *Cant.* 5. 12. to *Doves Eyes*, which are clear and quick; and to a *flame of fire*, Rev. 1. 14. not only heat to conſume his Enemies, but Light to diſcern their contrivances againſt the Church; he pierceth, by his knowledge, into all parts, as fire pierceth into the cloſeſt particle of Iron, and ſeparates between the moſt united parts of Metals; and ſome tell us, he is called a *Roe*, from the perſpicacity of his Sight, as well as from the ſwiftneſs of his Motion.

1. *He hath a perfect Knowledge of the Father*; he knows the Father, and none elſe knows the Father; *Angels* know God, *Men* know God, but *Chriſt* in a peculiar manner knows the Father; *no Man knows the Son but the Father; neither knows any Man the Father; ſave the Son*, Matt. 11. 27. he knows ſo, as that he learns not from any other; he doth perfectly comprehend him, which is beyond the reach of any Creature, with the addition of all the Divine Vertue;

Vertue; not becauſe of any incapacity in God to reveal, but the incapacity of the Creature to receive; finite is uncapable of being made infinite, and therefore incapable of comprehending infinite; ſo that Chriſt cannot be *Deus factus*, made of a Creature a God, to comprehend God; for then of *finite* he would become *infinite*, which is a contradiction. As the Spirit is God, becauſe *he ſearches the deep things of God*, 1 Cor. 2. 10. that is, comprehends them *, as the Spirit of a Man doth the things of a Man (now the Spirit of Man underſtands what it Thinks, and what it Wills) ſo the Spirit of God underſtands what is in the Underſtanding of God, and what is in the Will of God. He hath an abſolute knowledge aſcrib'd to him, and ſuch as could not be aſcrib'd to any thing but a Divinity: Now if the Spirit knows the deep things of God, and takes from *Chriſt* what he ſhews to us of *him*, *John* 16. 15. he cannot be ignorant of thoſe things himſelf; he muſt know the depths of God that affords us that Spirit, that is not ignorant of any of the Counſels of the Father's Will; ſince he comprehends the Father, and the Father him, he is in himſelf infinite; for God whoſe Eſſence is infinite, is infinitely knowable; but no created underſtanding can infinitely know God. The infiniteneſs of the object hinders it from being underſtood by any thing that is not infinite. Though a Creature ſhould underſtand all the works of God, yet it cannot be therefore ſaid to underſtand God himſelf: As tho' I may underſtand all the volitions and motions of my Soul, yet it doth not follow that therefore I underſtand the whole nature and ſubſtance of my Soul; or if a Man underſtood all the effects of the Sun, that therefore he underſtands fully the nature of the Sun. But Chriſt knows the Father, he lay in the *Boſom of the Father*, was in the greateſt intimacy with him, *John* 1. 18. and from this intimacy with him, he ſaw him and knew him; ſo he knows God as much as he is knowable; and therefore knows him perfectly as the Father knows himſelf by a *comprehenſive Viſion*; this is the knowledge of God wherein properly the infiniteneſs of his underſtanding appears: And our *Saviour* uſes ſuch expreſſions which manifeſt his Knowledge to be above all created Knowledge, and ſuch a manner of knowledge of the Father, as the Father hath of him.

* *Petav.* Theo. dogmat. Tom. 1. p. 467, &c.

2. *Chriſt knows all Creatures.* That knowledge which comprehends God, comprehends all Created things as they are in God; 'tis a knowledge that ſinks to the depths of his Will, and therefore extends to all the acts of his Will in Creation and Providence; by knowing the Father he knows all things that are contained in the Vertue, Power and Will of God; *whatſoever the Father doth, that the Son doth*, John 5. 19. As the Father therefore knows all things he is the cauſe of, ſo doth the Son know all things he is the worker of; as the perfect making of all things belongs to both, ſo doth the perfect knowledge of all things belong to both; where the action is the ſame, the knowledge is the ſame. Now the Father did not Create one thing, and Chriſt another; *but all things were Created by him, and for him: all things both in Heaven and Earth*, Col. 1. 16. As he knows himſelf the cauſe of all things, and the end of all things, he cannot be ignorant of all things that were effected by him, and are referred to him; he knows all Creatures in God, as he knows the Eſſence of God, and knows all Creatures in themſelves, as he Knows his own acts and the fruits of his Power; thoſe things muſt be in his Knowledge that were in his Power, *all the Treaſures of the Wiſdom and Knowledge* of God are *hid in him*, Col. 2. 3. Now it is not the Wiſdom of God to know in part, and be in part ignorant. He cannot be ignorant of any thing, ſince there is *nothing but what was made by him*, John 1. 3. and ſince it is leſs to know than Create; for we know many things which we cannot make. If he be the Creator, he cannot but be the diſcerner of what he made; this is a part of Wiſdom belonging to an Artificer to know the nature and quality of what he makes. Since he cannot be ignorant of what he furniſht with Being, and with various endowments, he muſt know them not only univerſally, but particularly. *Petav.* Theolo. Dogmat. Tom. 1. P. 467.

3. *Chriſt knows the hearts and affections of Men.* *Peter* ſcruples not to aſcribe to him this knowledge, among the knowledge of all other things, *John* 21. 17. *Lord thou knoweſt all things, thou knoweſt that I love thee.* From Chriſt's knowledge of all things, he concludes his knowledge of the inward frames and diſpoſitions of Men. To ſearch the Heart, is the ſole Prerogative of God, 1 *Kings* 8. 39. *For thou, even thou only knoweſt the hearts of all the Children of Men*: Shall we take (*only*) here with a limitation, as ſome that are no Friends to the Deity of Chriſt would, and ſay, God only knows the hearts of Men from himſelf, and by his own infinite vertue? Why may we not take (*only*) in other places with a limitation, and make nonſence of it, as Pſal. 86. 10. *Thou art God alone.* Is it to be underſtood, that God is God alone from himſelf, but other Gods may be made by him, and ſo there may be numberleſs infinites? *I* s God is God alone, ſo that none can be God but himſelf; ſo he alone knows all the hearts of all the Children of Men, and none but he can know them; this knowledge is from his nature. * The reaſon why God knows the hearts of Men, is rendred in the Scripture double, becauſe he *created them*, and becauſe he is *preſent every where*, Pſal. 33. 13, 15. theſe *two* are by the Confeſſion of *Chriſtians* and *Pagans* univerſally received as the proper Characters of Divinity, whereby the *Deity* is diſtinguiſh'd from all Creatures. Now when Chriſt aſcribes this to himſelf, and that with ſuch an *Emphaſis*, that nothing greater than that could be urg'd, *as he doth*, Rev. 2. 23. we muſt conclude that he is of the ſame Eſſence with God, one with him in his Nature, as well as one with him in his Attributes. God only knows the hearts of the Children of Men; there is the *unity* of God: Chriſt ſearches the Hearts and Reins; there is a *diſtinction of perſons* in an *oneneſs* of *Eſſence*; he knows the hearts of all Men, not only of thoſe that were with him in the time of the Fleſh, that have been and ſhall be, ſince his Aſcenſion; but of thoſe that lived and died before his coming, becauſe he is to be the Judge of all that lived before his humiliaon on Earth, as well as after his exaltation in Heaven. It pertains to him as a Judge, to know diſtinctly the merits of the Cauſe of which he is to judge; and this excellency of ſearching the hearts is mention'd by himſelf with relation to his judicial Proceeding, *I will give to every one of you according to your Works.* And tho' a Creature may know what is in a Man's heart, if it be revealed to him, yet ſuch a knowledge is a knowledge only by report, not by inſpection; yet this latter is aſcrib'd to *Chriſt*, John 2. 24, 25. *he knew all Men, and needed not that any ſhould teſtify of Man, for he knew what was in Man*; he looked into their hearts. The *Evangeliſt* to allay the amazement of Men at his relation of our *Saviour's* knowledge of the inward falſity of thoſe that made a ſplendid Profeſſion of him; doth not ſay, the Father revealed it to him; but intimates it to be an unſeparable Property of his nature. No covering was ſo thick as to bound his Eye; no pretence ſo glittering as to impoſe upon his underſtanding. Thoſe that made a Profeſſion of him, and could not be diſcerned by the Eye of Man from his faithfulleſt Attendants, were in their inſide known to him plainer

* *Placeus* de deitate Chriſti.

plainer than their outſide was to others; and therefore he committed not himſelf to them, tho' they ſeemed to be perſwaded to a real belief in his name, becauſe of the Power of his Miracles; and were touched with an admiration of him, as ſome great *Prophet*, and perhaps declared him to be the *Meſſiah*, ver. 23.

4. *He had a foreknowledge of the particular inclinations of men, before thoſe diſtinct inclinations were in actual Being in them.* This is plainly aſſerted, *John* 6. 64. *But there are ſome of you that believe not, for Jeſus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who ſhould betray him.* When Chriſt aſſured them from the knowledge of the hearts of his followers, that ſome of them were void of that Faith they profeſs'd: The Evangeliſt, to ſtop their Amazement, that Chriſt ſhould have ſuch a Power and Vertue; adds, that he *knew from the beginning*, that he had not only a preſent knowledge, but a foreknowledge of every ones inclination; he knew not only now and then what was in the Hearts of his Diſciples, but from the beginning of any ones giving up their Names to him; he knew whether it were a pretence, or ſincere, he knew who *ſhould* betray him, and there was no Man's inward Affection but was foreſeen by him. * *From the beginning*, whether we underſtand it from the beginning of the World, as when *Chriſt* ſaith concerning Divorces, *from the beginning it was not ſo*, that is, from the beginning of the World, from the beginning of the Law of Nature; or from the beginning of their attending him; as it is taken, *Luke* 1. 2. he had a certain preſcience of the inward diſpoſitions of mens hearts, and their ſucceeding Sentiments; he foreknew the treacherous heart of *Judas* in the midſt of his ſplendid Profeſſion, and diſcern'd his reſolution in the root, and his thought in the confus'd Chaos of his Natural Corruption; he knew how it would ſpring up, before it did ſpring up, before *Judas* had any diſtinct and formal conception of it himſelf, or before there was any actual preparation to a reſolve. *Peter*'s denyal was not unknown to him, when *Peter* had a preſent *Reſolution*, and no queſtion ſpake it in the preſent ſincerity of his Soul, *never to forſake him*; he foreknew what would be the reſult of that Poiſon which lurk'd in *Peter*'s Nature, before *Peter* himſelf imagin'd any thing of it; he diſcern'd *Peter*'s Apoſtatizing heart, when *Peter* reſolved the contrary; our *Saviour*'s Prediction was accompliſh'd, and *Peter*'s valiant Reſolution languiſh'd into Cowardice.

* ἐξ ἀρχῆς

Shall we then conclude our Bleſſed Saviour a Creature, who perfectly and only knew the Father, who knew all Creatures, who had all the Treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge, who knew the inward motions of mens hearts by his own Vertue, and had not only a preſent Knowledge, but a Preſcience of them.

Inform. II. The *ſecond Inſtruction* from this Poſition, That God hath an infinite Knowledge and Underſtanding. *Then there is a Providence exercis'd by God in the World, and that about every thing.* As Providence infers Omniſcience as the guide of it; ſo Omniſcience infers Providence as the end of it. What Exerciſe would there be of this Attribute, but in the Government of the World? To this infinite Perfection refers, *Jer.* 17. 10. *I the Lord ſearch the Heart, I try the Reins, to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.* He ſearches the heart to reward, he rewards every Man according to the rewardableneſs of his actions; his Government therefore extends to every Man in the World; there is no heart but he ſearches, therefore no heart but he governs; to what purpoſe elſe would be this Knowledge of all his Creatures? For a meer Contemplation of them? No, What pleaſure can that be to God, who knows himſelf, who is infinitely more excellent than all his Creatures? Doth he know them, to neglect all care of them? This muſt be either out of Sloth, but how incompatible is Lazineſs to a pure and infinite Activity? Or out of Majeſty, but 'tis no leſs for the glory of his Majeſty to conduct them, than it was for the glory of his Power to erect them into Being; he that counts nothing unworthy of his Arms to make, nothing unworthy of his Underſtanding to know; why ſhould he count any thing unworthy of his Wiſdom to govern? If he knows them, to neglect them, it muſt be becauſe he hath no Will to it, or no Goodneſs for it: Either of theſe would be a ſtain upon God; to want Goodneſs is to be Evil, and to want Will is to be negligent and ſcornful, which are inconſiſtent with an Infinite, Active Goodneſs. Doth a Father neglect providing for the wants of the Family which he knows? Or a Phyſician the cure of that Diſeaſe he underſtands? God is Omniſcient, he therefore ſees all things; he is good, he doth not therefore neglect any thing, but conducts it to the end he appointed it. There is nothing ſo little that can eſcape his Knowledge, and therefore nothing ſo little but falls under his Providence; nothing ſo ſublime, as to be above his Underſtanding; and therefore nothing can be without the compaſs of his Conduct; nothing can eſcape his Eye, and therefore nothing can eſcape his Care; nothing is known by him in vain, as nothing was made by him in vain; there muſt be acknowledg'd therefore ſome end of this knowledge of all his Creatures.

Inſtruct. III. *Hence then will follow the certainty of a Day of Judgment.* To what purpoſe can we imagine this Attribute of Omniſcience ſo often declared and urged in Scripture to our conſideration, but in order to a government of our Practice, and a future Tryal? Every Perfection of the Divine Nature hath ſent out brighter Rays in the World, than this of his Infinite Knowledge; his Power hath been ſeen in the Being of the World, and his Wiſdom in the Order and Harmony of the Creatures; his Grace and Mercy hath been plentifully poured out in the Miſſion of a Redeemer; and his Juſtice hath been elevated by the Dying-Groans of the Son of God upon the Croſs. But hath his *Omniſcience* yet met with a Glory proportionable to that of his other Perfections? All the Attributes of God that have appeared in ſome beautiful glimmerings in the World, wait for a more full manifeſtation in Glory, as the Creatures do for the *manifeſtation of the Sons of God*, Rom. 8. 19. But eſpecially this, ſince it hath been leſs evidenced than others, and as much or more abuſed than any; it expects therefore a publick righting in the Eye of the World. There have been indeed ſome few ſparks of this Perfection ſenſibly ſtruck out now and then in the World, in ſome horrors of Conſcience, which have made men become their own Accuſers of unknown Crimes, in bringing out hidden Wickedneſs to a publick view, by various Providences. This hath alſo been the deſign of ſprinklings of Judgments upon ſeveral Generations, as *Pſal.* 90. 8. *We are conſumed by thy Anger, and by thy Wrath we are troubled, thou haſt ſet our Iniquities before thee, and our ſecret Sins in the light of thy Countenance.* The word עלומנו ſignifies *Youth*, as well as *ſecret*, *i. e.* Sins committed long ago, and that with ſecrecy. By this he hath manifeſted, that ſecret Sins are not hid from his Eye: Tho' inward Terrors and outward Judgments have been let looſe to worry men into a belief of this, yet the Corruptions of men would ſtill keep a contrary Notion in their Minds, that *God hath forgotten, that he hides his face*

face from Tranſgreſſion, and will not regard their Impiety, *Pſal.* 10. 11. There muſt therefore be a time of Tryal for the publick demonſtration of this Excellency, that it may receive its due Honour by a full Teſtimony, that no ſecrecy can be a ſhelter from it. As his Juſtice, which conſiſts in giving every one his due, could not be Glorified, unleſs men were called to an Account for their Actions; ſo neither would his Omniſcience appear in its illuſtrious Colours, without ſuch a manifeſtation of the ſecret motions of mens hearts, and of Villanies done under Lock and Key, when none were conſcious to them, but the committers of them. Now the laſt Judgment is the time appointed for the *opening of the Books*, Dan. 7. 10. The Book of God's Records, and Conſcience the counter-part, were never fully opened and read before, only now and then ſome Pages turn'd to, in particular Judgments; and out of thoſe *Books ſhall men be judged according to their Works*, Rev. 20. 12. Then ſhall the defaced Sins be brought with all their circumſtances to every man's Memory; the Counſels of mens hearts fled far from their preſent remembrance; all the habitual knowledge they had of their own actions, ſhall by God's knowledge of them be excited to an actual review; and their works not only made manifeſt to themſelves, but notorious to the World: All the Words, Thoughts, Deeds of Men ſhall be brought forth into the light of their own minds, by the infinite Light of God's Underſtanding reflecting on them. His Knowledge renders him an unerring Witneſs, as well as his Juſtice a *ſwift Witneſs*, Mal. 3. 5. a ſwift Witneſs, becauſe he ſhall without any Circuit, or length of Speech, convince their Conſciences by an inward illumination of them, to take notice of the blackneſs and deformity of their hearts and works. In all Judgments God is ſomewhat known to be the ſearcher of hearts; the time of Judgment is the time of his remembrance, *Hoſ.* 8. 13. *Now will he remember their iniquity, and viſit their ſins*; but the great inſtant, or *now*, of the full glorifying it, is the grand day of Account. This Attribute muſt have a time for its full Diſcovery; and no time can be fit for it, but a time of a General Reckoning. Juſtice cannot be exercis'd without *Omniſcience*; for as Juſtice is a giving to every one his due, ſo there muſt be knowledge to diſcern what is due to every Man; the *ſearching* the heart is in order to the *rewarding the works.*

4. *This Perfection in God, gives us ground to believe a Reſurrection.* Who can think this too hard for his Power, ſince not the leaſt Atome of the Duſt of our Bodies can eſcape his Knowledge? An infinite Underſtanding comprehends every Mite of a departed Carkaſs; this will not appear impoſſible nor irrational to any upon a ſerious conſideration of this Excellency in God: The Body is periſhed, the matter of it hath been ſince clothed with different forms and figures; part of it hath been made the body of a Worm, part of it returned to the Duſt that hath been blown away by the Wind, part of it hath been concocted in the Bodies of *Cannibals*, Fiſh, ravenous Beaſts; the Spirits have evaporated into Air, part of the Blood melted into Water; what then, is the matter of the Body annihilated? Is that wholly periſhed? No, the Foundation remains, tho' it hath put on variety of forms; the Body of *Abel*, the firſt Man that died, nor the Body of *Adam*, are not to this day reduc'd to nothing; indeed the quantity and the quality of thoſe Bodies have been loſt by various changes they have paſt through ſince their diſſolution; but the matter or ſubſtance of them remains entire, and is not capable to be deſtroy'd by all thoſe transforming alterations, in ſo long a Revolution of Time.

The Body of a Man in his Infancy and his old Age, if it were *Methuſelah*'s, is the ſame in the Foundation in thoſe multitude of Years; tho' the quantity of it be alter'd; the quality different, tho' the colour and other things be changed in it; the matter of this Body remains the ſame among all the alterations after Death. And can it be ſo mixed with other Natures and Creatures, as that it is paſt finding out by an *Infinite Underſtanding*? Can any Particle of this matter eſcape the Eye of him that makes and beholds all thoſe various Alterations, and where every Mite of the ſubſtance of thoſe Bodies is particularly lodged; ſo as that he cannot compact it together again for a habitation of that Soul, that many a Year before fled from it? * Since the Knowledge of God is infinite, and his Providence extenſive over the leaſt as well as the greateſt parts of the World; he muſt needs know the leaſt as well as the greateſt of his Creatures in their Beginning, Progreſs, and Diſſolution; all the forms through which the Bodies of all Creatures roul, the particular inſtants of time, and the particular place when and where thoſe changes are made, they are all preſent with him; and therefore when the Revolution of time allotted by him for the reunion of Souls and Deceaſed Bodies is come, it cannot be doubted but out of the Treaſures of his Knowledge he can call forth every part of the matter of the Bodies of Men, from the firſt to the laſt Man that expired, and ſtrip it of all thoſe forms and figures, which it ſhall then have, to compact it to be a Lodging for that Soul which before it entertain'd; and tho' the Bodies of Men have been devour'd by Wild Beaſts in the Earth, and Fiſh in the Sea, and been lodg'd in the Stomachs of Barbarous Men-eaters, the matter is not loſt. There is but little of the Food we take, that is turned into the ſubſtance of our own Bodies; that which is not proper for nouriſhment, which is the greateſt part, is ſeparated, and concocted, and rejected; whatſoever Objections are made, are anſwered by this Attribute. Nothing hinders a God of Infinite Knowledge from diſcerning every Particle of the matter, whereſoever it is diſpos'd; and ſince he hath an Eye to diſcern, and a Hand to recollect and unite, what difficulty is there in believing this Article of the Chriſtian Faith? He that queſtions this reveal'd Truth of the Reſurrection of the Body, muſt queſtion God's Omniſcience as well as his Omnipotence and Power.

* *Daillé* Serm. 15. p. 21, 22, 23, 24.

5. *What ſemblance of Reaſon is there to expect a juſtification in the ſight of God by any thing in our ſelves?* Is there any Action done by any of us, but upon a ſcrutiny we may find flaws and deficiency in it? What then? ſhall not this Perfection of God diſcern them? The Motes that eſcape our Eyes cannot eſcape his, 1 John 3. 20. *God is greater than our hearts, and knows all things*; ſo that it is in vain for any Man to flatter himſelf with the Rectitude of any Work, or enter into any Debate with him who can bring a Thouſand Articles againſt us, out of his own Infinite Records unknown to us, and unanſwerable by us. If Conſcience, a Repreſentative or Counterpart of God's Omniſcience in our own Boſoms, find nothing done by us, but in a Copy ſhort of the Original, and beholds, if not blurs, yet Imperfections in the beſt actions, God muſt much more diſcern them; we never knew a Copy equally exact with the Original: If our own Conſcience be as a Thouſand Witneſſes, the Knowledge of God is as Millions of Witneſſes againſt us: If our Corruption be ſo great, and our Holineſs ſo low in our own Eyes, how much greater muſt the one, and how much meaner muſt the other appear in the Eyes of God? God hath an unerring Eye to ſee, as well as an unſpotted Holineſs to hate, and

an unbribable Juſtice to puniſh; he wants no more Underſtanding to know the ſhortneſs of our Actions, than he doth Holineſs to enact, and Power to execute his Laws: Nay, ſuppoſe we could recollect many Actions, wherein there were no ſpot viſible to us, the conſideration of this Attribute ſhould ſcare us from reſting upon any or all of them; ſince it is the Lord that by a piercing Eye ſees and judges according to the heart, and not according to appearance. The leaſt crookedneſs of a Stick, not ſenſible to an acute Eye, yet will appear when laid to the Line; and the impurity of a Counterfeit Metal be manifeſt when applyed to the Touch-ſtone; ſo will the beſt Action of any meer Man in the World, when it comes to be meaſur'd in God's Knowledge by the ſtrait Line of his Law.

Let every Man therefore, as *Paul*, though *he ſhould know nothing by himſelf, think not himſelf therefore juſtified*; Since it is the Lord, who is of an infinite Underſtanding, that Judgeth, 1 Cor. 4. 4. A Man may be juſtified in his own ſight, *but not any living Man can be juſtified in the ſight of God*, Pſal. 143. 2. in his Sight, whoſe Eye pierceth into our unknown ſecrets and frames: It was therefore well anſwered of a good Man upon his Death-bed, being askt *What he was afraid of? I have labour'd* (ſaith he) *with all my Strength to obſerve the commands of God; but ſince I am a Man, I am ignorant whether my works are acceptable to God, ſince God Judges in one manner, and I in another manner.* Let the conſideration therefore of this Attribute, make us joyn with *Job* in his Reſolution, *Job* 9. 21. *tho' we were perfect*, yet would we *not know our own Souls.* I would not ſtand up to Plead any of my Vertues before God. Let us therefore look after another Righteouſneſs, wherein the exact Eye of the Divine Omniſcience, we are ſure, can diſcern no ſtain or crookedneſs.

6. *What honourable and adoring Thoughts ought we to have of God for this Perfection?* Do we not honour a Man that is able to Predict; Do we not think it a great part of Wiſdom? Have not all Nations regarded ſuch a faculty, as a character and a mark of Divinity? There is ſomething more raviſhing in the knowledge of future things, both to the Perſon that knows them, and the Perſon that hears them, than there is in any other kind of knowledge; whence the greateſt Prophets have been accounted in the greateſt veneration, and Men have thought it a way to glory to Divine and Predict: Hence it was that the *Devils* and *Pagan* Oracles gained ſo much Credit; upon this Foundation were they eſtabliſhed, and the Enemies of Mankind owned for a true God; I ſay, from the Prediction of future things, tho' their Oracles were often ambiguous, many times falſe; yet thoſe poor Heathens framed many ingenious excuſes, to free their Adored Gods from the charge of falſity and impoſture: And ſhall we not adore the true God, the God of *Iſrael*, the God bleſſed for ever, for this incommunicable Property, whereby he flies above the Wings of the Wind, the Underſtandings of Men and Cherubims?

* *Sa'lund* Theol. natural. Tit. 84. ſomewhat changed.

* Conſider how great it is to know the Thoughts, and Intentions, and Works of one Man, from the beginning to the end of his Life; to foreknow all theſe before the Being of this Man, when he was lodged afar off in the Loyns of his Anceſtors, yea of *Adam*; how much greater is it to foreknow and know the Thoughts and Works of Three or Four Men, of a whole Village or Neighbourhood? 'Tis greater ſtill to know the imaginations and actions of ſuch a *multitude* of Men as are contained in *London*, *Paris*, or *Conſtantinople*; how much greater ſtill to know the intentions and practices, the clandeſtine contrivances of ſo *many Millions*, that have, do, or ſhall ſwarm in all quarters of the World, every perſon of them having Millions of Thoughts, Deſires, Deſigns, Affections and Actions!

Let this Attribute then make the bleſſed God honourable in our Eyes, and adorable in all our Affections; ſpecially ſince it is an Excellency which hath ſo lately diſcovered it ſelf, in bringing to Light the hidden things of darkneſs, in opening, and in part confounding the wicked Devices of Bloody Men. Eſpecially let us adore God for it, and admire it in God, ſince it is ſo neceſſary a Perfection, that without it the goodneſs of God had been impotent, and could not have relieved us; for what help can a diſtreſſed perſon expect from a Man of the ſweeteſt diſpoſition, and the ſtrongeſt arm, if the Eyes which ſhould diſcover the danger, and direct the defence and reſcue, were cloſed up by blindneſs and darkneſs? Adore God for this wonderful Perfection.

7. *In the conſideration of this excellent Attribute, what low thoughts ſhould we have of our own knowledge, and how humble ought we to be before God?* There's nothing Man is more apt to be proud of than his Knowledge; 'tis a Perfection he glories in; but if our own Knowledge of the little outſide and barks of things, puffs us up, the conſideration of the infiniteneſs of God's Knowledge ſhould abate the Tumour: As our Beings are nothing in regard to the infiniteneſs of his Eſſence, ſo our Knowledge is nothing in regard of the vaſtneſs of his Underſtanding: We have a ſpark of Being, but nothing to the heat of the Sun: We have a drop of Knowledge, but nothing to the Divine Ocean. What a vain thing is it for a ſhallow Brook to boaſt of its Streams before a Sea, whoſe depths are unfathomable? As it is a vanity to brag of our Strength when we remember the Power of God; and of our Prudence, when we glance upon the Wiſdom of God; ſo 'tis no leſs a vanity to boaſt of our Knowledge, when we think of the Underſtanding and Knowledge of God.

* *Paſcal* p. 170.

How hard is it for us to know *any thing* *? too much noiſe deafs us, and too much light dazels us, too much diſtance alienates the object from us, and too much nearneſs bars up our ſight from beholding it: When we think our ſelves to be near the knowledge of a thing, as a Ship to the Haven, a puff of Wind blows us away, and the object which we deſired to know, eternally flies from us; we burn with a deſire of knowledge, and yet are oppreſt with the darkneſs of ignorance; we ſpend our days more in dark *Egypt*, than in enlightened *Goſhen*. In what narrow bounds is all the knowledge of the moſt intelligent perſons included? * How few underſtand the exact Harmony of their own bodies, the nature of the life they have in common with other Animals? who underſtands the nature of his own Faculties, how he Knows, and how he Wills, how the Underſtanding propoſeth, and how the Will embraceth, how his ſpiritual Soul is united to his material Body, what the nature is of the operation of our Spirits? nay, who underſtands the nature of his own Body the offices of his Senſes, the motion of his Members, how they come to obey the command of the Will, and a Thouſand other things? What a vain, weak, and ignorant thing is Man, when compar'd with God? Yet there is not a greater pride to be found among Devils, than among ignorant Men with a little, very little flaſhy Knowledge. Ignorant Man is as proud, as if he knew as God!

* *Amyrant.* de Præ-deſt. p. 116, 117 ſomewhat changed.

As the conſideration of God's *Omniſcience* ſhould render him *honourable* in our eyes, ſo it ſhould render us *vile* in our own. God, becauſe of his knowledge, is ſo far from diſdaining his Creatures, that his Omniſcience is a Miniſter to his Goodneſs: No knowledge that we are poſſeſs'd of, ſhould make us ſwell with too high a conceit of our ſelves, and a diſdain of others. We have infinitely more of ignorance

rance than knowledge. Let us therefore remember in all our thoughts of God, that he is God, and we are Men; and therefore ought to be humble, as becomes Men, and ignorant and fooliſh Men to be; as weak Creatures ſhould lie low before an Almighty God, and impure Creatures before a Holy God, falſe Creatures before a Faithful God, finite Creatures before an infinite God; ſo ſhould ignorant Creatures before an All-Knowing God. All God's Attributes teach admiring thoughts of God, and low thoughts of our ſelves.

8. It may inform us, *how much this Attribute is injured in the World.* The firſt error after *Adam*'s eating the forbidden Fruit, was the denyal of this, as well as the Omnipreſence of God, *Gen.* 3. 10. *I heard thy voice in the Garden, and I hid my ſelf*; as if the thickneſs of the Trees could ſcreen him from the eye of his Creator. And after *Cain*'s Murder; this is the firſt Perfection he affronts, *Gen.* 4. 9 *Where is* Abel *thy Brother*, ſaith God? how roundly doth he anſwer, *I know not*? As if God were as weak as Man, to be put off with a Lye: Man doth as naturally hate this Perfection, as much as he cannot naturally but acknowledge it; he wiſhes God ſtript of this eminency, that he might be incapable to be an inſpector of his Crimes, and a ſearcher of the Cloſets of his heart: In wiſhing him deprived of this, there is a hatred of God himſelf; for it is a loathing an Eſſential Property of God, without which he would be a pitiful Governour of the World. What a kind of God ſhould that be, of a Sinner's wiſhing, that had wanted Eyes to ſee a Crime, and Righteouſneſs to puniſh it? The want of the conſideration of this Attribute, is the cauſe of all Sin in the World, *Hoſ.* 7. 2. *They conſider not in their hearts that I remember all their Wickedneſs*? they ſpeak not to their hearts, nor make any reflection upon the infiniteneſs of my Knowledge; 'tis a high contempt of God, as if he were an *Idol*, a ſenſeleſs Stock or Stone; in all evil practices this is denied: We know God ſees all things, yet we live and walk as if he knew nothing: We call him Omniſcient, and live as if he were ignorant; we ſay he is all eye, yet act as if he were wholly blind.

In *particular*, this Attribute is injured, *By invading the peculiar rights of it, by preſuming on it, and by a practical denyal of it.*

1. *By invading the peculiar rights of it.*

1. *By invocation of Creatures.* Praying to Saints, by the *Romaniſts*, is a diſparagement to this Divine Excellency; he that knows all things, is only fit to have the Petitions of Men preſented to him; Prayer ſuppoſeth an Omniſcient Being, as the object of it; no other Being but God ought to have that honour acknowledged to it; no Underſtanding but his, is infinite; no other Preſence but his, is every where; to implore any deceaſed Creature for a ſupply of our wants, is to own in them a Property of the Deity; and make them Deities that were but Men; and increaſe their glory by a diminution of God's Honour, in aſcribing that Perfection to Creatures which belongs only to God. Alas! they are ſo far from underſtanding the deſires of our Souls, that they know not the words of our Lips: 'Tis againſt reaſon to addreſs our ſupplications to them that neither underſtand us, nor diſcern us, Iſa. 63. 16. *Abraham is ignorant of us, and* Iſrael *acknowledges us not.* The *Jews* never called upon *Abraham*, tho' the Covenant was made with him for the whole Seed; not one departed Saint for the whole *Four Thouſand Years* between the *Creation* of the World, and the coming of *Chriſt*, was ever prayed to by the *Iſraelites*; or ever imagin'd to have a ſhare in God's Omniſcience; ſo that to pray to St. *Peter*, St. *Paul*, much leſs to St. *Roch*, St. *Swithen*, St. *Martin*, St. *Francis*, &c. is ſuch a Superſtition that hath no footing in the Scripture. * *Daille Melang.* part. 2. p. 560, 561.

* To deſire the Prayers of the Living, with whom we have a Communion, who can underſtand and grant our deſires, is founded upon a mutual Charity; but to implore perſons that are abſent, at a great diſtance from us, with whom we have not, nor know how to have any Commerce, ſuppoſeth them in their departure to have put off Humanity, and commenc'd God's, and endued with ſome part of the Divinity to underſtand our Petitions; we are indeed to cheriſh their Memories, conſider their Examples, imitate their Graces, and obſerve their Doctrines; we are to follow them as Saints, but not elevate them as God's, in aſcribing to them ſuch a knowledge which is only the neceſſary right of their and our common Creator: As the invocation of Saints mingles them with Chriſt in the exerciſe of his Office, ſo it ſets them equal with God in the Throne of his *Omniſcience*. As if they had as much credit with God, as Chriſt, in a way of Mediation; and as much knowledge of Mens Affairs, as God himſelf. Omniſcience is peculiar to God, and incommunicable to any Creature; 'tis the foundation of all Religion, and therefore one of the choiceſt acts of it, viz. *Prayer and Invocation.* To direct our Vows and Petitions to any elſe, is to invade the peculiarity of this Perfection in God, and to rank ſome Creatures in a Partnerſhip with him in it.

2. *This Attribute is injured by curioſity of Knowledge*, Eſpecially of future things which God hath not diſcovered in natural cauſes, or ſupernatural Revelation. 'Tis a common error of Mens Spirits to aſpire to know what God would have hidden, and to pry into Divine Secrets; and many Men are more willing to remain without the knowledge of thoſe things which may with a little induſtry be attained, than be diveſted of the curioſity of enquiring into thoſe things which are above their reach; 'tis hence that ſome have laid aſide the Study of the common remedies of Nature, to find out the *Philoſopher's Stone*; * *Amyrant. Moral.* Tom. 3. p. 75, &c. which ſcarce any ever yet attempted, but ſunk in the Enterpriſe.* From this inclination to know the moſt abſtruſe and difficult things it is, that the horrors of *Magick*, and the vanities of *Aſtrology* have ſprung, whereby Men have thought to find in a commerce with Devils, and the Juriſdiction of the Stars, the events of their Lives, and the diſpoſal of States and Kingdoms. Hence alſo aroſe thoſe multitudes of ways of Divination invented among the Heathen, and practiſed too commonly in theſe Ages of the World. This is an invaſion of God's Prerogative, to whom ſecret things belong, *Deut.* 29. 29. *Secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but revealed things belong to us and our Children.* 'Tis an intolerable boldneſs to attempt to fathom thoſe, the Knowledge whereof God hath reſerved to himſelf; and to ſearch that which God will have to ſurpaſs our Underſtandings; whereby we more truly envy God a knowledge ſuperior to our own, than we in *Adam* imagin'd that he envyed us. Ambition is the greateſt cauſe of this, Ambition to be accounted ſome great thing among Men, by reaſon of a Knowledge eſtrang'd from the common maſs of Mankind; but more eſpecially that ſoaring Pride to be equal with God, which lurks in our nature ever ſince the Fall of our Firſt Parents: This is not yet laid aſide by Man, though it was the *firſt* thing that embroyl'd the World with the Wrath of God. Some think a curioſity of Knowledge was the Cauſe of the fall of the Devils; I am ſure it was the Foyl of *Adam*, and is yet the Crime of his Poſterity; had he been contented to know what God had furniſht him with, neither he nor his Poſterity had ſmarted under the Venom of the Serpent's Breath.

All

All curious and bold enquiries into things not revealed, are an attempt upon the Throne of God; and are both ſinful and pernicious, like to glaring upon the Sun, where inſtead of a greater acuteneſs, we meet with blindneſs, and too dearly buy our Ignorance in attempting a ſuperfluous knowledge. As God's Knowledge is deſtin'd to the Government of the World, ſo ſhould ours be to the advantage of the World, and not degenerate into vain Speculations.

3. This Attribute is injur'd *by ſwearing by Creatures:* To ſwear by the *Name of God* in a Righteous Cauſe, * when we are Lawfully called to it by a Superior Power, or for the neceſſary deciſion of ſome Controverſie, for the ends of Charity and Juſtice, is an act of Religion, *and a part of Worſhip*, founded upon, and directed to the honour of this Attribute; by it we acknowledge the glory of his Infallible Knowledge of all things; but to Swear by falſe Gods, or by any Creature, is Blaſphemous; it ſets the Creature in the place of God, and inveſts it in that which is the peculiar Honour of the Divinity; for when any ſwear truly, they intend the invocation of an Infallible Witneſs, and the bringing an undoubted Teſtimony for what they do aſſert; while any therefore ſwear by a Creature, or a falſe God, they profeſs that that Creature, or that which they eſteem to be a God, is an Infallible Witneſs, which to be, is only the Right of God; they attribute to the Creature that which is the Property of God alone, to know the Heart, and to be a Witneſs whether they ſpeak true or no; and this was accounted by all Nations the true Deſign of an Oath. As to ſwear falſely, is a plain denial of the All-knowledge of God; ſo to ſwear by any Creature, is to ſet the Creature upon the Throne of God, in aſcribing that Perfection to the Creature, which Soveraignly belongs to the Creator; for it is not in the Power of any to Witneſs to the truth of the heart, but of him that is the ſearcher of hearts.

* *Cajetan.* Sum. p. 190.

4. We Sin againſt this Attribute *by cenſuring the hearts of others.* An open Crime indeed falls under our Cognizance, and therefore under our Judgment; for whatſoever falls under the Authority of Man to be puniſhed, falls under the Judgment of Man to be cenſured, as an act contrary to the Law of God; yet when a cenſure is built upon the evil of the act which is obvious to the view, if we take a ſtep farther to judge the heart and ſtate, we leave the revealed Rule of the Law, and ambitiouſly erect a Tribunal equal with God's; and uſurp a Judicial Power, pertaining only to the Supream Governour of the World; and conſequently pretend to be poſſeſs'd of this Perfection of *Omniſcience*, which is neceſſary to render him capable of the exerciſe of that Soveraign Authority. For it is in reſpect of his Dominion, that God hath the Supream Right to Judge; and in reſpect of his Knowledge, that he hath an incommunicable Capacity to Judge.

In an action that is doubtful, the good or evil whereof depends only upon God's determination, and wherein much of the Judgment depends upon the diſcerning the intention of the Agent, we cannot Judge any Man without a manifeſt Invaſion of God's peculiar Right; ſuch actions are to be Tryed by God's Knowledge, not by our ſurmiſes; God only is the Maſter in ſuch caſes, *to whom* a Perſon *ſtands* or *falls*, Rom. 14. 4. Till the true Principle and Ends of an action be known by the confeſſion of the Party acting it, a true Judgment of it is not in our Power. Principles and Ends lie deep and hid from us; and it is intolerable Pride to pretend to have a joynt Key with God to open that Cabinet which he hath reſerved to himſelf.

Beſides the violation of the Rule of Charity in miſconſtruing actions which may be great and generous in their Root and Principle, we invade God's Right, as if our ungrounded Imaginations and Conjectures were in Joynt-Commiſſion with this Soveraign Perfection; and thereby we become Uſurping *Judges of evil thoughts*, *James* 2. 4. 'Tis therefore a boldneſs worthy to be puniſhed by the Judge, to aſſume to our ſelves the Capacity and Authority of him, who is the only Judge. For as the Execution of the Divine Law, for the inward violation of it belongs only to God, ſo is the Right of Judging a Prerogative belonging only to his *Omniſcience*; his Right is therefore invaded, if we pretend to a knowledge of it. This Humour of Men the *Apoſtle* checks, when he ſaith, 1 *Cor.* 4. 5. *He that judgeth me is the Lord, therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will manifeſt the Counſels of all hearts.* 'Tis not the time yet for God to erect the Tribunal for the Tryal of mens hearts, and the Principles of their Actions: He hath reſerv'd the glorious diſcovery of this Attribute for another ſeaſon; We muſt not therefore preſume to Judge of the Counſels of mens hearts, till God hath reveal'd them by opening the Treaſuries of his own Knowledge. Much leſs are we to judge any Man's final Condition. *Manaſſeh* may Sacrifice to Devils, and unconverted *Paul* tear the Church in pieces; but God had Mercy on them, and called them. The Action may be cenſur'd, not the State, for we know not whom God may call. In Cenſuring Men, we may *doubly* imitate the Devil, in a *falſe Accuſation* of the Brethren, as well as in an ambitious *Uſurpation* of the Rights of God.

2. This Perfection is injured, *by preſuming upon it, or making an ill uſe of it.* As in the neglect of Prayer for the ſupply of mens wants, becauſe God knows them already; ſo that that which is an encouragement to Prayer, they make the reaſon of reſtraining it before God. Prayer is not to adminiſter Knowledge to God, but to acknowledge this admirable Perfection of the Divine Nature. If God did not know, there were indeed no uſe of Prayer, it would be as vain a thing to ſend up our Prayers to Heaven, as to implore the ſenſeleſs Statue or Picture of a Prince for a Protection. We Pray becauſe God knows, for though he know our wants with a *knowledge of Viſion*, yet he will not know them with a knowledge of ſupply, till he *be ſought unto*. All the Excellencies of God are ground of Adoration; and this Excellency is the ground of that part of Worſhip we call Prayer. If God be to be Worſhipped, he is to be called upon; *Invocations of his Name* in our Neceſſities is a chief act of Worſhip; whence the *Temple*, the Place of Solemn Worſhip, was not called the Houſe of Sacrifice, but the *Houſe of Prayer*.

* Mat. 6. 32, 33. * Mat. 7. 11.

Prayer was not appointed for God's Information, as if he were ignorant, but for the expreſſion of our deſires; not to furniſh him with a knowledge of what we want, but to manifeſt to him by ſome Rational Sign convenient to our Nature, our ſenſe of that want, which he knows by himſelf. So that Prayer is not deſign'd to acquaint God with our wants, but to expreſs the deſire of a Remedy of our wants. God knows our wants, but hath not made Promiſes barely to our wants, but to our asking: That his Omniſcience in hearing, as well as his ſufficiency in ſupplying, may have a ſenſible Honour in our acknowledgments and receipts. 'Tis therefore an ill uſe of this Excellency of God to neglect Prayer to him as needleſs, becauſe he knows already.

3. This Perfection of God is wrong'd, *by a practical denial of it.* 'Tis the Language of every Sin, and

and so God takes it when he comes to reckon with Men for their Impieties. Upon this he charges the greatness of the iniquity of *Israel*, the overflowing of Blood in the Land, and the perverseness of the City; *They say the Lord hath forsaken the Earth, and the Lord sees not* *: They deny his Eyes to see, and his Resolution to punish.

* Ezek. 9. 9.

1. It will appear, *in forbearing Sin from a sense of Man's knowledge, not of Gods.* Open Impieties are restrain'd because of the Eye of Man; but secret Sins are not checked because of the Eye of God. Wickedness is committed in Darkness, that is restrained in Light; as if *darkness* were as great a clog to God's Eyes as it is to ours; as though his Eyes were muffled with the Curtains of the Night *. This it is likely was at the root of *Jonah*'s flight, he might have some secret thought, that his Master's Eye could not follow him, as though the close Hatches of a Ship could secure him from the Knowledge of God, as well as the sides of the Ship could from the dashing of the Waves. What lies most upon the Conscience when it is graciously wounded, is least regarded, or contemned when it is basely inclin'd. *David*'s heart smote him not only for his Sin in the gross, but as particularly circumstantiated by the commission of it in the sight of God, *Psal.* 51. 4. *Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight.* None knew the reason of *Uriah*'s Death but my self, and because others knew it not, I neglected any regard to this Divine Eye. When *Jacob*'s Sons used their Brother *Joseph* so barbarously, they took care to hide it from their *Father*; but cast away all thoughts of God, from whom it could not be conceal'd.

* Job 22. 14.

Doth not the presence of a Child bridle a Man, from the act of a long'd for Sin, when the Eye of God is of no force to restrain him? As if God's Knowledge were of less value than the sight of a little Boy or Girl, as if a Child only could see, and God were blind. He that will forbear an unworthy action for fear of an Informer, will not forbear it for God; as if God's *Omniscience*, were not as full an Intelligencer to him, as Man can be an Informer to a Magistrate. As we acknowledge the power of Men seeing us, when we are ashamed to commit a filthy action in their view; so we disown the power of God seeing us, when we regard not what we do before the light of his Eyes. Secret Sins are more against God than open: Open Sins are against the Law, secret Sins are against the Law, and this prime Perfection of his Nature. The Majesty of God is not only violated, but the Omniscience of God disown'd, who is the only Witness; We must in all of them, either imagine him to be without Eyes to behold us, or without an Arm of Justice to punish us. And often it is, I believe, in such cases, that if any thoughts of God's Knowledge strike upon Men, they quickly damp them, lest they should begin to know what they fear, and fear that they might not eat their pleasant sinful Morsels.

2. It appears, *in partial Confessions of Sin before God.* As by a free, full, and ingenuous Confession, we offer a due Glory to this Attribute, so by a feigned and curtail'd Confession we deny him the honour of it: For though by any Confession we in part own him to be a Sovereign and Judge, yet by a half and pared acknowledgement, we own him to be no more than a Humane and Ignorant one. *Achan*'s full Confession gave God the glory of his Omniscience, manifested in the discovery of his secret Crime. *And* Joshua *said to* Achan, *My Son give glory to the Lord God of* Israel, *and make Confession unto him.* And so, *Psal.* 50. 23. *Who so offereth praise glorifieth me,*

* Josh. 7. 19.

or *confession*, as the word signifieth, in which sence I would rather take it, referring to this Attribute, which God seems to tax Sinners with the denial of, *Verse* 21. telling them that he would open the Records of their Sins before them, and indict them particularly for every one. If therefore you would glorifie this Attribute, which shall one Day break open your Consciences, *offer to me a sincere Confession.* When *David* speaks of the *happiness* of a pardon'd Man, * he adds, *in whose Spirit there is no guile*, not meaning a sincerity in general, but that ingenuity in Confessing. To excuse or extenuate Sin, is to deny God the knowledge of the depths of our deceitful hearts: When we will mince it rather than aggravate it? lay it upon the inducements of others, when it was the free act of our own Wills, study shifts to deceive our Judge, this is to *speak lyes of him*, as the expression is, *Hos.* 7. 13: As though he were a God easie to be cheated, and knew no more than we are willing to declare. What did *Saul*'s transferring his Sin from himself to the *people*, * but charge God with a defect in this Attribute? When Man could not be like God in his Knowledge, he would fansie a God like to him in his ignorance; and imagine a possibility of hiding himself from his knowledge, and all Men tread more or less in their Father's steps, and are fruitful to divise distinctions to disguise Errors in Doctrine, and excuses to palliate Errors in Practice: This Crime *Job* removes from himself, when he speaks of several acts of his sincerity; *If I cover'd my transgression as* Adam, *by hiding my iniquity in my Bosom*, I hid not any of my Sins in my own Conscience, but acknowledg'd God a Witness to them, and gave him the glory of his knowledge by a free Confession. I did not conceal it from God as *Adam* did, or as Men ordinarily do; as if God could understand no more of their secret Crimes, than they will let him, and had no more sense of their Faults, than they would furnish him with. As the first rise of Confession is the owning of this Attribute (for the Justice of God would not scare Men, nor the Holiness of God awe them without a sense of his knowledge of their iniquities) so to drop out some fragments of Confession, discover some Sins, and conceal others, is a plain denial of the extensiveness of the Divine Knowledge.

* Psal. 32. 1, 2. Camero. p. 89. col. 1

* 1 Sam. 15. 15.

* Job 31. 33.

3. It is discover'd, *by putting God off with an outside Worship.* Men are often flatterers of God, and think to bend him by formal glavering Devotions, without the concurrence of their hearts, as though he could not pierce into the darkness of the Mind, but did as little know us as one man knows another. There are such things as *feigned Lips* *, a contradiction between the Heart and the Tongue, a clamour in the Voice, and scoffing in the Soul; a crying, to God, thou art *my Father, the Guide of my Youth*, and yet speaking and *doing evil to the utmost* of our Power *. As if God could be impos'd upon by fawning pretences; and like old *Isaac*, take *Jacob* for *Esau*, and be cozen'd by the smell of his Garments: As if he could not discern the *Negro* Heart under an Angel's Garb. Thus *Ephraim*, the Ten Tribes, apostatized from the true Religion, would go with their *Flocks* and their *Herds* to *seek the Lord* *, would Sacrifice multitudes of Sheep and Heifers, which was the main outside of the *Jewish* Religion; only with their Flocks and their Herds, not with their Hearts, with those inward qualifications of deep Humiliation and Repentance for Sin: As though outside appearances limited God's observation, whereas God had told them before, That he *knew* Ephraim *and* Israel *was not hid from him.* Thus to do is to put a cheat upon God, and think to blind his All-seeing Eye; and therefore it is called *deceit*, *Psal.* 78. 36. They did *flatter him with their Mouths*;

* Psal. 11.

* Jer. 3. 4, 5.

* Hos. 5. 6. *Verse* 3.

The

The word נסה ſignifies to deceive as well as to flatter; not that they or any elſe can deceive God, but it implies an endeavour to deceive him, by a few diſſembling words and geſtures, or an imagination that God was ſatisfied with bare profeſſions, and would not concern himſelf in a further inquiſition: This is an unworthy conceit of God, to fanſie that we can ſatisfie for inward Sins, and avert approaching Judgments, by External Offerings, by a loud Voice with a falſe Heart, as if God (like Children) would be pleas'd, with the glittering of an empty Shell, or the ratling of Stones, the chincking of Money, a meer Voice, and crying without inward frames and intentions of Service.

4. *In cheriſhing multitudes of evil thoughts.* No man but would bluſh for ſhame, if the baſe, impure, ſlovenly thoughts, either in or out of Duties of Worſhip were viſible to the underſtanding of man; how diligent would he be to curb his luxuriant and unworthy fancies, as well as bite in his words; but when we give the Reins to the Motions of our Hearts, and ſuffer them to run at random without a Curb, 'tis an evidence we are not concern'd for their falling under the notice of the Eye of God; and it argues a very weak belief of this Perfection, or ſcarce any belief at all. Who can think any Man's Heart poſſeſſed with a ſenſe of this Infinite Excellency, that ſuffers his Mind, in his Meditation on God, to wander into every Sty, and be picking up Stones upon a Dunghill? What doth it intimate, but that thoſe thoughts are as inviſible, or unaudible to God, as they are to Men without the Garments of Words? * When a Man thinks of obſcene things, his own natural Notions, if reviv'd, would tell him, that God diſcerns what he thinks, that the depths of his heart are open to him: And the voice of thoſe Notions are, Deface thoſe vain imaginations out of your Minds. But what is done? Men caſt away Rational Light, muſter up Conceits, that God ſees them not, knows them not, and ſo ſink into the Puddle of their ſordid Imaginations, as though they remained in Darkneſs to God.

* Drexel. Nicetas. *lib.* 2. *cap.* 10. *p.* 357.

I might further inſtance.

In *omiſſion of Prayer*, which ariſes ſometime from a flat Atheiſm: Who will call upon a God, that believes no ſuch being? Or from partial Atheiſm, either a denial of God's ſufficiency to help, or of his Omniſcience to know, as if God were like the Statue of *Jupiter* in *Crete* framed without Ears.

In the *Hypocrital pretences of Men, to exempt them from the ſervice God calls them to.* When Men pretend one thing, and intend another; this lurks in the Veins ſometimes of the beſt Men; ſometimes it ariſeth from the fear of Man; when Men are more afraid of the power of Man, than of diſſembling with the Almighty: It will pretend a vertue to cover a ſecret wile: And chooſe the *Tongue of the Craftie*, as the Expreſſion in *Job* *.

* Job 15. 5.

The caſe is plain in *Moſes*, who when ordered to undertake an eminent Service, pretends a want of Eloquence, and an ungrateful *ſlowneſs of Speech* *. This generous Soul, that before was not afraid to diſcover himſelf in the midſt of *Egypt* for his Country-men, anſwers ſneakingly to God, and would veil his carnal fear, with a pretence of Inſufficiency and Humility; *Who am I, that I ſhould go unto* Pharaoh *? He could not well alledge an inability to go to *Pharaoh*, ſince he had had an Education in the *Egyptian* Learning, which render'd him capable to appear at Court. God at laſt uncaſeth him, and ſhews it all to be a diſſimulation, and whatſoever was the pretence, fear lay at the bottom; he was afraid of his Life upon his appearance before *Pharaoh*, from whoſe Face he had fled upon the ſlaying the *Egyptian*, which God intimates to him, *Exod.* 4. 19. *Go, and return into* Egypt, *for all the Men are dead which ſought thy life.* What doth this Carriage ſpeak, but as if God's Eye were not upon our inward parts, as though we could lock him out of our hearts, that cannot be ſhut out from any Creek of the hearts of Men and Angels.

* Exod. 4. 10.

* Exod. 3. 11.

II. The ſecond Uſe is of *Comfort.* 'Tis a ground of great Comfort under the *preſent diſpenſation* wherein we are: * We have heard the *Doctrinal* part, and God hath given us the *Experimental* part of it in his ſpecial Providence this day, upon the Stage of the World. And bleſſed be God that he hath given us a ground of Comfort, without going out of our ordinary courſe to fetch it, whereby it ſeems to be peculiarly of God's ordering for us.

* Nov. 1678. *When the Popiſh Plot was diſcover'd.*

1. *'Tis a Comfort in all the clandeſtine Contrivances of Men againſt the Church.* His Eyes pierce as far as the depths of Hell: Not one of his Churches Adverſaries lies in a miſt, all are as plain as the Stars which he numbers; *Mine Adverſaries are all before thee* *: More exactly known to thee, than I can recount them. 'Tis a Prophecy of Chriſt, wherein Chriſt is brought in ſpeaking to God, of his own and the Churches Enemies: He comforts himſelf with this, that God hath his Eye upon every particular Perſon among his Adverſaries: He knows where they repoſe themſelves, when they go out to Conſult, and when they come in with their Reſolves: He diſcerns all the Rage that Spirits their Hearts, in what corner it lurks, how it acts; all the diſorders, motions of it, and every Object of that Rage; He cannot be deceived by the cloſeſt and ſubtileſt Perſon. Thus God ſpeaks concerning *Sennacherib* and his Hoſt againſt *Jeruſalem* *. After he had ſpoke of the forming of his Church, and the weakneſs of it, he adds, *But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy Rage againſt me; becauſe thy Rage againſt me, and thy Tumult is come up into mine Ears, therefore will I put my Hook in thy Noſe, and my Bridle in thy Lips, and will turn thee back, &c.* He knows all the Methods of the Counſels, the Stages they had laid, the manner of Execution of their Deſigns, all the ways whither they turned themſelves, and would uſe them no better than Men do devouring Fiſh and untam'd Beaſts, with a Hook in the Noſe, and a Bridle in the Mouth. Thoſe Stateſmen in *Iſa.* 29. 15. thought their Contrivances too deep for God to fathom, and too cloſe for God to fruſtrate; *They ſeek deep to hide their Counſels from the Lord; ſurely your turning of things upſide down, ſhall be eſteemed as the Potter's Clay*; of no more force and underſtanding than a Potter's Veſſel, which underſtands not its own form wrought by the Artificer, nor the uſe it is put to by the Buyer and Poſſeſſor; or ſhall be eſteemed as a Potter's Veſſel, that can be as eaſily flung back into the Maſs from whence it was taken, as preſerved in the Figure it is now endued with. No ſecret Deſigner is ſhrowded from God's ſight, or can be ſhelter'd from God's Arm: He underſtands the Venom of their Hearts, better than we can feel it, and diſcovers their inward fury more plainly, than we can ſee the Sting or Teeth of a Viper when they are opened for miſchief; and to what purpoſe doth God know and ſee them, but in order to deliver his People from them in his own due time; *I know their ſorrow, and am come down to deliver them* *: The Walls of *Jeruſalem* are continually before him, he knows therefore all that would undermine and demoliſh them; None can hurt *Zion* by any ignorance or inadvertency in God.

* Pſal. 69. 19.

* Iſa. 37. 28, 29.

* Exod. 3. 7, 8.

'Tis obſervable, that our Saviour, aſſuming to himſelf a different Title in every Epiſtle to the *Seven Churches*, doth particularly aſcribe to himſelf this of Knowledge and Wrath in that to *Thyatira*, an Emblem or Deſcription of the *Romiſh* State:

* *And*

* Rev. 2. 19. * *And unto the Angel of the Church of* Thyatira *write, These things ſaith the Son of God, who hath his Eyes like to a flame of fire, and his Feet like fine Braſs.* His Eyes, like a flame of Fire, are of a piercing nature, inſinuating themſelves into all the Pores and parts of the Body they encounter with, and his Feet like braſs to cruſh them with, is explained, *Verſe* 23. *I, will kill her Children with Death, and all the Churches ſhall know that I am he which ſearches the Reins and the Heart, and I will give to every one of you according to your works.* He knows every deſign of the *Romiſh* Party, deſign'd by that Church of *Thyatira**. *Jezabel*, there, ſignifies a whoriſh Church, ſuch a Church as ſhall act as *Jezabel*, *Ahab*'s Wife, who was not only a Worſhipper of Idols, but propagated Idolatry in *Iſrael*, ſlew the Prophets, perſecuted *Elijah*, murdered *Naboth*, the Name whereof ſignifies Propheſie, fiez'd upon his Poſſeſſion. And if it be ſaid that *Verſe* 19. this Church was commended for her Works, Faith, Patience; 'tis true *Rome* did at firſt ſtrongly profeſs Chriſtianity, and maintain'd the intereſt of it, but afterwards fell into the practice of *Jezabel*, and committed Spiritual Adultery: And is ſhe to be owned for a Wife, that now plays the Harlot, becauſe ſhe was honeſt and modeſt at her firſt Marriage; * And though ſhe ſhall be deſtroy'd yet not ſpeedily, *Verſe* 22. *I will caſt her into a Bed*, ſeems to intimate the deſtruction of *Jezabel*, not to be at once and ſpeedily, but in a lingring way, and by degrees, as Sickneſs conſumes a Body.

* *For the Evidence of it I refer you to Dr.* More's *Expoſition of the Seven Churches, worthy every Learned and Underſtanding Man's reading, and of every ſober Romaniſt.*

* Coc. *in loc.*

2. This Perfection of God *fits him to be a ſpecial Object of Truſt.* If he were forgetful, what comfort could we have in any promiſe? how could we depend upon him if he were ignorant of our State? His Compaſſions to pity us, his Readineſs to relieve us, his Power to protect and aſſiſt us, would be inſignificant, without his Omniſcience to inform his Goodneſs, and direct the Arm of his power. This perfection is as it were Gods Office of Intelligence. As you go to your *Memorandum* Book to know what you are to do; ſo doth God to his *Omniſcience*: This perfection is Gods Eye, to acquaint him with the neceſſities of his Church, and directs all his other Attributes in their exerciſe for and about his people. You may depend upon his Mercy that hath promiſed, and upon his Truth to perform, upon his ſufficiency to ſupply you, and his Goodneſs to relieve you, and his Righteouſneſs to reward you, becauſe he hath an infinite Underſtanding to know you and your wants, you and your ſervices. And without this Knowledge of his, no comfort could be drawn from any other perfection; none of them could be a *ſure Nail* to hang our hopes and confidence upon. This is that, the Church always Celebrated, *Pſal.* 105. 7. *He hath remembred his Covenant for ever, and the Word which he hath commanded to a thouſand generations*; And *Verſe* 42. *He remembred his holy promiſe; and he remembred for them his Covenant**. He remembers and underſtands his Covenant, therefore his promiſe to perform it, and therefore our Wants to ſupply them.

* Pſal. 106. 45.

3. And the rather, *becauſe God knows the Perſons of all his own.* He hath in his infinite Underſtanding, the exact number of all the individual perſons that belong to him; 2 *Tim.* 2. 19. *The Lord knows them that are his.* He knows all things, becauſe he hath created them; and he knows his People becauſe he hath not only made them, but alſo choſe them: He could no more chooſe he knew not what, than he could Create he knew not what: he knows them under a *double* Title; of *Creation* as Creatures, in the common Maſs of Creation; as new Creatures by a particular act of *Separation*. He cannot be ignorant of them in time, whom he fore-knew from Eternity: His knowledge in time is the ſame that he had from Eternity; He foreknew them that he had intended to give the Grace of Faith unto; and he knows them after they believe, becauſe he knows his own Act, in beſtowing Grace upon them, and his own Mark and Seal wherewith he hath ſtampt them: No doubt but he that *calls the Stars of Heaven by their Names**, knows the Number of thoſe living Stars that ſparkle in the Firmament of his Church. He cannot be ignoraat of their Perſons, when he numbers the Hairs of their Heads, and hath Regiſtred their Names in the Book of Life. As he only had an infinite Mercy to make the Choice, ſo he only hath an infinite Underſtanding to comprehend their Perſons. We only know the Elect of God by a Moral Aſſurance in the Judgment of Charity, when the Converſation of Men is according to the Doctrine of God: We have not an infallible knowledge of them, we may be often miſtaken; *Judas*, a Devil, may be judged by Man for a Saint, till he be ſtript of his Diſguiſe. God only hath an infallible knowledge of them, he knows his own Records, and the Counterparts in the Hearts of his People: None can counterfeit his Seal, nor can any raze it out. *When the Church is either ſcatter'd, like Duſt, by Perſecution, or over-grown with Superſtition and Idolatry, that there is ſcarce any grain of true Religion appearing, as in the Time of *Elijah*, who complain'd that he was *left alone*, as if the Church had been rooted out of that corner of the World, * yet God knew that he had a *number fed in a Cave*, and had reſerved *ſeven thouſand Men* that had preſerved the Purity of his Worſhip, and *not bow'd their Knee to* Baal. *Chriſt knew his Sheep*, as well as he is known of them; yea, better than they can know him.* *Hiſtory* acquaints us, that *Cyrus* had ſo vaſt a Memory, that he knew the Name of every particular Soldier in his Army, which conſiſted of divers Nations; Shall it be too hard for an infinite Underſtanding to know every one of that Hoſt that march under his Banners? May he not as well know them, as know the Number, Qualities, Influences of thoſe Stars which lie conceal'd from our Eye, as well as thoſe that are viſible to our Senſe? Yes, he knows them, as a General to employ them, as a Shepherd to preſerve them: He knows them in the World to guard them, and he knows them when they are out of the World to gather them, and cull out their Bodies, though wrapped up in a Cloud of the putrified Carcaſes of the Wicked: As he knew them from all Eternity to elect them, ſo he knows them in time to cloath their Perſons with Righteouſneſs, to protect their Perſons in Calamity according to his good pleaſure, and at laſt to raiſe and reward them according to his Promiſe.

* Pſal. 147 4.

* Turretin's *Sermons, p.* 362.

* 1 Kings 19. 14. 18.

* John 10. 14.

4. We may take *Comfort* from hence, That *our ſincerity cannot be unknown, to an infinite Underſtanding.* Not a way of the Righteous is conceal'd from him, and therefore *they ſhall ſtand in Judgment before him*; * *The Lord knows the way of the Righteous*: He knows them to obſerve them, and he knows them to Reward them. How comfortable is it to appeal to this Attribute of God for our integrity, with *Hezekiah*, 2 Kings 20. 3. *Remember Lord how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart.* Chriſt himſelf is brought in this *Prophetical Pſalm* drawing out the Comfort of this Attribute, *Pſal.* 40. 9. *I have not reſtrain'd my Lips, O Lord, thou knoweſt*, meaning his faithfulneſs in declaring the Righteouſneſs of God. *Job* follows the ſame ſteps, *Alſo now, behold, my Record is in Heaven, and my Witneſs is on high**: My Innocence hath the Teſtimony of Men, but my greateſt ſupport is in the Records of God. *Alſo now*; or beſides the Teſtimony of my own Heart, I have another Witneſs in Heaven that knows the Heart and can only Judge of the principles of my actions, and clear me from the ſcorns of my Friends, and

* Pſal. 1. 6.

* Job 16. 19

the accuſations of Men, with a juſtification of my Innocence: He repeats it twice to take the greater comfort in it. God knows, that we do that in the ſimplicity of our Hearts, which may be judged by Men to be done for unworthy and ſordid ends: He knows not only the outward action, but the inward affection; and praiſes that which Men often diſpraiſe; and writes down that with an *Euge, Well done good and faithful Servant*, which Men daub with their ſevereſt Cenſures *. How refreſhing is it to conſider, that God never miſtakes the appearance for reality, nor is lead by the judgment of Man? He ſits in Heaven and laughs at their follies and Cenſures. If God had no ſounder and no more piercing a Judgment than Man, woe be to the ſincereſt Souls that are often judged Hypocrites by ſome. What a happineſs is it for Integrity to have a Judge of infinite Underſtanding, who will one day wipe off the dirt of Worldly Reproaches?

* Rom. 2. 29.

Again, God knows the leaſt dram of Grace and Righteouſneſs in the Hearts of his People, though but as a *ſmoaking Flax*, or as the leaſt bruiſe of a ſaving conviction *; and knows it ſo as to cheriſh it; he knows what work he hath begun, and never hath his Eye off from it to abandon it.

* Mat. 12. 20.

5. The conſideration of this excellent Perfection in God may *comfort us in our ſecret Prayers, ſighs and works*. If God were not infinite Underſtanding, to pierce into the Heart, what comfort hath a poor Creature that hath a ſcantineſs of Expreſſions, but a Heart in a flame? If God did not underſtand the Heart, Faith and Prayer, which are internal works, would be in vain: How could he give that Mercy our Hearts plead for, if he were ignorant of our inward Affections? Hypocrites might ſcale Heaven by lofty Expreſſions, and a Sincere Soul come ſhort of the happineſs he is prepared for, for want of floriſhing Gifts. *Prayer* is an internal work, words are but the Garment of Prayer; *Meditation* is the Body, and Affections the Soul and Life of Prayer; *Give Ear to my words, O Lord, conſider my Meditation* *. Prayer is a Rational act, an act of the *mind*, not the act of a *Parrot*: Prayer is an act of the Heart, though the ſpeaking Prayer is the work of the Tongue; Now God gives Ear to the words, but he conſiders the Meditation, the frame of the Heart. Conſideration is a more exact notice than hearing, the act only of the Ear. Were not God of an infinite Underſtanding, and Omniſcient, he might take fine Clothes, a heap of Garments for the Man himſelf; and be put off by glittering words, without a Spiritual Frame. What matter of rejoycing is it, that we call not upon a deaf and ignorant Idol; but on one that liſtens to our ſecret Petitions to give them a diſpatch, that knows our deſires afar off, and from the infiniteneſs of his Mercy, joyn'd with his Omniſcience, ſtands ready to give us a return? Hath he not a Book of Remembrance for them that fear him, and for their ſighs and ejaculations to him as well as their diſcourſes of him *; and not only what Prayers they utter, but what gracious and holy thoughts they have of him? That *thought upon his Name*. Though millions of ſupplications be put up at the ſame time, yet they have all a diſtinct File (as I may ſay) in an infinite Underſtanding, which perceives and comprehends them all. As he obſerves millions of Sins committed at the ſame time by a vaſt number of Perſons to Record them in order to Puniſhment; ſo he diſtinctly diſcerns an infinite number of Cries at the ſame moment to Regiſter them in order to an Anſwer.

* Pſal. 5. 1.

* Mal. 3. 16.

A ſigh cannot ſcape an infinite Underſtanding, though crowded among a mighty multitude of Cries from others, or cover'd with many unwelcome diſtractions in our ſelves, no more than a believing touch from the Woman that had the Bloudy Iſſue, could be conceal'd from Chriſt, and be undiſcern'd from the preſs of the thronging multitudes: Our groans are as audible and intelligible to him as our words, and he knows what is the mind of his own Spirit, though expreſt in no plainer language than ſobs and heavings *. Thus *David* cheers up himſelf under the neglects of his Friends, *Pſal.* 38. 9. *Lord my deſire is before thee, and my groaning is not hid from thee.* Not a groan of a panting Spirit ſhall be loſt till God hath loſt his knowledge; not a Petition forgotten while God hath a Record, nor a Tear dried while God hath a *Bottle* to reſerve it in *.

* Rom. 8. 27.

* Pſal. 56. 8.

Our *ſecret works* are alſo known and obſerved by him; not only our outward labour, but our inward love in it, *Heb.* 6. 10. If with *Iſaac* we go privately into the Field to meditate, or ſecretly *caſt our Bread upon the Waters*, he keeps his Eye upon us to Reward us, and returns the Fruit into our own Boſoms *; Yea, though it be but a Cup of cold Water from an inward Spring of love given to a Diſciple: *He ſees your works and your labours, and faith and patience* in working them *, all the marks of your induſtry, and ſtrength of your intentions, and will be as exact at laſt in order to a due *Praiſe*, as to open Sins in order to a juſt *Recompence* *.

* Mat. 6. 4, 6.

* Rev. 2. 2.

* 1 Cor 4. 5.

6. The Conſideration of this excellent Attribute, affords *Comfort in the Afflictions of good Men*. He knows their *Preſſures*, as well as *hears their Cries* *: His knowledge comes not by information from us; but his Compaſſionate liſtening to our Cries ſprings from his own Inſpection into our Sorrows; He is affected with them, before we make any diſcovery of them: He is not ignorant of the beſt Seaſon, when they may be uſefully inflicted, and when they may be profitably removed: The Tribulation and Poverty of his Church is not unknown to him, *Rev.* 2. 8, 9. *I know thy Works and Tribulation, &c.* He knows their Works, and what Tribulation they meet with for him; He ſees their extremities, when they are *toiling* againſt the Wind and Tide of the World *: Yea, the natural exigences of the multitude are not neglected by him, he diſcerns to take care of them: Our Saviour conſidered the *three days faſting* of his Followers, and miraculouſly provides a Diſh for them in the Wilderneſs. No good Man is ever out of Gods Mind, and therefore never out of his Compaſſionate Care: His eye pierceth into their Dungeons and pities their Miſeries. *Joſeph* may forget his Brethren, and the Diſciples not know Chriſt, when he walks upon the Midnight Waves and Turbulent Sea; * but a *Lion*'s Den cannot obſcure a *Daniel* from his Sight, nor the depths of the Whales Belly bury *Jonah* from the Divine Underſtanding: He diſcerns *Peter* in his Chains, and *Stephen* under the Stones of Martyrdom: He knows *Lazarus* under his tatter'd Rags, and *Abel* wallowing in his Blood: His Eye and Knowledge goes along with his People, when they are tranſplanted into Foreign Countries, and ſold for Slaves into the *Iſlands of the* Græcians, *for he will raſe them out of the place*, Joel 3. 6, 7. He would defeat the hopes of the Perſecutors, and applaud the Patience of his people: He knows his People in the Tabernacle of Life, and in the *Valley* of the *Shadow* of Death, *Pſal.* 23. He knows all penal Evils becauſe he commiſſions and directs them: He knows the Inſtruments becauſe they are his *Sword* *, and he knows his gracious Sufferer becauſe he hath his Mark: He diſcerns *Job* in his Anguiſh, and the *Devil* in his Malice: By the direction of this Attribute he orders Calamities, and reſcues from them. *Thou haſt ſeen it, for thou beholdeſt miſchief and ſpight* *: That is the Comfort of the *Pſalmiſt*, and the Comfort of every Believer, and the Ground of committing

* Mat. 4. 6. 48.

* Bar. 3. 24. low's *Mans Refuge*, p. 29, 30.

* Pſal 17. 13.

* Pſal. 10. 14.

committing themselves to God under all the injustice of Men.

7. 'Tis a Comfort *in all our infirmites.* As he knows our Sins to charge them; so he knows the weakness of our Nature to pity us. As his infinite Understanding may *scare* us, because he knows our Transgressions; so it may *relieve* us, because he knows our natural mutability in our first Creation: *Psal. 103. 14. *He knows our frame, he remembers that we are dust*. 'Tis the reason of the precedent *Verses*, why he removes our Transgression from us, why he is so backward in punishing; so patient in waiting, so forward in pitying; Why? He doth not only remember our Sins, but remember our frame or forming, what brittle, though clear glasses we were by Creation, how easie to be crackt; He remembers our impotent and weak Condition by Corruption, what a sink we have of vain imaginations that remain in us after Regeneration; he doth not only consider that we were made according to his image, and therefore able to stand, but that we were made of Dust and weak Matter, and had a sensitive Soul, like that of Beasts, as well as an intellectual Nature, like that of Angels, and therefore liable to follow the dictates of it, without exact care and watchfulness. If he remembred only the first, there would be no issue but Indignation; but the Consideration of the latter moves his Compassion. How miserable should we be for want of this perfection in the Divine Nature, whereby God remembers and reflects upon his past act in our first frame, and the mindfulness of our Condition excites the motion of his Bowels to us? Had he lost the knowledge, how he first framed us; did he not still remember the mutability of our Nature, as we were form'd and stampt in his Mint; how much more wretched would our condition be than it is? If his remembrance of our Original, be one ground of his Pity, the sense of his Omniscience should be a ground of our Comfort, in the stirring of our infirmities: He remembers we were but Dust, when he made us; and yet remembers we are but Dust, while he preserves and forbears us.

8. 'Tis some Comfort *in the fears of some lurking Corruption in our Hearts.* We know by this whither to address our selves for the search and discovery of it: Perhaps some Blessings we want are retarded, some Calamities we understand not the particular cause of, are inflicted, some Petitions we have put up, hang too long for an Answer; and the Chariot Wheels of Divine Goodness move slow and are long in coming: Let us beg the Aid of this Attribute to open to us the Remora's, to discovery what base Affection there is that retards the Mercies we want, or attracts the Affliction we feel, or bars the Door against the return of our supplications. What our dim sight cannot discover, the clear Eye of God can make visible to us *Job* 10. 2. *Shew me wherefore thou contendest with me.* As in want of Pardon, we particularly plead his Mercy, and in our desires for the performances of his Promise, we argue with him from his faithfulness; so in the fear of any insincerity or hidden Corruption we should implore his Omniscience: For as God is a God in Covenant, our God, our God in the whole of his Nature; so the Perfections of his Nature, are employed in their several Stations, as assistances of his Creatures. This was *David*'s Practice and Comfort, after that large Meditation on the Omniscience and Omnipresence of God, he turns his Thoughts of it into Petitions for the Employment of it in the Concerns of his Soul, and begs a Mercy suitable to the Glory of this Perfection, *Psal.* 139. 23. *Search me, Oh God, and try my Heart, try me and know my Thoughts*; Dive to the bottom, *Verse* 24. *And see if there be any wicked Way in me, and lead me in the Way Everlasting.* His desire is not barely that God should know him, for it would be senseless to beg of God that he should have Mercy, or Faithfulness, or Power, or Knowledge in his Nature; but he desires the Exercise of this Attribute, in the Discovery of himself to himself, in order to his Sight of any wicked Way, and Humiliation for it, and Reformation of it, in order to his Conduct to Everlasting Life. As we may appeal to this Pertection to judge us, when the sincerity of our Actions is censured by others; so we may implore it to search us, when our Sincerity is question'd by our selves: That our Minds may be enlightned by a Beam from his Knowledge, and the little Thieves may be pull'd out of their Dens in our Hearts, by the Hand of his Power. In particular, it is our Comfort that we can, and our necessity that we must Address particularly to this, when we engage solemnly in a Work of Self-Examination; that we may have a clearer Eye to direct us than our own, that we may not mistake Brass for Gold, or counterfeit Graces for true; that nothing that is filthy and fit to be cast out, may escape our Sight, and preserve its Stations. And we need not question the laying at the Door of this Neglect, (*viz.* not calling in this Attribute to our Aid, whose proper Office it is, (as I may so say) to search and enquire) all the Mistakes, ill Success, and fruitlessness of our Endeavours in Self-Examination, because we would engage in it, in the pitiful Strength of our own Dimness, and not in the Light of God's Countenance, and the Assistance of his Eye, which can discern what we cannot see, and discover that to us, which we cannot manifest to our selves. 'Tis a Comfort to a Learner of an Art, to have a skilful Eye to overlook his Work, and inform him of the Defects. Beg the help of the Eye of God in all your Searches and Self Examinations.

9. The Consideration of this Attribute is comfortable *in our Assurances of, and Reflections upon the pardon of Sin, or seeking of it.* As God punishes Men for Sin according to his Knowledge of them, which is greater than the Knowledge their own Consciences have of them; so he pardons according to his Knowledge: He pardons not only according to our Knowledge, but according to his own: He is greater than any Man's Heart, to condemn for that, which a Man is at present ignorant of; and greater than our Hearts, to pardon that which is not at present visible to us: He knows that which the most watchful Conscience cannot take a survey of: If God had not an infinite Understanding of us, how could we have a perfect and full pardon from him? It would not stand with his Honour to pardon he knew not what. He knows what Crimes we have to be pardon'd, when we know not all of them our selves; that stand in need of a gracious Remission: His Omniscience beholds every Sin to charge it upon our Saviour. If he knows our Sins that are black, he knows every mite of Christ's Righteousness which is pure, and the utmost extent of his Merits, as well as the Demerit of our Iniquities. As he knows the filth of our Sin, he also knows the covering of our Saviour: He knows the value of the Redeemer's Sufferings, and exactly understands every Plea in the Intercession of our Advocate. Though God knows our Sins *oculo indice*, yet he doth not see them *oculo judice*, with a Judicial Eye: His Omniscience stirs not up his Justice to Revenge, but his Mercy to Pity. His infinite Understanding of what Christ hath done, directs him to disarm his Justice, and sound an Alarm to his Bowels. As he understands better than we what we have committed; so he understands better than we what our Saviour hath merited; and his Eye directs his Hand in the blotting out Guilt, and applying the Remedy.

3. The third Uſe ſhall be to Sinners to humble them, and put them upon ſerious Conſideration. This Attribute ſpeaks terrible things to a Profligate Sinner. *Baſil* thinks that the ripping open the Sins of the Damned to their faces by this Perfection of God, is more terrible than their other Torments in Hell. God knows the Perſons of Wicked Men, not one is exempted from his Eye, he ſees all the Actions of Men, as well as he knows their Perſons: *Job* 11. 11. *He knows vain men, he ſees wickedneſs alſo.* Job 34. 21. *His Eye is upon all their goings.* He hears the moſt private Whiſpers, *Pſal.* 139. 4 the ſcope, manner, circumſtance of ſpeaking, he knows it altogether: *He underſtands all our thoughts*, the firſt bubblings of that bitter Spring, *Pſal.* 139. 2. The quickeſt glances of the Fancy, the cloſeſt muſings of the Mind, and the abortive wouldings or wiſhes of the Will, the language of the Heart, as well as the language of the Tongue; Not a fooliſh thought, or an idle word, not a wanton glance, or a diſhoneſt action; Not a negligent ſervice, or a diſtracting fancy, but is more viſible to him, than the filth of a Dunghil can be to any Man by the help of a Sun-Beam. How much better would it be for deſperate Sinners, to have their Crimes known to all the Angels in Heaven, and Men upon Earth, and Devils in Hell, than that they ſhould be known to their Sovereign, whoſe Laws they have violated, and to their Judge, whoſe Righteouſneſs obligeth him to revenge the Injury?

Conſider, *What a poor Refuge is Secrecy to a Sinner?* Not the Miſts of a foggy Day, nor the Obſcurity of the darkeſt Night, nor the cloſeſt Curtains, nor the deepeſt Dungeon, can hide any Sin from the Eye of God. *Adam* is known in his Thickets, and *Jonah* in his Cabin. *Achan*'s Wedge of Gold is diſcern'd by him, though buried in the Earth, and hooded with a Tent. Shall *Sarah* be unſeen by him, when ſhe mockingly laughs behind the Door? Shall *Gehazi* tell a Lye, and comfort himſelf with an imagination of his Maſter's Ignorance, as long as God knows it? Whatſoever works Men do, are not hid from God, whether done in the darkneſs or Day-light, in the Midnight Darkneſs, or the Noon-day Sun: He is all Eye to ſee, and he hath a great Wrath to Puniſh. The Wheels in *Ezekiel* are full of Eyes: A piercing Eye to behold the Sinner, and a ſwift Wheel of Wrath to overtake him. God is Light, and of all things Light is moſt difficultly kept out. The *ſecreteſt Sins are ſet in the light of his Countenance* *, as legible to him, as if writ with a Sun-Beam; More viſible to him than the greateſt Print to the ſharpeſt Eye. The Fornications of the *Samaritan Woman*, perhaps known only to her own Conſcience, were manifeſt to Chriſt *. There is nothing ſo ſecretly done, but there is an infallible Witneſs to prepare a Charge. Though God be inviſible to us, we muſt not imagine we are ſo to him; 'tis a vanity therefore to think, we can conceal our ſelves from God, by concealing the Notions of God from our ſenſe and practice. If Men be as cloſe from the Eyes of all Men, as from thoſe of the Sun: Yea, if they could ſeparate themſelves from their own Shadow, they could not draw themſelves from God's Underſtanding: How then can Darkneſs ſhelter us, or Crafty Artifices defend us? With what ſhame will Sinners be filled, when God, who hath trac'd their Steps, and writ their Sins in a Book, ſhall make a Repetition of their ways, and unveil the Web of their Wickedneſs?

* Pſal. 90. 8.

* John 4. 16.

2. What a dreadful Conſideration is this to the *juggling Hypocrite, that maſks himſelf with an appearance of Piety?* An Infinite Underſtanding judges not according to the Veils and Shadows, but according to the Truth; *He judges not according to appearance* *. The outward Comelineſs of a Work impoſeth not on him, his Knowledge, and therefore his Eſtimations are quite of another Nature than thoſe of Men. By this Perfection God looks through the Veil, and beholds the litter of Abominations in the ſecrets of the Soul: The true Quality and Principle of every Work, and judges of them as they are, and not as they appear. Diſguiſed Pretexts cannot deceive him; the Diſguiſes are known afar off before they are weav'd, he pierceth into the depths of the moſt abſtruſe Wills; all ſecret Ends are diſſected before him: Every action is naked in its outſide, and open in its inſide, all are as clear to him as if their Bodies were of Cryſtal, ſo that if there be any ſecret Reſerves, he will *certainly reprove us* *. We are often deceiv'd, we may take Wolves for Sheep, and Hypocrites for Believers; for the Eyes of Men are no better than Fleſh, and dive no further than appearance; but an infinite Underſtanding, that fathoms the ſecret depths of the Heart, is too knowing to let a Dream paſs for a Truth, or miſtake a Shadow for a Body. Though we call God Father all our days, ſpeak the Language of Angels, or be endowed with the Gift of Miracles, he can diſcern whether we have his Mark upon us; He can eſpy the Treaſon of *Judas* in a Kiſs, *Herod*'s intent of Murdering under a ſpecious pretence of Worſhip: A *Phariſee*'s fraud under a broad *Phylactery*: A Ravenous Wolf under the ſoftneſs of a Sheep's Skin; And the *Devil* in *Samuel*'s Mantle, or when he would ſhrowd himſelf among the *Sons of God* *. All the Rooms of the Heart, and every Atome of Duſt in the leaſt chink of it is clear to his Eye: He can ſtrip Sin from the faireſt Excuſes, pierce into the Heart with more eaſe than the Sun can through the thinneſt Cloud or Vapour; and look through all *Ephraim*'s ingenious Inventions to excuſe his *Idolatry* *. Hypocriſie then is a ſenſeleſs thing, ſince it cannot eſcape unmasking, by an infinite Underſtanding. As all our Force cannot ſtop his Arm, when he is reſolved to Puniſh; ſo all our Sophiſtry cannot blind his Underſtanding, when he comes to Judge. Woe to the Hypocrite, for God ſees him; all his juggling is open and naked to infinite Underſtanding.

* 1 Sam. 16. 7.

* Job 13. 10.

* Job 1. 6, 7.

* Hoſ. 5. 3.

3. *Is it not alſo a ſenſeleſs thing to be careleſs of Sins committed long ago?* The old Sins forgotten by Men, ſtick faſt in an infinite Underſtanding: Time cannot raze out that which hath been known from Eternity. Why ſhould they be forgotten many Years after they were acted, ſince they were foreknown in an Eternity before they were committed, or the Criminal capable to practice them? *Amalek* muſt pay their Arrears of their ancient Unkindneſs to *Iſrael* in the time of *Saul*, though the Generation that committed them were rotten in their Graves *. Old Sins are *written in a Book*, which lies always before God; and not only our own Sins, but the *Sins of our Fathers*, to be requited upon their Poſterity *. What a vanity is it then to be regardleſs of the Sins of an Age that went before us; becauſe they are in ſome meaſure out of our knowledge, are they therefore blotted out of God's remembrance? Sins are bound up with him, as Men do Bonds, till they reſolve to ſue for the Debt; *The Iniquity of* Ephraim *is bound up* *. As his fore-knowledge extends to all acts that ſhall be done, ſo his remembrance extends to all acts that have been done. We may as well ſay, God fore-knows nothing that ſhall be done to the end of the World, as that he forgets any thing that hath been done from the beginning of the World. The former Ages of the World are no further diſtant from him than the latter. God hath a *Calendar*, (as it were) or an Account Book of Mens Sins ever ſince the beginning of the World, what they did in their

* 1 Sam. 15. 2.

* Iſa. 65 6. *Behold it is written.*

* Hoſ. 13. 12.

their Childhood, what in their Youth, what in their Manhood, and what in their Old Age: He hath
*Deut. 32. 34. them *in ſtore among his Treaſure* *: He hath neither loſt his Underſtanding to know them, nor his Reſo-
* Verſ. 35. lution to revenge them: As follows, * *To me Vengeance belongs.* He intends to enrich his Juſtice with a glorious manifeſtation, by rendring a due Recompence. And it is to be obſerved, that God doth not only neceſſarily remember them, but ſometimes binds himſelf by an Oath to do it; *Amos* 8. 7. *The Lord hath ſworn by the Excellency of* Jacob, *ſurely I will never forget any of their works.* Or in the Hebrew, *If I ever forget any of their works*; That is, I et me not be accounted a God for ever, if I do forget; Let me loſe my Godhead, if I loſe my Remembrance. 'Tis not leſs a Miſery to the Wicked, than it is a Comfort to the Godly, that their Record is in Heaven.

4. Let it be obſerved, *That this infinite Underſtanding doth exactly know the ſins of Men, he knows ſo as to conſider.* He doth not only know them, but in-
* Pſal. 11. 4. tently behold them; * *His Eye-lids try the Children of Men*, a Metaphor taken from Men, that contract the Eye-lids, when they would wiſtly and accurately behold a thing; 'tis not a tranſient and careleſs lqok. *Pſal.* 10. 14 *Thou haſt ſeen it*; Thou haſt intently beheld it, as the word properly ſignifies: He beholds and knows the Actions of every particular Man, as if there were none but he in the World. And doth
* Prov. 5. 21. not only know, but *ponder* *, and *conſider their*
* Pſal. 33. 15. *works* *, He is not a bare Spectator, but a diligent Obſerver, * *By him actions are weighed*; To ſee
* 1 Sam. 2. 3. what degree of good or evil there is in them, what there is to blemiſh them, what to advantage them, what the quality and quantity of every action is. Conſideration takes in every Circumſtance of the conſidered Object: Notice is taken of the Place where, the Minute when, the Mercy againſt which it is committed; the number of them is exact in God's Book; *They have tempted me now theſe ten*
* Numb. 14. 22. *times* *, againſt the demonſtrations of my Glory in *Egypt* and the Wilderneſs. The whole Guilt in every Circumſtance is ſpread before him: His knowledge of mens Sins is not confuſed, ſuch an Imperfection an infinite Underſtanding cannot be ſubject to;
* Jer. 2. 22. 'Tis exact, for *Iniquity is mark'd before him* *.

5. *God knows Mens miſcarriage ſo as to judge.* This uſe his Omniſcience is put to, to maintain his Soveraign Authority in the exerciſe of his Juſtice: His notice of the Sins of Men is in order to a juſt Retribution, *Pſal.* 10. 14. *Thou haſt ſeen miſchief to requite it with thy hand.* The Eye of his Knowledge directs the Hand of his Juſtice; and no ſinful action that falls under his Cognizance, but will fall under his Revenge; they can as little eſcape his Cenſure as they can his Knowledge: He is a Witneſs in his Omniſcience, that he may be a Judge in his Righteouſneſs: He *knows the hearts of the Wicked*, ſo as to hate their Works, and teſtifie his abhorrency of
*Luke 16. 15. that which is of *high value with Men* *. Sin is not preſerved in his Underſtanding, or written down in his Book to be Moth-eaten as an old Manuſcript, but to be open'd one day, and Copied out in the Conſciences of Men: He writes them to publiſh them, and ſets them in the light of his Countenance, to bring them to the light of their Conſciences What a terrible Conſideration is it, to think that the Sins of *a day* are upon Record in an Infallible Underſtanding, much more the Sins of a Week? What a number then do the Sins of a *Month*, a *Year*, *ten or forty Years* ariſe to? How many actions againſt Charity, againſt Sincerity; what an infinite number is there of them, all bound up in the Court Rolls of God's Omniſcience, in order to a Tryal, to be brought out before the Eyes of Men? Who can ſeriouſly conſider all thoſe Bonds, reſerv'd in the Cabinet of God's Knowledge, to be ſued out againſt the Sinner in due time, without an unexpreſſible horror?

4. The fourth Uſe is of *Exhortation.* *Let us have a ſenſe of God's Knowledge upon our hearts.* All Wickedneſs hath a ſpring from a want of due Conſideration and ſenſe of it. *David* concludes it ſo, * *The proud*
* Pſal. 86. 14. *roſe againſt him, and violent Men ſought after* his *Soul*, becauſe they did *not ſet God before them.* They think God doth not know, and therefore care not what, nor how they act. When the fear of this Attribute is remov'd, a Door is open'd to all Impiety: What is there ſo villainous, but the minds of Men will attempt to act? What Reverence of a Deity can be left, when the ſenſe of his infinite Underſtanding is extinguiſh'd? What Faith could there be in Judgments in Witneſſes? How would the Foundations of Humane Society be overturn'd? The Pillars upon which Commerce ſtands, be utterly broken and diſſolved? What Society can be preſerved, if this be not truly believed and faithfully ſtuck to? But how eaſily would Oaths be ſwallowed and quickly violated, if the ſenſe of this Perfection were rooted out of the minds of Men? What fear could they have of calling to Witneſs a Being they imagine blind and ignorant? Men ſecretly imagine, that *God knows not*, or *ſoon forgets*, and then make bold to Sin againſt
* Ezek. 8. 12. him *. How much does it therefore concern us to cheriſh and keep alive the ſenſe of this? If God *writes us upon the Palms of his Hands*, as the Expreſſion is, to remember us, let us engrave him upon the Tables of our Hearts to remember him. It would be a good Motto to write upon our Minds, God knows all, he is of infinite Underſtanding.

1. *This would give check to much Iniquity.* Can a Man's Conſcience eaſily and delightfully ſwallow that, which he is ſenſible falls under the Cognizance of God, when it is hateful to the Eye of his Holineſs, and renders the Actor odious to him? *Doth he not ſee my ways, and count all my ſteps*, ſaith *Job* *? * Job 41. To what end doth he fix this Conſideration? To 4. keep him from *wanton glances.* Temptations have no encouragement to come near him, that is conſtantly arm'd with the thoughts that his Sin is Book'd in God's Omniſcience. If any impudent Devil hath the face to tempt us, we ſhould not have the impudence to joyn iſſue with him under the ſenſe of an infinite Underſtanding. How fruitleſs would his Wiles be againſt this Conſideration? How eaſily would his Snares be crack'd, by one ſenſible thought of this? This doth *Solomon* preſcribe to allay the heat of *Carnal imaginations* *. It were a uſeful Que- * Prov. 5. 20, 21. ſtion to ask, at the appearance of every Temptation, at the entrance upon every Action, as the Church did in Temptations to Idolatry; * *Shall not God ſearch* * Pſal. 44. *this out, for he knows the ſecrets of the heart?* His 21. Underſtanding comprehends us more than our Conſciences can our acts, or our Underſtanding our thoughts: Who durſt ſpeak Treaſon againſt a Prince, if he were ſure he heard him, or that it would come to his knowledge? A ſenſe of God's knowledge of Wickedneſs in the firſt motion and inward contrivance, would bar the accompliſhment and execution. The Conſideration of God's infinite Underſtanding, would cry *ſtand* to the firſt glances of the heart to Sin.

2. *It would make us watchful over our hearts and thoughts.* Should we harbour any unworthy thoughts in our Cabinet, if our heads and hearts were poſſeſs'd with this uſeful Truth, That *God knows every thing which comes into our minds* *? We ſhould as much * Ezek. 11. bluſh at the riſing of impure thoughts before the 5. Underſtanding of God, as at the diſcovery of unworthy actions to the knowledge of Men: If we

lived

lived under a ſenſe, that not a thought of all thoſe Millions, which flutter about our Minds, can be conceal'd from him; how watchful and careful ſhould we be of our hearts and thoughts?

3. *It would be a good Preparation to every Duty.* This Conſideration ſhould be the Preface to every Service: The Divine Underſtanding knows how I now act. This would engage us to ſerious Intention, and quell wandring and diſtracting Fancies: Who would come before God with a careleſs and ignorant Soul, under a ſenſe of his infinite Underſtanding, and Prerogative of ſearching the Heart? *Oh thou that ſitteſt in Heaven*, was a Conſideration the *Pſalmiſt* had at the beginning of his Prayer*: Whereby he teſtifies not only an Apprehenſion of the Majeſty and Power of God, but of his Omniſcience; as one ſitting above, beholds all that is below; would we offer to God ſuch raw and undigeſted Petitions; would there be ſo much flattneſs in our Services; ſhould our Hearts ſo often give us the ſlip: Would any hang down their Heads like a Bulruſh by an affected or counterfeit Humility, while the Heart is filled with Pride, if we did actuate Faith in this Attribute? No, our Prayers would be more ſound, our Devotions more vigorous, our Hearts more cloſe, our Spirits like the Chariots of *Aminadab*, more ſwift in their Motions: Every thing would be done by us with all our might, which would be very feeble and faint, if we conceived God to be of a Finite Underſtanding like our ſelves. Let us therefore before every Duty, not draw, but open the Curtains between God and our Souls, and think that we are going before him that *ſees us*, before him that knows us*. And the ſtronger Impreſſions of the Divine Knowledge are upon our Minds, the better would our Preparation be for, and the more active our Frames in every Service: And certainly we may judge of the ſuitableneſs of our Preparations, by the ſtrength of ſuch Impreſſions upon us.

* Pſal. 123. 1.

* Gen. 16. 13.

4. *This would tend to make us ſincere in our whole Courſe.* This Preſcription *David* gave to *Solomon*, to maintain a ſoundneſs and health of Spirit in his Walk before God; 1 *Chron.* 28. 9. *And thou* Solomon *my Son, know the God of thy Fathers, and ſerve him with a perfect Heart, for the Lord underſtands all the Imaginations of the Thoughts.* *Joſephus* gives this Reaſon for *Abel*'s Holineſs, that he believed God was ignorant of nothing. As the Doctrine of Omniſcience is the Foundation of all Religion; ſo the Impreſſion of it, would promote the practice of all Religion. When *all* our *ways are* imagin'd by us to be *before* the Lord, we ſhall then *keep his Precepts**. And we can never be *perfect* or ſincere, till we *walk before* God, *Gen.* 17. 1. as under the Eye of God's Knowledge. What we ſpeak, what we think, what we act is in his Sight: He knows every place where we are, every thing that we do, as well as Chriſt knew *Nathanael* under the Fig-Tree. As he is too powerful to be vanquiſh'd, ſo he is too Underſtanding to be deceived: The ſenſe of this would make us walk with as much Care, as if the Underſtanding of all Men did comprehend us and our Actions.

* Antiquit. *lib.* 1. *cap.* 3.

* Pſal. 119. 168.

5. The Conſideration of this Attribute *would make us humble.* How dejected would a Perſon be, if he were ſure all the Angels in Heaven, and Men upon Earth, did perfectly know his Crimes, with all their Aggravations? But what is created Knowledge to an infinite and juſt cenſuring Underſtanding? When we conſider that he knows our Actions, whereof there are Multitudes, and our Thoughts, whereof there are Millions: That he views all the Bleſſings beſtow'd upon us; all the Injuries we have return'd to him; that he exactly knows his own Bounty, and our Ingratitude; all the Idolatry, Blaſphemy, and ſecret Enmity in every Man's Heart againſt him; all Tyrannical Oppreſſions, hidden Luſts, Omiſſions of neceſſary Duties, violation of plain Precepts, every fooliſh Imagination, with all the Circumſtances of them, and that perfectly in their full Anatomy, every Mite of Unworthineſs and Wickedneſs in every Circumſtance; and add to this his Knowledge, the Wonders of his Patience, which are miraculous upon the ſcore of his Omniſcience, that he is not as quick in his Revenge, as he is in his Underſtanding; but is ſo far from inflicting Puniſhment, that he continues his former Benefits, arms not his Juſtice againſt us, but ſollicits our Repentance, and waits to be gracious with all this Knowledge of our Crimes; ſhould not the Conſideration of this, melt our Hearts into Humiliation before him, and make us earneſt in begging Pardon and Forgiveneſs of him?

Again, Do we not all find a Worm in our beſt Fruit, a Flaw in our ſoundeſt Duties? Shall any of us vaunt, as if God beheld only the Gold, and not any Droſs; as if he knew one thing only, and not another: If we knew ſomething by our ſelves to chear us, do we not alſo know ſomething, yea, many things to condemn us, and therefore to humble us? Let the ſenſe of God's infinite Knowledge therefore be an Incentive and Argument for more Humiliation in us. If we know enough to render our ſelves vile in our own Eyes, how much more doth God know to render us vile in his!

6. The Conſideration of this excellent Perfection, ſhould *make us to acquieſce in God, and rely upon him in every ſtrait.* In publick, in private: He knows all Caſes, and he knows all Remedies: He knows the Seaſons of bringing them, and he knows the Seaſons of removing them, for his own Glory. What is *contingent* in reſpect of us, and of our Foreknowledge, and in reſpect of *ſecond* Cauſes, is it not ſo in regard of God's, who hath the Knowledge of the futurition of all things: He knows all Cauſes in themſelves, and therefore knows what every Cauſe will produce, what will be the event of every Counſel, and of every Action? How ſhould we commit our ſelves to this God of infinite Underſtanding, who knows all things, and fore-knows every thing, that cannot be forced through Ignorance to take new Counſel, or be ſurpriz'd with any thing that can happen to us? This Uſe the *Pſalmiſt* makes of it, *Pſal.* 10. 14. *Thou haſt ſeen it, the poor committeth himſelf unto thee.* Though *ſome truſt in Chariots and Horſes**, ſome in Counſels and Counſellors, ſome in their Arms and Courage, and ſome in meer Vanity and Nothing, yet let us *remember the Name* and Nature *of the Lord our God*, his Divine Perfections, of which this of his infinite Underſtanding and Omniſcience is none of the leaſt, but ſo neceſſary, that without it he could not be God, and the whole World would be a meer Chaos and Confuſion.

* Pſal. 10. 7.

A DISCOURSE UPON THE Wiſdom of GOD.

Rom. XVI. xxvii.

To God only Wiſe be Glory through Jeſus Chriſt, for ever, Amen.

THis *Chapter* being the laſt of this *Epiſtle*, is chiefly made up of charitable and friendly Salutations and Commendations of particular Perſons, according to the early neſs and ſtrength of their ſeveral Graces, and their labour of Love for the Intereſt of God and his People.

In *verſe* 17. he warns them not to be drawn aſide from the *Goſpel Doctrine*, which had been taught them, by the plauſible Pretences and Inſinuations, which the Corrupters of the Doctrine and Rule of *Chriſt* never want from the ſuggeſtions of their *Carnal Wiſdom*. The Brats of Soul-deſtroying Errors, may walk about the world in a garb and diſguiſe of *good words, and fair ſpeeches*, as it is in the 18*th Verſe*, by *good words and fair ſpeeches deceive the hearts of the ſimple*. And for their encouragement to a conſtancy in the Goſpel Doctrine, he aſſures them, that all thoſe that would diſpoſſeſs them of Truth, to poſſeſs them with Vanity, are but *Satans*'s Inſtruments, and will fall under the ſame Captivity and Yoke with their principal; *Verſe* 18. *The God of Peace ſhall bruiſe Satan under your feet ſhortly.*

Whence obſerve,

1. *All Corrupters of Divine Truth, and Troublers of the Churches Peace, are no better than Devils.* Our Saviour thought the Name *Satan*, a Title merited by *Peter*, when he breathed out an Advice, as an Ax at the Root of the Goſpel, the *Death of Chriſt*, the foundation of all Goſpel Truth; and the *Apoſtle* concludes them under the ſame Character, which hinder the ſuperſtructure, and would mix their Chaff with his Wheat; *Mat.* 16. 23. *Get thee behind me Satan.* 'Tis not, Get thee behind me *Simon*, or, Get thee behind me *Peter*; but, *Get thee behind me Satan: thou art an offence to me:* Thou doſt oppoſe thy ſelf to the Wiſdom, and Grace, and Authority of God, to the Redemption of Man, and to the good of the World,

As the *Holy Ghoſt* is the Spirit of Truth, ſo is *Satan* the Spirit of Falſhood: As the *Holy Ghoſt* inſpires Believers with Truth, ſo doth the *Devil* corrupt Unbelievers with Error. Let us cleave to the Truth of the Goſpel, that we may not be counted by God as part of the Corporation of fallen Angels, and not be barely reckon'd as Enemies of God, but in league with the greateſt Enemy to his Glory in the World.

2. *The Reconciler of the World will be the ſubduer of Satan.* The God of peace ſent the *Prince of Peace* to be the Reſtorer of his Rights, and the Hammer to beat in pieces the Uſurper of them. As a God of Truth he will make good his promiſe, as a God of Peace he will perfect the deſign his Wiſdom hath laid, and begun to act. In the ſubduing *Satan*, he will be the Conqueror of his Inſtruments: He ſaith not, God ſhall bruiſe your Troublers, and Hereticks; but *Satan*: The fall of a General proves the rout of the Army. Since God, as a *God of Peace*, hath delivered his own, he will perfect the Victory, and make them ceaſe from bruiſing the heel of his Spiritual ſeed.

3. *Divine Evangelical Truth ſhall be Victorious.* No Weapon formed againſt it ſhall proſper: The Head of the Wicked ſhall fall as low as the feet of the Godly. The *Devil* never yet bluſter'd in the World, but he met at laſt with a diſappointment: His fall hath been like *Lightning*, ſudden, certain, vaniſhing.

4. *Faith muſt look back as far as the foundation-promiſe. The God of Peace, ſhall bruiſe, &c.* The *Apoſtle* ſeems to allude to the firſt promiſe, *Gen* 2. 15. A Promiſe that hath vigor to nouriſh the Church in all Ages of the World: 'Tis the ſtanding Cordial; out of the Womb of this promiſe all the reſt have taken their birth. The promiſes of the Old Teſtament were deſigned for thoſe under the New, and full performance of them, is to be expected, and will be enjoyed by them. 'Tis a mighty ſtrengthening to Faith, to trace the footſteps of Gods Truth and Wiſdom, from the Threatning againſt the Serpent in *Eden*, to the bruiſe he received in *Calvary*, and the Triumph over him upon Mount *Olivet*.

5. *We are to conſide in the promiſe of God, but leave the ſeaſon of its accompliſhment to his Wiſdom.* He will *bruiſe Satan under your feet*, therefore do not doubt it; and ſhortly, therefore wait for it: Shortly it will be done, that is, quickly when you think it may be a great way off; or ſhortly, that is, ſeaſonably, when Satan's Rage is hotteſt. God is the beſt Judge of the ſeaſons of diſtributing his own mercies, and darting out his own Glory: 'Tis enough to encourage our waiting, that it will be, and that it will be ſhortly; but we muſt not meaſure God's *ſhortly* by our Minutes.

The *Apoſtle* after this concludes with a comfortable Prayer, That ſince they were liable to many Temptations, to turn their backs upon the Doctrine which they had learned; yet he deſires God, who had brought them to the knowledge of his Truth, would confirm them in the belief of it, ſince it was the Goſpel of Chriſt, his dear Son, and a myſtery he had been chary of and kept in his own Cabinet, and now brought forth to the World, in purſuance

of

of the Ancient Prophecies, and now had publiſh'd to all Nations for that end that it might be obeyed; and concludes with a *Doxology*, a voice of Praiſe, *To him who was only Wiſe*, to effect his own purpoſes; *Verſes* 25, 26, 27. *Now to him that is of power to eſtabliſh you, according to my Goſpel and the preaching of Jeſus Chriſt, according to the revelation of the Myſtery, which was kept ſecret ſince the World began; but now is made manifeſt, and by the Scriptures of the Prophets, according to the commandment of the Everlaſting God, made known to all Nations for the obedience of Faith.* This *Doxology* is interlac'd with many Comforts for the *Romans*; He explains the *cauſes* of this glory to God, *Power* and *Wiſdom*; Power to eſtabliſh the *Romans* in Grace, which includes his will. This he proves from a Divine Teſtimony, *viz.* the *Goſpel*; the Goſpel committed to him, and preach'd by him, which he commends by calling it the *preaching of Chriſt*; and deſcribes it, for the Inſtruction and Comfort of the Church, from the Adjuncts, the obſcurity of it under the Old Teſtament, and the clearneſs of it under the New: It was hid from the former Ages, and kept in ſilence; not ſimply and abſolutely, but comparatively and in part; becauſe in the Old Teſtament, the Doctrine of Salvation by Chriſt was confin'd to the limits of *Judea*, preach'd only to the Inhabitants of that Country: *To them he gave his Statutes and his Judgments, and dealt not ſo magnificently with any Nation* *; but now he cauſes it to ſpring with greater Majeſty out of thoſe narrow bounds, and ſpread its Wings about the World. This manifeſtation of the Goſpel he declares *firſt*, from the *ſubject*, *All Nations*: 2. From the principal *efficient* cauſe of it, *The Commandment and Order of God*: 3. The *Inſtrumental* cauſe, *The Prophetick Scriptures*: 4. From the *End* of it, *The obedience of Faith.*

*Pſal. 147. 19, 20.

Gomarus *in loc.*

1. Obſerve, *The glorious Attributes of God bear a comfortable reſpect to Believers.* Power and Wiſdom are here mention'd as two Props of their Faith; his Power here includes his Goodneſs. Power to help, without will to aſſiſt, is a dry Chip. The *Apoſtle* mentions not God's Power ſimply and abſolutely conſidered, for that of it ſelf is no more Comfort to Men, than it is to Devils; but as conſidered in the Goſpel-Covenant, his Power, as well as his other Perfections, are ingredients in that Cordial of God's being *our God*. We ſhould never think of the Excellency of the Divine Nature, without conſidering the Duties they demand, and gathering the Honey they preſent.

2. Obſ. *The ſtability of a gracious Soul depends upon the Wiſdom, as well as the Power of God.* It would be a diſrepute to the Almightineſs of God, if that ſhould be totally vanquiſh'd which was introduc'd by his mighty Arm, and rooted in the Soul by an irreſiſtible Grace. It would ſpeak a want of ſtrength to maintain it, or a change of Reſolution, and ſo would be no honour to the Wiſdom of his firſt Deſign. 'Tis no part of the wiſdom of an Artificer, to let a Work wherein he determin'd to ſhew the greatneſs of his Skill, to be daſh'd in pieces, when he hath power to preſerve it. God deſign'd every gracious Soul for a piece of *his workmanſhip* *: What, to have the Skill of his Grace defeated? If any Soul which he hath graciouſly conquer'd ſhould be wreſted from him, what could be thought, but that his Power is enfeebled? If deſerted by him, what could be imagin'd, but that he repented of his Labour, and alter'd his Counſel, as if raſhly undertaken? Theſe *Romans* were rugged Pieces, and lay in a filthy Quarry, when God came firſt to ſmooth them; for ſo the *Apoſtle* repreſents them with the reſt of the Heathen, *Rom.* 1. 19. and would he throw them away, or leave them to the power of his Enemy, after all his pains he had taken with them, to fit them for his Building? Did he not foreſee the Deſigns of Satan againſt them; what Stratagems he would uſe to defeat his purpoſes, and ſtrip him of the honour of his Work; and would God ſo gratifie his Enemy, and diſgrace his own *Wiſdom*? The deſerting of what hath been acted, is a real Repentance, and argues an Imprudence in the firſt reſolve and attempt. The Goſpel is called, the *Manifold Wiſdom of God*, Eph. 3. 10. the fruit of it in the heart of any Perſon, which is a main deſign of it, hath a Title to the ſame Character; and ſhall this Grace, which is the product of this Goſpel, and therefore the birth of *Manifold Wiſdom*, be ſuppreſs'd? 'Tis at God's hand we muſt ſeek our fixedneſs and eſtabliſhment, and act Faith upon theſe two Attributes of God. *Power* is no ground to expect ſtability, without *Wiſdom* intereſting the Agent in it, and finding out and applying the means for it. Wiſdom is naked without Power to act, and Power is uſeleſs without Wiſdom to direct: They are theſe two Excellencies of the Deity, the *Apoſtle* here pitches the Hope and Faith of the converted *Romans* upon for their ſtability.

* Eph. 2. 10.

3. Obſ. *Perſeverance of Believers in Grace, is a Goſpel-Doctrine. According to my Goſpel*: My Goſpel miniſterially, according to that Goſpel-Doctrine I have taught you in this *Epiſtle*; (for, as the *Prophets* were Comments upon the *Law*, ſo are the *Epiſtles* upon the *Goſpel*:) This very Doctrine he had diſcours'd of, *Rom.* 8. 38, 39. where he tells them, that neither *death* nor *life*, the Terrors of a cruel death, or the Allurements of an honourable and pleaſant life, nor *principalities* and *powers*, with all their ſubtility and ſtrength; not the things we have before us, nor the promiſes of a future felicity, by either Angels in Heaven, or Devils in Hell; not the higheſt Angel, nor the deepeſt Devil, is *able to ſeparate us*, us *Romans*, *from the love of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus*. So that, *According to my Goſpel*, may be according to that Declaration of the Goſpel, which I have made in this *Epiſtle*, which doth not only promiſe the firſt creating Grace, but the Perfecting and Crowning Grace; for not only the being of Grace, but the health, livelineſs, and perpetuity of Grace is the fruit of the *New Covenant*, Jer. 32. 40.

4. Obſerve, *That the Goſpel is the ſole Means of a Chriſtian's Eſtabliſhment. According to my Goſpel*, that is, *by my Goſpel*. The Goſpel is the Inſtrumental cauſe of our Spiritual Life, 'tis the cauſe alſo of the continuance of it; 'tis the *Seed* whereby we were born, and the *Milk* whereby we are nouriſh'd *; 'tis the *Power of God to Salvation* *, and therefore to all the degrees of it. *John* 17. 17. *Sanctifie them by thy Truth*, or *through thy Truth*; by or through his Truth he Sanctifies us, and by the ſame Truth he eſtabliſheth us: The firſt Sanctification, and the progreſs of it, the firſt lineaments, and the laſt colours, are wrought by the Goſpel. The Goſpel therefore ought to be known, ſtudied, and conſidered by us: 'Tis the Charter of our Inheritance, and the ſecurity for our ſtanding. The Law acquaints us with our Duty, but contributes nothing to our ſtrength and ſettlement.

* 1 Pet. 1. 23.

* 1 Pet. 2. 2.

5. Obſ. *The Goſpel is nothing elſe but the Revelation of Chriſt.* Verſe 25. *According to my Goſpel, and the preaching of Jeſus Chriſt*: The diſcovery of the Myſtery, and Redemption, and Salvation, in and by him. 'Tis *Genitivus objecti*, that Preaching wherein Chriſt is declared and ſet out, with the Benefits accruing by him. This is the Privilege the *Wiſdom* of God reſerved for the latter Times, which the *Old Teſtament-Church* had only under a Veil.

6. *'Tis a part of the Excellency of the Goſpel, that it had the Son of God for its Publiſher: The Preaching of Jeſus Chriſt.* It was firſt preached to *Adam* in Paradiſe

Paradiſe by God, and afterwards publiſh'd by *Chriſt* in Perſon to the Inhabitants of *Judea*. It was not the Invention of Man, but Copied from the Boſom of the Father by him that lay in his Boſom. The *Goſpel* we have, is the ſame which our Saviour himſelf preached when he was in the World: He preached it not to the *Romans*; but the ſame Goſpel he preached is tranſmitted to the *Romans*. It therefore Commands our Reſpect, whoever ſlights it, 'tis as much as if he ſlighted Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, were he in Perſon to ſound it from his own Lips The validity of a Proclamation is derived from the Authority of the Prince that dictates it, and orders it; yet the greater the Perſon that publiſheth it, the more diſhonour is caſt upon the Authority of the Prince that enjoyns it, if it be contemn'd. The Everlaſting God ordain'd it, and the Eternal Son publiſh'd it.

7. *The Goſpel was of an Eternal Reſolution, though of a temporary Revelation.* Verſe 25. *According to the Revelation of the Myſtery, which was kept ſecret ſince the World began.* 'Tis an Everlaſting Goſpel. It was a Promiſe *before the World began*, Titus 1. 2. It was not a new Invention, but only kept ſecret among the *Arcana*, in the Breaſt of the Almighty. It was hidden from *Angels*, for the depths of it are not yet fully made known to them; their *deſire to look into it*, ſpeaks yet a deficiency in their Knowledge of it *. It was publiſh'd in *Paradiſe*, but in ſuch words as *Adam* did not fully underſtand: It was both diſcover'd and clouded in the Smoak of Sacrifices: It was wrapped up in a Veil under the Law, but not open'd till the Death of the Redeemer: It was then plainly ſaid to the Cities of *Judah*, *behold your God comes.* The whole Tranſaction of it between the Father and the Son, which is the Spirit of the Goſpel, was from Eternity; the Creation of the World was in order to the manifeſtation of it. Let us not then regard the *Goſpel* as a Novelty; the conſideration of it, as one of God's Cabinet Rarities, ſhould enhance our Eſtimation of it. No Traditions of Men, no Invention of vain Wits, that pretend to be wiſer than God, ſhould have the ſame Credit with that which bears date from Eternity.

* 1 Pet. 1. 12.

8. Obſerve, *That Divine Truth is Myſterious. According to the revelation of the myſtery, Chriſt manifeſted in the fleſh.* The whole Scheme of *Godlineſs* is a Myſtery. No Man or Angel could imagine, how two Natures ſo diſtant as the *Divine* and *Humane*, ſhould be united; how the ſame Perſon ſhould be Criminal and Righteous; how a Juſt God ſhould have a Satisfaction, and Sinful Man a Juſtification; how the Sin ſhould be puniſh'd, and the Sinner ſaved. None could imagine ſuch a way of Juſtification, as the *Apoſtle* in this *Epiſtle* declares: It was a Myſtery, when hid under the ſhadows of the Law; and a Myſtery to the *Prophets*, when it ſounded from their Mouths; they *ſearched* it, without being able to comprehend it *.

* 1 Pet. 1. 10, 11.

If it be a Myſtery, 'tis humbly to be ſubmitted to: *Myſteries* ſurmount Human Reaſon. The ſtudy of the Goſpel muſt not be with a yawning and careleſs frame. Trades you call *Myſteries*, are not learned ſleeping and nodding; diligence is required, we muſt be Diſciples at God's Feet. As it had God for the Author, ſo we muſt have God for the Teacher of it; the Contrivance was his, and the Illumination of our Minds muſt be from him. As God only manifeſted the Goſpel, ſo he only can open our Eyes to ſee the *Myſteries* of Chriſt in it.

In *Verſe* 26. we may obſerve,

1. *The Scriptures of the Old Teſtament verifie the ſubſtance of the New, and the New doth evidence the Authority of the Old. By the Scriptures of the Prophets made known.* The Old Teſtament credits the New, and the New illuſtrates the Old. The New Teſtament is a Comment upon the Prophetick part of the Old. The Old ſhews the Promiſes and Predictions of God, and the New ſhews the Performance: What was foretold in the Old, is fulfilled in the New; the Predictions are cleared by the Events. The Predictions of the Old are Divine, becauſe they are above the Reaſon of Man to foreknow: None but an Infinite Knowledge could foretell them, becauſe none but an Infinite *Wiſdom* could order all things for the accompliſhment of them.

The Chriſtian Religion hath then the ſureſt Foundation, ſince the Scriptures of the *Prophets*, wherein it is foretold, are of undoubted Antiquity, and owned by the *Jews* and many *Heathens*, which are and were the great Enemies of Chriſt. The *Old Teſtament* is therefore to be read for the ſtrengthening of our Faith. Our Bleſſed *Saviour* himſelf draws the Streams of his Doctrine from the Old Teſtament: He clears up the Promiſe of *Eternal Life*, and the Doctrine of the *Reſurrection*, from the words of the Covenant, *I am the God of Abraham, &c.* Mat. 22. 32. And our *Apoſtle* clears up the Doctrine of *Juſtification by Faith* from God's Covenant with *Abraham*, Rom. 4. It muſt be read, and it muſt be read as it is writ: It was writ to a Goſpel end, it muſt be ſtudied with a Goſpel Spirit. The *Old Teſtament* was writ to give Credit to the *New*, when it ſhould be manifeſted in the World. It muſt be read by us to give ſtrength to our Faith, and eſtabliſh us in the Doctrine of *Chriſtianity*. How many view it as a bare ſtory, an *Almanack* out of date, and regard it as a dry Bone, without ſucking from it the *Evangelical* Marrow? Chriſt is, in *Geneſis*, *Abraham's* Seed; in *David's* Pſalms and the *Prophets*, the *Meſſiah* and Redeemer of the World.

2. Obſerve the *Antiquity of the Goſpel is made manifeſt by the Scriptures of the Prophets.* It was of as Ancient a date as any Prophecy: The firſt Prophecy was nothing elſe but a Goſpel-Charter; it was not made at the Incarnation of Chriſt, but *made manifeſt*. It then roſe up to its Meridian luſtre, and ſprung out of the Clouds, wherewith it was before obſcur'd. The *Goſpel* was preached to the Ancients by the *Prophets*, as well as to the *Gentiles* by the *Apoſtles*; Heb. 4. 2. *Unto us was the Goſpel preached, as well as unto them.* To them firſt, to us after; to them indeed more cloudy, to us more clear; but they as well as we, were *Evangeliz'd*, as the word ſignifies.

The Covenant of *Grace* was the ſame in the Writings of the *Prophets*, and the Declarations of the *Evangeliſts* and *Apoſtles*. Though by our *Saviour's* Incarnation, the Goſpel Light was clearer, and by his Aſcenſion, the Effuſions of the Spirit fuller and ſtronger; yet the Believers under the Old Teſtament, ſaw *Chriſt* in the Swadling-Bands of Legal Ceremonies, and the Lattice of Prophetical Writings; they could not elſe offer one Sacrifice, or read one Prophecy with a Faith of the right ſtamp. *Abraham's* Juſtifying Faith had *Chriſt* for its Object, though it was not ſo explicit as ours, becauſe the manifeſtation was not ſo clear as ours.

3. *All Truth is to be drawn from Scripture.* The *Apoſtle* refers them here to the *Goſpel* and the *Prophets*: The Scripture is the Source of Divine Knowledge; not the Traditions of Men, nor Reaſon ſeparate from Scripture. Whoſoever brings another Doctrine, coins another Chriſt; nothing is to be added to what is written, nothing detracted from it. He doth not ſend us for Truth, to the Puddles of Humane Inventions, to the *Enthuſiaſms* of our Brain; nor to the See of *Rome*, no, nor to the Inſtructions of Angels; but the Writings of the *Prophets*, as they clear up the Declarations of the *Apoſtles*. The Church of *Rome* is not made here the Standard of Truth;

but the Scriptures of the *Prophets* are to be the Touchſtone to the *Romans*, for the trial of the *Truth* of the Goſpel.

4. *How great is the Goodneſs of God?* The Borders of *Grace* are enlarged to the *Gentiles*, and not hid under the Skirts of the *Jews*. He that was ſo long the God of the *Jews*, is now alſo manifeſt to be the God of the *Gentiles*: *The Goſpel is now made known to all Nations, according to the Commandment of the Everlaſting God.* Not only in a way of common Providence, but ſpecial Grace; in calling them to the Knowledge of himſelf, and a Juſtification of them by Faith, he hath brought Strangers to him, to the *Adoption of Children*, and lodged them under the Wings of the Covenant, that were before *alienated from him* through the univerſal Corruption of Nature. Now he hath manifeſted himſelf a God of Truth, mindful of his Promiſe in bleſſing all Nations in the Seed of *Abraham*. The Fury of Devils, and the Violence of Men, could not hinder the Propagation of this *Goſpel*: Its Light hath been diſperſed as far as that of the Sun; and that *Grace* that ſounded in the *Gentiles* Ears, hath bent many of their Hearts to the Obedience of it.

5. Obſerve, That *Libertiniſm and Licentiouſneſs find no Encouragement in the Goſpel. It was made known to all Nations for the Obedience of Faith.* The Goodneſs of God is publiſh'd, that our Enmity to him may be parted with. Chriſt's Righteouſneſs is not offered us to be put on, that we may roll more warmly in our Luſts. The Doctrine of Grace Commands us to give up our ſelves to Chriſt to be accepted through him, and to be ruled by him. Obedience is due to God, as a Sovereign Lord in his Law; and 'tis due out of Gratitude, as he is a God of Grace in the Goſpel. The Diſcovery of a further Perfection in God, weakens not the Right of another, nor the Obligation of the Duty the former Attribute claims at our Hands. The *Goſpel* frees us from the Curſe, but not from the Duty and Service: *We are delivered from the Hands of our Enemies, that we might ſerve God in Holineſs and Righteouſneſs*, Luk. 1. 74. *This is the Will of God* in the Goſpel, *even our Sanctification.* When a Prince ſtrikes off a Malefactor's Chains, though he deliver him from the Puniſhments of his Crime, he frees him not from the Duty of a Subject: His Pardon adds a greater Obligation, than his Protection did before while he was Loyal. Chriſt's *Righteouſneſs* gives us a Title to Heaven; but there muſt be a *Holineſs* to give us a Fitneſs for Heaven.

6. Obſerve, That *Evangelical Obedience, or the Obedience of Faith is only acceptable to God. Obedience of Faith*; *Genitivus ſpeciei*, noting the kind of Obedience God requires; an Obedience ſpringing from Faith, animated and influenced by Faith. Not Obedience of Faith, as though Faith were the Rule, and the Law were abrogated; but to the Law as a *Rule*, and from Faith as a *Principle*. There is no true Obedience before Faith: *Heb.* 11. 6. *Without Faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God*; and therefore without Faith impoſſible to obey him. A good Work cannot proceed from a defil'd *Mind* and *Conſcience*; and without Faith every Man's Mind is darkned, and his Conſcience polluted*. Faith is the Band of Union to Chriſt, and Obedience is the Fruit of Union; we *cannot bring forth Fruit* without being Branches*, and we cannot be Branches without Believing. Legitimate Fruit follows upon Marriage to Chriſt, not before it: *Rom.* 7. 4. *That you ſhould be married to another, even to him that is raiſed from the dead, that you ſhould bring forth Fruit unto God.* All Fruit before Marriage is Baſtard, and Baſtards were excluded from the Sanctuary. Our Perſons muſt be firſt accepted in Chriſt, before our Services can be acceptable; thoſe Works are not acceptable where the Perſon is not pardoned. Good Works flow from a pure Heart; but the Heart cannot be pure before Faith. All the Good Works reckoned up in the 11th. Chapter of the *Hebrews* were from this Spring; thoſe *Heroes* firſt believed, and then obeyed. *By Faith* Abel *was righteous before God*, without it his Sacrifice had been no better than *Cain*'s: *By Faith* Enoch *pleaſed God*, and had a Divine Teſtimony to his Obedience before his Tranſlation: *By Faith* Abraham *offered up* Iſaac, without which he had been no better than a Murderer. All Obedience hath its Root in Faith, and is not done in our own Strength, but in the Strength and Virtue of another, of *Chriſt*, whom God hath ſet forth as our Head and Root.

7. Obſerve, *Faith and Obedience are diſtinct, though inſeparable*: *The Obedience of Faith. Faith* indeed is Obedience to a Goſpel Command, which enjoyns us to believe; but it is not all our Obedience. *Juſtification* and *Sanctification* are diſtinct Acts of God; Juſtification reſpects the Perſon, Sanctification the Nature; Juſtification is firſt in order of Nature, and Sanctification follows: They are diſtinct, but inſeparable; every Juſtified Perſon hath a Sanctified Nature, and every Sanctified Nature ſuppoſeth a Juſtified Perſon. So *Faith* and *Obedience* are diſtinct; Faith as the Principle, Obedience as the Product; Faith as the Cauſe, Obedience as the Effect; the Cauſe and the Effect are not the ſame. By *Faith* we own Chriſt as our Lord; by *Obedience* we regulate our ſelves according to his Command. The Acceptance of the Relation to him as a Subject, precedes the Performance of our Duty: By Faith we receive his Law, and by Obedience we fulfil it. *Faith* makes us God's *Children*, Gal. 3. 26. *Obedience* manifeſts us to be Chriſt's *Diſciples*, *John* 15. 8. Faith is the Touchſtone of Obedience; the Touchſtone, and that which is tried by it, are not the ſame. But though they are diſtinct, yet they are inſeparable. *Faith* and *Obedience* are joined together; Obedience follows Faith at the Heels. *Faith purifies the Heart*, and a pure Heart cannot be without pure Actions. Faith unites us to Chriſt, whereby we partake of his Life; and a living Branch cannnot be without *Fruit* in its Seaſon, and *much Fruit*, John 15. 5. and that naturally from a *newneſs of Spirit*, Rom. 7. 9. not conſtrained by the Rigors of the Law, but drawn forth from a ſweetneſs of Love; for *Faith works by Love.* The Love of God is the ſtrong Motive, and Love to God is the quickning Principle; as there can be no Obedience without Faith, ſo no Faith without Obedience.

After all this, the *Apoſtle* ends with the Celebration of the *Wiſdom* of God; *To God only wiſe, be Glory through Jeſus Chriſt for ever.* The rich Diſcovery of the Goſpel, cannot be thought of by a gracious Soul, without a return of Praiſe to God, and Admiration of his ſingular *Wiſdom.*

Wiſe God.] His *Power* before, and his *Wiſdom* here, are mentioned in conjunction (in which his *Goodneſs* is included, as intereſted in his eſtabliſhing *Power*) as the ground of all the Glory and Praiſe God hath from his Creatures.

Only Wiſe.] As Chriſt ſaith, *Mat.* 19. 17. *None is good, but God*; ſo the *Apoſtle* ſaith, None *Wiſe*, but God. As all Creatures are *unclean* in regard of his Purity; ſo they are all Fools in regard of his *Wiſdom*, yea the glorious *Angels* themſelves*. *Wiſdom* is the Royalty of God; the proper Dialect of all his Ways and Works. No Creature can lay claim to it: He is ſo Wiſe, that he is *Wiſdom* it ſelf.

Be glory through Jeſus Chriſt.] As God is only known in and by Chriſt, ſo he muſt be only worſhiped and celebrated in and through Chriſt. In him we muſt pray to him, and in him we muſt Praiſe

* Tit. 1. 15.

* John. 15. 4, 5.

* Job 4. 18.

Praiſe him. As all Mercies flow from God through Chriſt to us, ſo all our Duties are to be preſented to God through Chriſt.

In the Greek, *verbatim* it runs thus; *To the alone Wiſe God, through Jeſus Chriſt, to him be Glory for ever.* But we muſt not underſtand it, as if God were Wiſe by Jeſus Chriſt; but that Thanks are to be given to God through Chriſt, becauſe in and by Chriſt God hath revealed his Wiſdom to the World. The Greek hath a Repetition of the Article ᾧ not expreſt in the Tranſlation, *To him be Glory.* *Beza* expungeth this Article, but without Reaſon, for ᾧ is as much as ἀυτῷ, *To him*; and joining this, *The only Wiſe God* with the 25th. Verſe, *To him that is of Power to eſtabliſh you*; Reading it thus, *To him that is of Power to eſtabliſh you, the only Wiſe God*, leaving the reſt in a *Parentheſis*, it runs ſmoothly, *To him be Glory through Jeſus Chriſt.* And *Crellius* the *Socinian* obſerves, that this Article ᾧ, which ſome leave out, might be induſtriouſly inſerted by the *Apoſtle*, to ſhew, that the Glory we aſcribe to God, is alſo given to Chriſt.

We may Obſerve, That neither in this place, nor any where in Scripture, is the *Virgin Mary*, or any of the *Saints*, aſſociated with God or Chriſt in the Glory aſcrib'd to them.

In the Words there is,

1. An *Appropriation* of Wiſdom to God, and a *Remotion* of it from all Creatures; *Only Wiſe God.*
2. A *Gloriſying* him for it.

The Point I ſhall inſiſt upon, is,

That Wiſdom is a tranſcendent Excellency of the Divine Nature. We have before ſpoken of the *Knowledge* of God, and the infiniteneſs of it: The next Attribute is the *Wiſdom* of God. Moſt confound the *Knowledge* and *Wiſdom* of God together; but there is a manifeſt Diſtinction between them in our Conception.

I ſhall handle it thus:

1. *Shew what Wiſdom is.* Then lay down
2. *Some Propoſitions about the Wiſdom of God.* And ſhew,
3. *That God is Wiſe, and only Wiſe.*
4. *Wherein his Wiſdom appears.*
5. *The Uſe.*

I. *What Wiſdom is.* Wiſdom among the *Greeks*, firſt ſignified an eminent Perfection in any Art or Myſtery; ſo a good Statuary, Engraver, or Limner, was called *Wiſe*, as having an excellent Knowledge in his particular Art. But afterwards the Title of *Wiſe* was appropriated to thoſe that devoted themſelves to the Contemplation of the higheſt things, that ſerved for a Foundation to Speculative Sciences *. But ordinarily we count a Man a Wiſe Man, when he conducts his Affairs with Diſcretion, and governs his Paſſions with Moderation, and carries himſelf with a due Proportion and Harmony in all his Concerns.

* Amyrant. *Moral. Tom.* 3. *p.* 123.

But in Particular *Wiſdom* conſiſts,

1. *In acting for a right End.* The chiefeſt part of Prudence is in fixing a right End, and in chuſing fit Means, and directing them to that ſcope: To ſhoot at random is a mark of Folly. As he is the wiſeſt Man, that hath the nobleſt End and fitteſt Means; ſo God is infinitely Wiſe; as he is the moſt excellent Being, ſo he hath the moſt excellent End. As there is none more excellent than himſelf, nothing can be his End but himſelf: As he is the Cauſe of all, ſo he is the End of all; and he puts a true Byaſs into all the Means he uſeth to hit the Mark he aims at: *Of him, and through him, and to him are all things*, Rom. 11. 36.

2. Wiſdom conſiſts, *in obſerving all Circumſtances for Action.* He is counted a wiſe Man, that lays hold of the fitteſt Opportunities to bring his Deſigns about, that hath the fulleſt foreſight of all the little Intriegues which may happen in a Buſineſs he is to manage, and Times every part of his Action in an exact Harmony with the proper Minutes of it. God hath all the Circumſtances of things in one entire Image before him; he hath a proſpect of every little Creek in any Deſign. He ſees what Second Cauſes will act, and when they will act this or that; yea, he determines them to ſuch and ſuch Acts; ſo that it is impoſſible he ſhould be miſtaken, or miſs of the due Seaſon of bringing about his own Purpoſes. As he hath more Goodneſs, than to deceive any; ſo he hath more Underſtanding, than to be miſtaken in any thing. Hence the Time of the Incarnation of our Bleſſed Saviour, is called the *Fulneſs of Time*, the proper Seaſon for his coming. Every Circumſtance about Chriſt was tim'd according to the Predictions of God; even ſo little a thing as *not parting his Garment*, and the giving him *Gall and Vinegar to drink*: And all the bleſſings he ſhowers down upon his People, according to the Covenant of Grace, are ſaid to come *in his due Seaſon*, Ezek. 34. 25, 26.

3. Wiſdom conſiſts, *In willing and acting according to the right Reaſon, according to a right Judgment of things.* We never count a wilful Man a wiſe Man, but him only that acts according to a right Rule, when right Counſels are taken and vigorouſly executed. The Reſolves and Ways of God are not meer Will, but Will guided by the Reaſon and Counſel of his own Infinite Underſtanding; *Eph.* 1. 11. *Who works all things according to the Counſel of his own Will.* The Motions of the Divine Will are not raſh, but follow the Propoſals of the Divine Mind: He chuſes that which is fitteſt to be done, ſo that all his Works are graceful, and all his Ways have a Comelineſs and *Decorum* in them.

Hence all his Ways are ſaid to be Judgment, *Deut.* 32. 4. not meer Will.

Hence it appears, that *Wiſdom* and *Knowledge* are *two* diſtinct Perfections. *Knowledge* hath its Seat in the Speculative Underſtanding, *Wiſdom* in the Practical. Wiſdom and Knowledge are evidently diſtinguiſh'd as *two* ſeveral Gifts of the Spirit in Man, 1 *Cor.* 12. 8. *To one is given by the Spirit the Word of Wiſdom, to another the Word of Knowledge by the ſame Spirit.* Knowledge is an underſtanding of general Rules, and Wiſdom is a drawing Concluſions from thoſe Rules in order to particular Caſes. A Man may have the Knowledge of the whole Scripture, and have all Learning in the Treaſury of his Memory, and yet be deſtitute of Skill to make uſe of them upon particular Occaſions, and unty thoſe knotty Queſtions which may be propoſed to him, by a ready Application of thoſe Rules.

Again, *Knowledge* and *Wiſdom* may be diſtinguiſh'd in our Conception, as Two diſtinct Perfections in God: The *Knowledge* of God is his Underſtanding of all things; his *Wiſdom* is the skillful reſolving and acting of all things. And the *Apoſtle*, in his Admiration of him, owns them as diſtinct, *Oh the Depths of the Riches, both of the Wiſdom and Knowledge of God*, Rom. 11. 33. Knowledge is the Foundation of Wiſdom, and antecedent to it; Wiſdom, the Superſtructure upon Knowledge: Men may have Knowledge without Wiſdom, but not Wiſdom without Knowledge; according to our common Proverb, *The greateſt Clerks are not the wiſeſt Men.* All Practical Knowledge is founded in Speculation, either *Secundum rem*, as in a Man; or *Secundum rationem*, as in God. They agree in this, that they are both Acts of the Underſtanding; but Knowledge is the Apprehenſion of a thing, and Wiſdom is the Appointing and Ordering of things. Wiſdom is the Splendour and Luſtre of Knowledge ſhining forth in Operations and is an Act both of Underſtanding and Will; Underſtanding in Counſelling

ſelling and Contriving, Will in Reſolving and Executing: *Counſel* and *Will* are link'd together, *Epheſ.* 1. 11.

II. The ſecond thing is to lay down ſome *Propoſitions in general, concerning the Wiſdom of God.*

1. *There is an Eſſential and a Perſonal Wiſdom of God.* The Eſſential Wiſdom, is the Eſſence of God; the Perſonal Wiſdom, is the Son of God. *Chriſt* is called *Wiſdom* by himſelf, *Luke* 7. 35. The *Wiſdom of God* by the *Apoſtle*, 1 *Cor.* 1. 24. The *Wiſdom* I ſpeak of belongs to the Nature of God, and is conſidered as a neceſſary Perfection. The *perſonal* Wiſdom is called ſo, becauſe he opens to us the Secrets of God. If the Son were that Wiſdom whereby the Father is wiſe, the Son would be alſo the Eſſence whereby the Father is God. If the Son were the Wiſdom of the Father, whereby he is Eſſentially wiſe; the Son would be the Eſſence of the Father, and the Father would have his Eſſence from the Son, ſince the VViſdom of God is the Eſſence of God; and ſo the Son would be the Father, if the VViſdom and Power of the Father were originally in the Son.

2. Therefore Secondly, *The Wiſdom of God is the ſame with the Eſſence of God.* VViſdom in God is not a Habit added to his Eſſence, as it is in Man, but it is his Eſſence. 'Tis like the Splendour of the Sun, the ſame with the Sun it ſelf; or like the brightneſs of Chryſtal, which is not communicated to it by any thing elſe, as the brightneſs of a Mountain is by the Beam of the Sun, but it is one with the Chryſtal it ſelf. 'Tis not a Habit ſuperadded to the Divine Eſſence; that would be repugnant to the ſimplicity of God, and ſpeak him compounded of divers Principles; it would be contrary to the Eternity of his Perfections: If he be Eternally wiſe, his *Wiſdom* is his Eſſence; for there is nothing Eternal, but the Eſſence of God. * As the Sun melts ſome things, and hardens others; blackens ſome things, and whitens others, and produceth contrary Qualities in different Subjects; yet it is but one and the ſame Quality in the Sun, which is the cauſe of thoſe contrary Operations: So the Perfections of God ſeem to be divers in our Conceptions, yet they are but one and the ſame in God. The VViſdom of God, is God acting Prudently; as the Power of God, is God acting Powerfully, and the Juſtice of God, is God acting Righteouſly: And therefore 'tis more truly ſaid, that God is *Wiſdom*, *Juſtice*, *Truth*, *Power*, than that he is *Wiſe*, *Juſt*, *True*, &c. as if he were compounded of Subſtance and Qualities. All the Operations of God proceed from one ſimple Eſſence; as all the Operations of the Mind of Man, though various, proceed from one Faculty of Underſtanding.

*Maimon. *Mor. Part.* 1 *cap.* 53.

3. *Wiſdom is the Property of God alone. He is only Wiſe.* 'Tis an Honour peculiar to him Upon the account that no Man deſerved the Title of *Wiſe*, but that it was a Royalty belonging to God *, *Pythagoras* would not be call'd Σοφὸς, a Title given to their Learned Men; but φιλόσοφος. The Name *Philoſopher*, aroſe out of a reſpect to this tranſcendent Perfection of God.

* Laert. *lib.* 1. *Proem.*

1. *God is only Wiſe neceſſarily.* As he is neceſſarily God, ſo he is neceſſarily VViſe; for the Notion of VViſdom is inſeparable from the Notion of a Deity. VVhen we ſay *God is a Spirit*, is *True*, *Righteous*, *Wiſe*; we underſtand that he is tranſcendently theſe by an intrinſick and abſolute neceſſity, by virtue of his own Eſſence, without the Efficiency of any other, or any Efficiency in and by himſelf. God doth not make himſelf VViſe, no more than he makes himſelf God. As he is a neceſſary Being in regard of his Life, ſo he is neceſſarily VViſe in regard of his Underſtanding. *Syneſius* ſaith, that *God is Eſſentiated*, ἐσπῆσθαι, *by his Underſtanding*. He places the Subſtance of God in *Underſtanding* and *Wiſdom*: Wiſdom is the firſt vital Operation of God. He can no more be Unwiſe than he can be untrue; for Folly in the Mind is much the ſame with Falſity in Speech. Wiſdom among Men is gained by Age and Experience, furthered by Inſtructions and Exerciſe; but the Wiſdom of God is his Nature, as the Sun cannot be without Light, while it remains a Sun; and as Eternity cannot be without Immortality; ſo neither can God be without Wiſdom. As *he only hath Immortality*, 1 *Tim.* 6. 16. not arbitrarily, but neceſſarily; ſo he only hath *Wiſdom*: Not becauſe he will be Wiſe, but becauſe he cannot but be Wiſe. He cannot but contrive Counſels, and exert Operations, becoming the Greatneſs and Majeſty of his Nature.

2. Therefore *only VViſe originally.* God is ἀυτοδίδακτος, ἀυτόσοφος. Men acquire Wiſdom by the loſs of their faireſt Years; but his *VViſdom* is the Perfection of the Divine Nature, not the birth of Study or the growth of Experience, but as neceſſary, as Eternal, as his Eſſence. He goes not out of himſelf to ſearch Wiſdom: He needs no more the Brains of Creatures in the Contrivance of his Purpoſes, than he doth their Arm in the Execution of them. He needs no Counſel, he receives no Counſel from any; *Rom.* 11. 34. *VVho hath been his Counſellor?* and *Iſai.* 40. 14. *VVith whom took he counſel, and who inſtructed him, or taught him in the path of Judgment, and taught him Knowledge, and ſhewed to him the path of Underſtanding?* He is the only Fountain of *VViſdom* to others; Angels and Men have what Wiſdom they have, by Communication from him. All created Wiſdom is a ſpark of the Divine Light, like that of the *Stars* borrowed from the *Sun*. He that borrows VViſdom from another, and doth not originally poſſeſs it in his own Nature, cannot properly be called *VViſe*. As God is the only Being, in regard that all other Beings are derived from him; ſo he is only VViſe, becauſe all other VViſdom flows from him. He is the Spring of *VViſdom* to all; none the Original of VViſdom to him.

3. Therefore *only VViſe perfectly.* There is no Cloud upon his Underſtanding. He hath a diſtinct and certain Knowledge of all things that can fall under Action. As he hath a perfect Knowledge without Ignorance, ſo he hath a Beautiful VViſdom without *Mole* or *VVart*. Men are wiſe, yet have not an Underſtanding ſo vaſt as to graſp all things; nor a Perſpicacity ſo clear, as to penetrate into the depths of all Beings. Angels have more delightful and lively Sparks of VViſdom, yet ſo imperfect, that in regard of the VViſdom of God they are *charged with folly*, Job 4. 18. Their VViſdom as well as their Holineſs is veiled in the Preſence of God. It vaniſheth, as the glowing of a Fire doth before the Beauty of the Sun; or as a Light of a Candle in the midſt of a Sunſhine contracts it ſelf, and none of its Rays are ſeen, but in the Body of the Flame. The Angels are not perfectly Wiſe, becauſe they are not perfectly Knowing: The *Goſpel*, the great Diſcovery of God's Wiſdom, was hid from them for Ages.

4. Therefore *only VViſe univerſally.* Wiſdom in one Man is of one ſort, in another of another ſort; one is a wiſe Tradeſman, another a wiſe Stateſman, and another a wiſe Philoſopher: One is wiſe in the Buſineſs of the VVorld, another is wiſe in Divine Concerns. One hath not ſo much of Plenty of one ſort, but he may have a Scantineſs in another; one may be wiſe for Invention, and fooliſh in Execution; an Artificer may have skill to frame an Engine, and not skill to uſe it: The Ground that is fit for Olives, may not be fit for Vines; that will bear one ſort of Grain and not another. But God hath

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an Univerſal VViſdom, becauſe his Nature is VViſe; 'tis not limited, but hovers over every thing, ſhines in every Being. His Executions are as wiſe as his Contrivances: He is Wiſe in his Reſolves, and wiſe in his Ways; wiſe in all the Varieties of his Works of Creation, Government, Redemption. As his Will wills all things, and his Power effects all things; ſo his Wiſdom is the univerſal Director of the Motions of his Will, and the Executions of his Power: As his Righteouſneſs is the meaſure of the matter of his Actions, ſo his Wiſdom is the Rule that directs the manner of his Actions. The abſolute Power of God is not an unruly Power: His VViſdom orders all things, ſo that nothing is done, but what is fit and convenient, and agreeable to ſo excellent a Being: As he cannot do an unjuſt thing becauſe of his Righteouſneſs, ſo he cannot do an unwiſe Act, becauſe of his infinite VViſdom. Though God be not neceſſitated to any Operation without himſelf, as to the Creation of any thing, yet ſuppoſing he will act, his VViſdom neceſſitates him to do that which is congruous, as his Rigteouſneſs neceſſitates him to do that which is juſt: So that though the will of God be the principle, yet his wiſdom is the rule of his Actions. VVe muſt in our conceiving of the order, ſuppoſe wiſdom antecedent to will: None that acknowledges a God, can have ſuch an impious thought, as to affix temerity and raſhneſs to any of his proceedings.

All his Decrees are drawn out of the infinite Treaſury of Wiſdom in himſelf. * He reſolves nothing about any of his Creatures without Reaſon; but the reaſon of his purpoſe is in himſelf, and ſprings from himſelf, and not from the Creatures: There is not one thing that he wills, but *he wills by counſel, and works by counſel, Eph.* 1. 11. Counſel writ down every line, every letter, in his eternal Book; and all the Orders are drawn out from thence by his wiſdom and will: What was Illuſtrious in the contrivance, glitters in the execution. His underſtanding and will are infinite; what is therefore the act of his will, is the reſult of his underſtanding, and therefore rational: His underſtanding and will joyn hands; there is no conteſt in God, Will againſt Mind, and Mind againſt Will; they are one in God, one in his reſolves, and one in all his works.

* Polhil. *againſt* Sherlock, *p.* 377.

5. Therefore he is *only wiſe perpetually*. As the wiſdom of man is got by ripeneſs of Age, ſo it is loſt by decay of years; 'tis got by inſtruction, and loſt by dotage. The perfecteſt minds, when in the wane, have been darkned with folly: *Nebuchadnezzar* that was wiſe for a man, became as fooliſh as a Brute. But the *Ancient of days* is an unchangeable Poſſeſſor of Prudence; his wiſdom is a mirror of brightneſs, without a defacing ſpot. It was *poſſeſſed* by him *in the beginning of his ways, before his works of old, Prov.* 8. 22. and he can never be diſpoſſeſſed of it in the end of his works. 'Tis inſeparable from him: The Being of his Godhead may as ſoon ceaſe, as the Beauty of his Mind; *with him is wiſdom, Job* 12. 13. it is inſeparable from him, therefore as durable as his Eſſence. 'Tis a wiſdom infinite, and therefore without increaſe or decreaſe in it ſelf. The experience of ſo many Ages in the Goverment of the World hath added nothing to the immenſity of it; as the ſhining of the Sun ſince the Creation of the World, hath added nothing to the light of that glorious Body. As ignorance never darkens his knowledge, ſo Folly never diſgraces his Prudence, God infatuates men, but neither Men nor Devils can infatuate God; he his unerringly wiſe; his Counſel doth not vary and flatter; 'tis not one day one Counſel, and another day another, but it ſtands like an immoveable Rock, or a Mountain of Braſs. *The Counſel of the Lord ſtands for ever, and the thoughts of his heart to all Generations, Pſal.* 33. 11.

6 He is *only incomprehenſibly wiſe*. His thoughts are *deep, Pſal.* 92. 5. *His judgments unſearchable, his ways paſt finding out, Rom.* 11. 33. Depths that cannot be fathomed. A ſplendor, more dazling to our dim minds, than the light of the Sun to our weak eyes. The wiſdom of one man may be comprehended by another, and over comprehended; and often men are underſtood by others to be wiſer in their Actions, than they underſtand themſelves to be. And the wiſdom of one Angel may be meaſured by another Angel of the ſame perfection. But as the Eſſence, ſo the wiſdom of God is incomprehenſible to any Creature; God is only comprehended by God: The ſecrets of wiſdom in God are double to the expreſſions of it in his works, *Job* 11. 6, 7. *Canſt thou by ſearching find out God.* There is an unfathomable depth in all his Decrees, in all his Works we cannot comprehend the reaſon of his Works, much leſs that of his Decrees, much leſs that in his Nature; becauſe his Wiſdom being infinite as well as his power can no more act to the higheſt pitch, than his Power. As his Power is not terminated by what he hath wrought, but he could give further teſtimonies of it; ſo neither is his wiſdom, but he could furniſh us with infinite expreſſions and pieces of his skill. As in regard of his Immenſity, he is not bounded by the limits of place; in regard of his Eternity, not meaſured by the minutes of Time; in regard of his Power, not terminated with this or that number of Objects; ſo in regard of his Wiſdom, he is not confin'd to this or that particular mode of working; ſo that in regard of the reaſon of his Actions, as well as the Glory and Majeſty of his Nature, he dwells in *unapproachable light*, 1 *Tim.* 6. 16. and whatſoever we underſtand of his wiſdom in Creation and Providence, is infinitely leſs than what is in himſelf, and his own unbounded Nature.

Many things in *Scripture* are declar'd chiefly to be the acts of the Divine will, yet we muſt not think that they were acts of meer will without wiſdom, but they are repreſented ſo to us, becauſe we are not capable of underſtanding the infinite Reaſon of its acts: His Soveraignty is more intelligible to us than his Wiſdom. We can better know the Commands of a Superiour, and the Laws of a Prince, than underſtand the reaſon that gave birth to thoſe Laws. We may know the Orders of the Divine will as they are publiſh'd, but not the ſublime Reaſon of his will. Though Election be an act of God's Soveraignty, and he hath no cauſe from without to determine him; yet his infinite wiſdom ſtood not ſilent while meer Dominion acted. Whatſoever God doth, he doth wiſely, as well as ſoveraignly; though that wiſdom which lies in the ſecret places of the Divine Being, be as incomprehenſible to us, as the effects of his Soveraignty and Power in the World are viſible: God can give a reaſon of his proceeding, and that drawn from himſelf, though we underſtand it not.

The cauſes of things viſible lie hid from us; Doth any man know how to diſtinguiſh the ſeminal vertue of a ſmall Seed from the Body of it, and in what nook and corner that lies, and what that is that ſpreads it ſelf in ſo fair a Plant, and ſo many Flowers? Can we comprehend the Juſtice of God's proceedings in the proſperity of the wicked, and the afflictions of the Godly? Yet as we muſt conclude them the fruits of an unerring righteouſneſs, ſo we muſt conclude all his actions the fruits of an unſpotted wiſdom, though the concatenation of all his counſels is not intelligible to us; for he is as eſſentially and neceſſarily wiſe, as he is eſſentially and neceſſarily good and righteous.

God

God is not only ſo wiſe that nothing more wiſe can be conceiv'd, but he is more wiſe than can be imagin'd; ſomething greater in all his Perfections than can be comprehend by any Creature. 'Tis a fooliſh thing therefore to queſtion that which we cannot comprehend: we ſhould adore inſtead of diſputing againſt it; and take it for granted, that God would not order any thing, were it not agreeable to the Soveraignty of his wiſdom, as well as that of his will. Though the reaſon of man proceed from the wiſdom of God, yet there is more difference between the reaſon of Man, and the wiſdom of God, than between the light of the Sun, and the feeble ſhining of the Gloe-worm; yet we preſume to cenſure the ways of God, as if our pur-blind reaſon had a reach above him.

7. *God is only wiſe infallibly.* The wiſeſt men meet with rubs in the way, that make them fall ſhort of what they aim at; they often deſign, and fail; then begin again, and yet all their counſels end in ſmoak and none of them arrive at perfection. If the wiſeſt Angels lay a plot, they may be diſappointed; for though they are higher and wiſer than Man, yet there is one higher and wiſer than they, that can check their Projects. God always compaſſeth his end, never fails of any thing he deſigns and aims at; all his undertakings are counſel and will; as nothing can reſiſt the efficacy of his will, ſo nothing can countermine the skill of his counſel; *There is no wiſdom, nor underſtanding, nor counſel againſt the Lord, Prov.* 21. 30. He compaſſeth his ends by thoſe actions of Men and Devils, wherein they think to croſs him; they ſhoot at their own mark, and hit his. *Lucifer's* plot by Divine wiſdom fullfilled God's purpoſe againſt *Lucifer's* mind. The counſel of Redemption by Chriſt, the end of the Creation of the World, rode into the World upon the back of the Serpent's Temptation. God never miſtakes the means, nor can there be any diſapointments, to make him vary his Counſels, and pitch upon other means than what before he had ordain'd. His *word that goeth forth of his mouth ſhall not return to him void, but it ſhall accompliſh that which he pleaſes, and it ſhall proſper in the thing whereto he ſent it, Iſa.* 55 11. What is ſaid of his word, is true of his Counſel, it ſhall proſper in the thing for which it is appointed; it cannot be defeated by all the Legions of Men and Devils; for *as he thinks, ſo ſhall it come to paſs; and as he hath purpoſed, ſo ſhall it ſtand; The Lord hath purpoſed, and who ſhall diſannul it? Iſa.* 14. 24. 27. The Wiſdom of the Creature is a drop from the Wiſdom of God, and is like a drop to the Ocean, and a ſhadow to the Sun; and therefore is not able to mate the Wiſdom of God, which is infinite and boundleſs. No Wiſdom is exempted from miſtakes, but the Divine: *He is wiſe* in all his Reſolves, and never *calls back his words and purpoſes, Iſa.* 31. 2.

III. The *third General* is to *prove that God is Wiſe.*

This is aſcrib'd to God in *Scripture*, Dan. 2. 20. *Wiſdom and Might are his*; Wiſdom to contrive, and Power to effect. * Where ſhould Wiſdom dwell, but in the Head of a Deity? And where ſhould Power triumph, but in the Arm of Omnipotency? All that God doth, he doth artificially, skilfully: Whence he is called the *Builder of the Heavens, Heb.* 11. 10. Τεχνίτης, an artificial and curious Builder, a Builder by Art. And that word, *Prov.* 8. 30. meant of Chriſt, *Then I was by him, as one brought up with him*; ſome render it, *Then was I the curious Artificer*; and the ſame word is tranſlated a *cunning workman, Cant.* 7. 5. For this cauſe *Counſel* is aſcrib'd to God *; not properly; for Counſel implies ſomething of Ignorance, or Irreſolution, antecedent to the Conſultation, and a poſture of will afterwards, which was not before. Counſel is properly a laborious deliberation, and a reaſoning of things: An invention of means for the attainment of the end, after a diſcuſſing and reaſoning of all the doubts which ariſe *pro re natâ*, about the matter in Counſel: But God hath no need to deliberate in himſelf, what are the beſt means to accompliſh his ends. He is never ignorant or undetermin'd, what courſe he ſhould take, as Men are before they conſult. But it is an expreſſion in condeſcention to our Capacity, to ſignifie that God doth nothing but with Reaſon and Underſtanding, with the higheſt Prudence, and for the moſt glorious ends, as Men do after conſultation, and the weighing of every foreſeen Circumſtance.

Though he acts all things Soveraignly by his Will, yet he acts all things wiſely by his Underſtanding; and there is not a decree of his will, but he can render a ſatisfactory reaſon for in the face of Men and Angels. As he is the cauſe of all things, ſo he hath the higheſt Wiſdom for the ordering of all things. If wiſdom among Men be the knowledge of Divine and Humane things, God muſt be infinitely wiſe, ſince knowledge is moſt radiant in him; he knows what Angels and Men do, and infinitely more; what is known by them obſcurely, is known by him clearly: What is known by Man after it is done, was known by God before it was wrought. By his wiſdom as much as by any thing, he infinitely differs from all his Creatures, as by wiſdom Man differs from a Brute. We cannot frame a Notion of God, without conceiving him infinitely wiſe. We ſhould render him very inconſiderable, to imagine him furniſh'd with an infinite knowledge, and not have an infinite wiſdom to make uſe of that knowledge; or to fancy him with a mighty power, deſtitute of prudence. Knowledge without prudence is an eye without motion; and power without diſcretion, is an arm without a head; a hand to act, without underſtanding to contrive and model; a ſtrength to act, without reaſon to know how to act: It would be a miſerable notion of a God, to fanſie him with a brutiſh and unguided power. The *Heathens* therefore had, and could not but have this Natural Notion of God. *Plato* therefore calls him *Mens* *, and *Cleanthes* uſed to call God *Reaſon*, and *Socrates* thought the Title of Σοφὸς too magnificent to be attributed to any thing elſe but God alone.

* Eugub. *per Philoſoph. lib.* 1. *cap.* 5.

Arguments to prove that God is wiſe.

Reaſ. 1. *God could not be infinitely perfect without wiſdom.* A rational Nature is better than an irrational Nature. A Man is not a perfect Man without Reaſon; how can God without it, be an infinitely perfect God? Wiſdom is the moſt eminent of all Vertues; all the other Perfections of God without this, would be as a Body without an Eye, a Soul without Underſtanding. A Chriſtian's Graces want their luſtre, when they are deſtitute of the guidance of wiſdom: Mercy is a feebleneſs, and Juſtice a cruelty; Patience a timorouſneſs, and Courage a madneſs, without the conduct of wiſdom; ſo the Patience of God would be Cowardice, his Power an Oppreſſion, his Juſtice a Tyranny, without Wiſdom as the Spring, and Holineſs as the Rule. No Attribute of God could ſhine with a due luſtre and brightneſs without it. Power is a great perfection, but Wiſdom a greater *. Wiſdom may be without much power, as in *Bees* and *Ants*; but power is a tyrannical thing without wiſdom and righteouſneſs. The *Pilot* is more valuable becauſe of his skill, than the Gally-Slave becauſe of his ſtrength; and the conduct of a *General* more eſtimable than the might of a private Soldier. Generals are choſen more by their skill to guide, than their ſtrength to act; what a Clod is a Man without Prudence?

* *Licet magnum ſit poſſe majus tamen eſt ſapere.*

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* Culverwell, *light of Nature, p.* 30.

* Iſa. 46. 10. Jer. 32. 19. *Great in Counſel, Job* 12. 13. *He hath counſel and underſtanding.*

What a Nothing would God be without it? This is the Salt that gives relish to all other perfections in a Creature: This is the Jewel in the Ring of all the Excellencies of the Divine Nature, and Holiness is the splendor of that Jewel.

Now God being the *first Being*, possesses whatsoever is most noble in any Being. If therefore Wisdom, which is the most noble perfection in any Creature, were wanting in God, he would be deficient in that which is the highest Excellency. God being the *living God*, as he is frequently termed in *Scripture*, he hath therefore the most perfect manner of living, and that must be a pure and intellectual life: Being essentially living, he is essentially in the highest degree of living. As he hath an infinite life above all Creatures, so he hath an infinite intellectual life, and therefore an infinite wisdom; whence some have called God not *sapientem*, but *super-sapientem* *, not only wise, but above all wisdom.

* Suarez. *Vol.* 1. *lib.* 1 *cap.* 3. *p.* 10.

Reas. 2. *Without infinite Wisdom he could not govern the World.* Without wisdom in forming the Matter, which was made by Divine power, the world could have been no other than a *Chaos*; and without wisdom in Government, it could have been no other than a heap of Confusion; without wisdom the world could not have been created in the posture it is. Creation supposeth a determination of the will putting power upon acting; the determination of the will supposeth the counsel of the understanding, determining the will: No work, but supposeth understanding as well as will in a rational Agent. As without skill things could not be created, so without it things cannot be governed. *Reason* is a necessary perfection to him that presides over all things: Without knowledge there could not be in God a foundation for Government, and without wisdom there could not be an exercise of Government; and without the most excellent wisdom, he could not be the most excellent Governor. He could not be an universal Governour, without an universal wisdom, nor the sole Governor without an unimitable wisdom; nor an independent Governor without an original and independent wisdom; nor a perpetual Governor without an incorruptible wisdom. He would not be the Lord of the world in all points, without skill to order the affairs of it Power and wisdom are foundations of all Authority and Government: Wisdom to know how to Rule and Command; Power to make those Commands obeyed: No regular Order could issue out without the first, nor could any Order be enforced without the second. A feeble wisdom, and a brutish power, seldom or never produce any good effect. Magistracy without wisdom, would be a frantick power, a rash conduct; like a strong arm when the eye is out, it strikes it knows not what, and leads it knows not whither. Wisdom without power, would be like a great body without feet *, like the knowledge of a *Pilot* that hath lost his arm, who, though he knows the Rule of Navigation, and what Course to follow in his Voyage, yet cannot manage the Helm: But when those two, wisdom and power are link'd together, there ariseth from both a fitness for Government: There is wisdom to propose an end, and both wisdom and power to employ means that conduce to that end. And therefore when God demonstrates to *Job* his right of Government, and the unreasonableness of *Job*'s quarrelling with his proceedings, he chiefly urgeth upon him the consideration of those *two Excellencies* of his Nature, *power*, and *wisdom*, which are express'd in his works *. A Prince without wisdom, is but a Title without a Capacity to perform the Office; no Man without it is fit for government: Nor could God without wisdom, exercise a just Dominion in the world.

* Amirant. *moral.*

* Chap. 38, 39, 40, 41.

He hath therefore the highest wisdom, since he is the universal Governor. That wisdom which is able to govern a Family, may not be able to govern a City; and that wisdom which governs a City, may not be able to govern a Nation or Kingdom, much less a World. The bounds of God's government being greater than any, his wisdom for government must needs surmount the wisdom of all.

* And though the Creatures be not in number actually infinite, yet they cannot be well governed, but by one endowed with infinite Discretion. Providential government can be no more without infinite wisdom, than infinite wisdom can be without Providence

* Amyrald. *defert. Theol. p.* 111.

Reas. 3. *The Creatures working for an end, without their own knowledge, demonstrates the Wisdom of God that guides them.* All things in the world work for some end; the ends are unknown to them, though many of their ends are visible to us. As there was some prime Cause, which by his power inspir'd them with their several instincts, so there must be some supream wisdom, which moves and guides them to their end. As their Being manifests his power that endowed them, so the acting according to the rules of their Nature, which they themselves understand not, manifests his wisdom in directing them. Every thing that acts for an end, must know that end, or be directed by another to attain that end. The Arrow doth not know who shoots it, or to what end it is shot, or what Mark is aimed at; but the Archer that puts it in, and darts it out of the Bow, knows. A Watch hath a regular motion, but neither the Spring nor the Wheels that move, know the end of their motion; no Man will judge a wisdom to be in the Watch, but in the Artificer that dispos'd the Wheels and Spring, by a joynt-combination to produce such a motion for such an end. Doth either the Sun that enlivens the Earth, or the Earth that travels with the Plant, know what Plant it produceth in such a Soil, what temper it should be of, what fruit it should bear, and of what colour? VVhat Plant knows its own Medicinal qualities, its own beautiful flowers, and for what use they are ordain'd? VVhen it strikes up its head from the Earth, doth it know what proportion of them there will be? Yet it produceth all these things in a state of ignorance. The Sun warms the Earth, concocts the humours, excites the vertue of it, and cherishes the Seeds, which are cast into her lap, yet all unknown to the Sun or the Earth. Since therefore that Nature, that is the immediate cause of those things, doth not understand its own quality, nor operation, nor the end of its action, that which thus directs them must be conceived to have an infinite wisdom. When things act by a Rule they know not, and move for an end they understand not, and yet work harmoniously together for one end, that all of them, we are sure, are ignorant of, it mounts up our minds to acknowledge the wisdom of that supream Cause, that hath rang'd all these inferior Causes in their order, and imprinted upon them the Laws of their motions, according to the *Idea's* in his own Mind, who orders the Rule by which they act, and the end for which they act, and directs every motion according to their several Natures, and therefore is possessed with infinite wisdom in his own Nature.

Reas. 4. *God is the fountain of all Wisdom in the Creatures, and therefore is infinitely wise himself.* As he hath a fulness of Being in himself, because the streams of Being are derived to other things from him; So he hath a fulness of wisdom, because he is the spring of wisdom to Angels and Men. That Being must be infinitely wise from whence all other wisdom derives its Original: For nothing can be in the Effect, which

which is not eminently in the Cauſe; the Cauſe is always more perfect than the Effect: If therefore the Creatures are wiſe, the Creator muſt be much more wiſe. If the Creator were deſtitute of wiſdom, the Creature would be much more perfect than the Creator. If you conſider the wiſdom of the *Spider* in her Web, which is both her Houſe and Net; the artifice of the *Bee* in her Comb, which is both her Chamber and Granary; the proviſion of the *Piſmire* in her repoſitories for Corn; the wiſdom of the Creator is illuſtrated by them; whatſoever Excellency you ſee in any Creature, is an Image of ſome Excellency in God. The skill of the Artificer is viſible in the fruits of his Art; a workman tranſcribes his ſpirit in the work of his hands. But the wiſdom of rational Creatures, as Men, doth more illuſtrate it: All Arts among Men are the Rays of Divine Wiſdom ſhining upon them, and by a common gift of the Spirit enlightning their minds to curious Inventions, as *Prov.* 8. 12. *I wiſdom find out the knowledge of witty inventions*; that is, I give a faculty to Men to find them out; without my wiſdom, all things would be buried in darkneſs and ignorance: Whatſoever wiſdom there is in the world, it is but a ſhadow of the wiſdom of God, a ſmall Rivulet derived from him, a ſpark leaping out from Uncreated Wiſdom. *Iſa.* 54. 16. *He created the Smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and makes the Inſtruments*: The skill to uſe thoſe weapons in warlike Enterprizes is from him, *I have created the waſter to deſtroy*; 'Tis not meant of creating their Perſons, but communicating to them their Art; he ſpeaks it there to expel fear from the Church of all warlike preparations againſt them: He had given Men the skill to form and uſe weapons, and could as well ſtrip them of it, and defeat their purpoſes. The Art of *Husbandry* is a fruit of Divine Teaching, *Iſa.* 28. 24, 25. If thoſe lower kinds of knowledge, that are common to all Nations, and eaſily learn'd by all, are diſcoveries of Divine Wiſdom, much more the nobler Sciences, Intellectual and Political Wiſdom, *Dan.* 2. 21. *He gives Wiſdom to the wiſe, and knowledge to them that know underſtanding*; ſpeaking of the more abſtruſe parts of knowledge; *The inſpiration of the Almighty gives Underſtanding*, *Job* 32. 8. Hence the wiſdom which *Solomon* expreſs'd in the *Harlots caſe*, 1 *Kings* 3. 28. was in the Judgment of all *Iſrael*, the *Wiſdom of God*; that is, a fruit of Divine Wiſdom, a Beam communicated to him from God. Every Man's Soul is endowed more or leſs with thoſe noble qualities: The Soul of every Man exceeds that of a Brute; If the Streams be ſo excellent, the Fountain muſt be fuller and clearer. The firſt Spirit muſt infinitely more poſſeſs, what other Spirits derive from him by Creation; were the wiſdom of all the Angels in Heaven and Men on Earth collected in one Spirit, it muſt be infinitely leſs than what is in the Spring; for no Creature can be equal to the Creator. As the higheſt Creature already made, or that we can conceive may be made by Infinite Power, would be infinitely below God in the Notion of a Creature, ſo it would be infinitely below God in the Notion of Wiſe.

IV. The fourth *Thing* is, *Wherein the Wiſdom of God appears.*

It appears (1.) In *Creation*, (2.) In *Government*, (3.) In *Redemption.*

1. In *Creation.* As in a Muſical Inſtrument, there is firſt the skill of the workman in the frame; then the skill of the Muſician in ſtringing it proper for ſuch Muſical Notes as he will expreſs upon it; and after that the tempering of the Strings by various ſtops to a delightful Harmony: So is the wiſdom of God ſeen in framing the world, then in tuning it, and afterwards in the motion of the ſeveral Creatures. The Fabrick of the world is called the Wiſdom of God; 1 *Cor.* 1. 21. *After that in the Wiſdom of God the world by Wiſdom knew not God*; *i. e.* by the Creation the world knew not God; the framing Cauſe is there put for the Effect and the work framed: Becauſe the Divine Wiſdom ſtept forth in the Creatures to a publick appearance, as if it had preſented it ſelf in a viſible ſhape to Man, giving Inſtructions in and by the Creatures, to know and adore him. What we tranſlate, 1 *Gen.* 1. In *the beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth*, the *Targum* expreſſeth, *In the Wiſdom God created the Heaven and the Earth.* Both bear a ſtamp of this perfection on them: And when the *Apoſtle* tells the *Romans*, *Rom.* 1. 20. *the inviſible things of God were clearly underſtood by the things that are made*: The word he uſes is ποίημασι, not ἔργοις, this ſignifies a work of labour, but ποίημα, a work of skill, or a *Poem.* The whole Creation is a *Poem*, every Species a *Stanza*, and every individual Creature a *Verſe* in it. The Creation preſents us with a proſpect of the wiſdom of God, as a *Poem* doth the Reader with the wit and fancy of the Compoſer: *By wiſdom he created the Earth*, Prov. 3. 19. *and ſtretched out the Heavens by diſcretion*, *Jer.* 10. 12. There is not any thing ſo mean, ſo ſmall, but glitters with a beam of Divine Skill; and the conſideration of them would juſtly make every Man ſubſcribe to that of the *Pſalmiſt*, *O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wiſdom haſt thou made them all*, *Pſal.* 104. 24. All, the leaſt as well as the greateſt, and the meaneſt as well as the nobleſt; even thoſe Creatures which ſeem ugly and deformed to us, as Toads, *&c.* becauſe they fall ſhort of thoſe perfections which are the dowry of other Animals: In theſe there is a footſtep of Divine Wiſdom, ſince they were not produc'd by him at random, but determin'd to ſome particular end, and deſign'd to ſome uſefulneſs, as parts of the world in their ſeveral natures and ſtations. God could never have had a ſatisfaction in the review of his works, and pronounc'd them *good* or comely, as he did, *Gen.* 1. 31. had they not been agreeable to that Eternal Original Copy in his own mind: 'Tis ſaid he was *refreſh'd*, *viz.* with that review, *Exod.* 31. 17. which could not have been, if his piercing Eye had found any defect in any thing, which had ſprung out of his hand, or an unſuitableneſs to that end for which he created them. He ſeems to do as a Man that hath made a curious and polite work, with exact care to peer about every part and line, if he could perceive any imperfection in it, to rectifie the miſtake: But no defect was found by the infinitely wiſe God upon his ſecond Examination.

* *Omne opus naturæ eſt opus intelligentiæ.*

This Wiſdom of the Creation appears,

(1.) In *the variety*, (2.) In *the beauty*, (3.) *The fitneſs of every Creature for its uſe*, (4.) *The ſubordination of one Creature to another, and the joynt concurrence of all to one common end.*

1. In *the Variety.* *Pſal.* 104. 24. *O Lord how manifold are thy Works!* How great a variety is there of Animals and Plants, with a great variety of Forms, Shapes, Figurations, Colours, various Smells, Vertues and Qualities! and this variety is produced from one and the ſame Matter, as Beaſts and Plants from the Earth; *Gen.* 1. 11. 24. *Let the Earth bring forth living Creatures*; *and the Earth brought forth Graſs, and the Herb yielding Seed after his kind*: Such diverſity of Fowl and Fiſh from the Water; *Gen* 1. 20. *Let the Waters bring forth abundantly the moving Creature that hath Life, and Fowl that may fly*; ſuch a beautiful and active Variety from ſo dull a Matter as the Earth; ſo ſolid a Variety from ſo fluid a Matter as the Water; ſo noble a piece as the Body of Man, with ſuch variety of Members, fit to entertain a more excellent Soul as a Gueſt, from ſo mean a matter

matter as the *duſt of the ground*, *Gen.* 2. 7. This Extraction of ſuch variety of Forms out of one ſingle and dull Matter, is the Chymiſtry of Divine Wiſdom: 'Tis a greater skill to frame noble Bodies of vile Matter, as varieties of precious Veſſels of Clay and Earth, than of a nobler Matter, as Gold and Silver.

Again, all thoſe Varieties propagate *their kind* in every particular and quality of their Nature, and uniformly bring forth exact Copies, according to the firſt pattern God made of the *kind*, *Gen.* 1 11, 12, 24. Conſider alſo how the ſame piece of Ground is garniſh'd with Plants and Flowers of ſeveral Virtues, Fruits, Colours, Scents, without our being able to perceive any variety in the Earth that breeds them, and not ſo great a difference in the Roots that bears them. Add to this, the Diverſities of Birds of different Colours, Shapes, Notes conſiſting of various part, Wings like Oars to cut the Air, and Tails as the Rudder of a Ship to guide their Motion.

How various alſo are the Endowments of the Creatures? Some have vegetation, and the power of growth; others have the addition of Senſe, and others the Excellency of Reaſon; ſomething wherein all agree, and ſomething wherein all differ; variety in unity, and unity in variety: The Wiſdom of the Workman had not been ſo conſpicuous, had there been only one degree of Goodneſs: The greateſt Skill is ſeen in the greateſt variety.

The comelineſs of the Body is viſible in the variety of Members, and their uſefulneſs to one another; what an inform thing had Man been, had he been all Ear, or all Eye? If God had made all the Stars to be Suns, it would have been a demonſtration of his Power, but perhaps leſs of his Wiſdom: No Creatures, with the Natures they now have, could have continued in being under ſo much heat: There was no leſs Wiſdom went to the frame of the leaſt, than to the greateſt Creature. It ſpeaks more Art in a Limner to paint a Landskip exactly, than to draw the Sun, though the Sun be a more glorious Body.

I might inſtance alſo in the different Characters and Features imprinted upon the Countenances of Men and Women, the differences of Voices and Statures, whereby they are diſtinguiſh'd from one another: Theſe are the Foundations of Order and of human Society and Adminiſtration of Juſtice; what confuſion would have been if a grown up Son could not be known from his Father, the Magiſtrate from the Subject, the Creditor from the Debtor, the Innocent from the Criminal? The Laws God hath given to Mankind, could not have been put in Execution: This variety ſpeaks the Wiſdom of God.

2. The wiſdom of the Creation appears *in the Beauty, and Order, and Situation of the ſeveral Creatures.* Eccleſ. 3. 11. *He hath made every thing beautiful in his time.* As their Being was a fruit of Divine Power, ſo their Order is a fruit of Divine Wiſdom All Creatures are as members in the great body of the world, proportion'd to one another, and contributing to the beauty of the whole; * ſo that if the particular forms of every thing, the union of all for the compoſition of the world, and the Laws which are eſtabliſhed in the Order of Nature for its conſervation, be conſidered, it would raviſh us with an admiration of God: All the Creatures are as ſo many Pictures or Statues, exactly fram'd by Line; *Pſal.* 19. 4. *Their Line is gone through all the Earth*; Their Line a meaſuring Line, or a Carpenter's Rule, whereby he proportions ſeveral pieces to be exactly link'd and coupled together. *Their Line*, that is their harmonious proportion, and the inſtruction from it is gone forth through all the Earth. Upon the account of this harmony, ſome of the ancient *Heathens* framed the Images of their Gods with muſical Inſtruments in their hands, ſignifying that God wrought all things in a due proportion *.

* Amyrant *Moral. Vol.* 1. *p.* 257.

The Heavens ſpeak this Wiſdom in their Order.

The Revolutions of the Sun and Moon determine the Seaſons of the Year, and make Day and Night in an orderly ſucceſſion. The Stars beautifie the Heavens, and influence the Earth, and keep their *Courſes*, *Judges* 5. 20. They keep their ſtations without interfering with one another; and tho they have roll'd about for ſo many Ages they obſerve their diſtinct Laws, and in the variety of their Motions have not diſturb'd one anothers Functions.

* The Sun is ſet as the heart in the midſt of this great body, to afford warmth to all: Had it been ſet lower, it had long ſince turned the Earth into flame and aſhes: Had it been placed higher, the Earth would have wanted the nouriſhment and refreſhment neceſſary for it. Too much nearneſs had ruin'd the Earth by parching heat, and too great a diſtance had deſtroyed the Earth by ſtarving it with cold.

The Sun hath alſo its appointed Motion; had it been fixed without motion, half of the Earth had been unprofitable; there had been perpetual darkneſs in a moiety of it; nothing had been produc'd for nouriſhment, and ſo it had been rendred uninhabitable: But now by this motion, it viſits all the *Climates* of the World, *runs its Circuit*, ſo that *nothing is hid from the heat thereof*, Pſal. 19. 6 It imparts its vertue to every Corner of the world in its daily and yearly viſits. Had it been fixed, the fruits of the Earth under it had been parch'd and deſtroy'd before their maturity; but all thoſe inconveniencies are provided againſt by the perpetual motion of the Sun.

This motion is orderly *; It makes its daily Courſe from Eaſt to Weſt, its yearly motion from North to South: It goes to the North, till it comes to the Point God hath ſet it, and then turns back to the South, and gains ſome point every day: It never riſeth nor ſets in the ſame place one day, where it did the day before. The World is never without its light: ſome ſee it Riſing the ſame moment we ſee its ſetting.

The Earth alſo ſpeaks the Divine Wiſdom; 'tis the Pavement of the World, as the Heaven is the the Ceiling of Fretwork. * Tis placed lowermoſt, as being the heavieſt body, and fit to receive the weightieſt Matter, and provided as an Habitation proper for thoſe Creatures, which derive the matter of their bodies from it and partake of its Earthly nature; and garniſht with other Creatures for the profit and pleaſure of man.

The Sea alſo ſpeaks the ſame divine Wiſdom. He *ſtrengthened the Fountains of the Deep and gave the Sea a Decree, that it ſhould not paſs his Command*, *Prov.* 8. 28, 29. He hath given it certain *Bounds*, that it ſhould not *overflow* the Earth, *Job* 28. 11. It contains it ſelf in the ſituation wherein God hath placed it and doth not tranſgreſs its bounds. What if ſome part of a Country, a little Spot; hath been overflowed by it, and groaned under its waves? Yet for the main, it retains the ſame Channels wherein it was at firſt lodged.

All Creatures are cloathed with an outward Beauty and endowed with an inward Harmony; there is an agreement in all parts of this great Body; every one is beautiful and orderly; but the beauty of the World reſults from all of them diſpos'd and linkt together.

* Montag. *againſt* Selden, *p.* 281. Plutarch *calls God* ἁρμονίαν καὶ μῖξιν τῶν ὅλων, *nothing was made without Muſick.*

* Charleton *Light of Nature. p.* 57.

* Daillé. *me. p.* 11. *p.* 483.

* Amyrant. *Predeſtin. p.* 9.

3. This Wiſdom is ſeen *in the fitneſs of every thing for its end, and the uſefulneſs of it.* Divine Wiſdom is more illuſtrious in the fitneſs and uſefulneſs of this great variety, than in the Compoſure of their diſtinct parts: As the Artificers Skill is more eminent in fitting the Wheels, and ſetting them in order for their due motion, than in the external Fabrick of the Materials which compoſe the Clock.

After the moſt diligent inſpection, there can be found nothing in the Creation unprofitable; nothing but is capable of ſome Service, either for the ſupport of our Bodies, recreation of our Senſes, or Moral Inſtruction of our Minds. Not the leaſt Creature but is formed and ſhap'd and furniſh'd with Members and Parts, in a due proportion for its end and ſervice in the World; nothing is ſuperfluous, nothing defective.

* Amyrant. *ſur diverſes Text. p.* 127.

The *Earth* is fitted in its parts*; the Valleys are appointed for Granaries, the Mountains to ſhadow them from the ſcorching heat of the Sun; the Rivers like veins, carry refreſhment to every Member of this Body; Plants and Trees thrive on the face of the Earth, and Metals are ingendred in the Bowels of it, for Materials for Building and other uſes for the ſervice of Man *There he cauſes the Graſs to grow for the Cattle, and Herb for the Service of Man, that he may bring forth food out of the Earth,* *Pſal.* 104. 14.

The *Sea* is fitted for uſe; 'tis a Fiſh-pond for the nouriſhment of Man; a Boundary for the dividing of Lands and ſeveral Dominions; It joyns together Nations far diſtant. A great Veſſel for Commerce, *Pſal.* 104. 26. *There go the Ships.* It affords Vapours to the Clouds, wherewith to water the Earth, which the Sun draws up, ſeparating the finer from the ſalter parts, that the Earth may be fruitful, without being burthened with barrenneſs by the ſalt. The Sea hath alſo its Salt, its ebbs and flouds; the one as Brine, the other as Motion, to preſerve it from Putrefication, that it may not be Contagious to the reſt of the World.

Showers are appointed to refreſh the bodies of living Creatures, to open the Womb of the Earth, and *water the Ground to make it fruitful,* *Pſal.* 104. 3. The Clouds therefore are called the *Chariots of God*; he rides in them in the manifeſtation of his goodneſs and Wiſdom.

* Leſſins. * *Winds* are fitted to purifie the Air, to preſerve it from Putrefaction; to carry the Clouds to ſeveral parts to refreſh the parched Earth, and aſſiſt her Fruits: And alſo to ſerve for the Commerce of one Nation with another by Navigation. God in his Wiſdom and Goodneſs *walks upon the wings of the wind,* *Pſal.* 104. 3.

* Daille *melan. part.* 2. *p.* 472. 473. * *Rivers* are appointed to bathe the Ground, and render it freſh and lively; they fortifie Cities, are the limits of Countrys, ſerve for Commerce, they are the Watring-pots of the Earth, and the Veſſels for Drink for the living Creatures that dwell upon the Earth, God cut thoſe Channels for the *wild Aſſes,* the *Beaſts of the Deſarts,* which are his Creatures as well as the reſt, *Pſal.* 104. 10. 12, 13.

Trees are appointed for the Habitation of Birds, ſhadows for the Earth, Nouriſhment for the Creatures, Materials for building, and Fuel for the relief of Man againſt Cold.

The *Seaſons* of the Year have their uſe; the Winter makes the Juice retire into the Earth, fortifies Plants, and fixes their Roots: It moiſtens the Earth that was dried before by the heat of the Summer, and cleanſeth and prepares it for a new fruitfulneſs. The Spring calls out the Sap in new Leaves and Fruit: The Summer conſumes the ſuperfluous moiſture, and produceth Nouriſhment for the Inhabitants of the World.

* The *Day* and *Night* have alſo their uſefulneſs: The Day gives Life to Labour, and is a guide to Motion and Action. *Pſal.* 104. 23. *The Sun ariſeth, Man goeth forth to his labour untill the Evening.* It warms the Air, and quickens Nature; without Day the World would be a *Chaos*, an unſeen Beauty. The Night indeed caſts a Veil upon the bravery of the Earth, but it draws the Curtains from that of Heaven; though it darkens below, it makes us ſee the Beauty of the World above, and diſcovers to us a glorious part of the Creation of God, the Tapiſtry of Heaven, and the Motion of the Stars, hid from us by the eminent light of the Day. It procures a Truce from Labour, and refreſheth the Bodies of Creatures, by recruiting the Spirits which are ſcattered by watching. It prevents the ruin of Life, by a reparation of what was waſted in the Day. It takes from us the ſight of Flowers and Plants, but it waſheth their Face with Dews for a new Appearance next Morning. The length of the Day and Night, is not without a Mark of Wiſdom; were they of a greater length, as the length of a Week or Month, the one would too much dry, and the other too much moiſten; and for want of Action, the Members would be ſtupified. The perpetual Succeſſion of Day and Night, is an Evidence of the Divine Wiſdom, in tempering the travel and reſt of Creatures. Hence the *Pſalmiſt* tells us, *Pſal.* 74. 16, 17. *The day is thine, and the night is thine; thou haſt prepared the light of the ſun, and made ſummer and winter*; *i. e.* they are of God's framing, not without a wiſe counſel and end. * Daille *melang. part.* 1. *p.* 774. *&c.*

Hence let us aſcend to the Bodies of living Creatures, and we ſhall find every member fitted for uſe. What a curioſity is there in every Member? Every one fitted to a particular uſe in their ſituation, form, temper, and mutual agreement for the good of the whole: The Eye to direct, the Ear to receive directions from others, the Hands to act, the Feet to move. Every Creature hath members fitted for that Element wherein it reſides: And in the Body, ſome parts are appointed to change the Food into Blood, others to refine it, and others to diſtribute and convey it to ſeveral parts for the maintenance of the whole: The Heart to mint vital Spirits for preſerving Life, and the Brain to coin animal Spirits for Life and Motion; the Lungs to ſerve for the cooling the Heart, which elſe would be parcht as the Ground in Summer. The Motion of the Members of the Body by one act of the Will, and alſo without the Will by a natural Inſtinct, is an admirable Evidence of Divine Skill in the Structure of the Body; ſo that well might the *Pſalmiſt* cry out, *Pſal.* 139. 14. *I am fearfully and wonderfully made.*

But how much more of this Divine Perfection is ſeen in the Soul? A Nature furniſh'd with a Faculty of Underſtanding to judge of things, to gather in things that are diſtant, and to reaſon and draw Concluſions from one thing to another, with a Memory to treaſure up things that are paſt, with a Will to apply it ſelf ſo readily to what the mind judges fit and comely, and fly ſo ſpeedily from what it judges ill and hurtful. The whole World is a Stage, every Creature in it hath a part to act, and a Nature ſuted to that part and end 'tis deſign'd for; and all concur in a joint Language to publiſh the Glory of Divine Wiſdom, they have a Voice to proclaim the *Glory of God,* *Pſal.* 19. 1. 3. And it is not the leaſt part of God's Skill, in framing the Creatures ſo, that upon Man's Obedience, they are the Channels of his Goodneſs; and upon Man's Diſobedience, they can in their Natures be the Miniſters of his Juſtice for the puniſhing of offending Creatures.

4. Fourthly, The Wiſdom is apparent *in the linking all theſe uſeful parts together, ſo that one is ſubordinate*

to

to the other for a common end. All parts are exactly ſuted to one another, and every part to the whole, though they are of different Natures, as Lines diſtant in themſelves, yet they meet in one common Center, the good and the preſervation of the Univerſe; they are all joined togerher, as the word
* Heb. 11. 3. tranſlated *framed* * ſignifies; knit by fit Bands and Ligaments to contribute mutual Beauty, Strength and Aſſiſtance to one another; like ſo many Links of a Chain coupled together, that though there be a diſtance in place, there is a unity in regard of connexion and end, there is a conſent in the whole. *Hoſea* 2. 21, 22. *The Heavens hear the Earth, and the Earth hears the Corn, and the Wine, and the Oyl.* The Heavens communicate their Qualities to the Earth, and the Earth conveys them to the Fruits ſhe bears:
* Daille. 15. *Serm.* p. 170. * The Air diſtributes Light, Wind, and Rain to the Earth; the Earth and the Sea render to the Air Exhalations and Vapours, and all together charitably give to the Plants and Animals, that which is neceſſary for their Nouriſhment and Refreſhment. The Influences of the Heavens animate the Earth, and the Earth affords matter in part for the Influences it receives from the Regions above. Living Creatures are maintain'd by Nouriſhment; Nouriſhment is conveyed to them by the Fruits of the Earth; the Fruits of the Earth are produced by means of rain and heat; matter for Rain and Dew is raiſed by the heat of the Sun; and the Sun by its motion diſtributes heat, and quickning virtue to all parts of the Earth. So Colours are made for the pleaſure of the Eye, Sounds for the delight of the Ear: Light is formed, whereby the Eye may ſee the one, and Air to convey the Species of Colours to the Eye, and Sound to the Ear; all things are like the Wheels of a Watch compacted: And though many of the Creatures be endowed with contrary Qualities, yet they are joined in a Marriage-knot for the publick Security, and Subſerviency to the Preſervation and Order of the Univerſe: As the variety of Strings upon an Inſtrument, ſending forth various and diſtinct Sounds, are temper'd together, for the framing excellent and delightful Airs. In this univerſal conſpiring of the Creatures together to one end, is the Wiſdom of the Creator apparent; in tuning ſo many Contraries as the Elements are, and preſerving them in their Order, which if once broken, the whole Frame of Nature would crack, and fall in pieces; all are ſo interwoven and inlaid together, by the Divine Workmanſhip, as to make up one intire Beauty in the whole Fabrick: As every part in the Body of Man hath a diſtinct Comelineſs, yet there is beſides, the Beauty of the whole, that reſults from the union of divers parts exactly faſhioned to one another, and linkt together.

By the way,

Uſe. *How much may we ſee of the Perfection of God in every thing that preſents it ſelf to our Eyes?* And how ſhould we be convinc'd of our unworthy neglect of aſcending to him with reverent and admiring thoughts, upon the proſpect of the Creatures? What dull Scholars are we, when every Creature is our Teacher, every part of the Creature a lively Inſtruction! Thoſe things that we tread under our Feet, if uſed by us according to the full Deſign of their Creation, would afford rich matter, not only for our Heads, but our Hearts. As Grace doth not deſtroy Nature, but elevate it, ſo neither ſhould the freſher and fuller Diſcoveries of Divine Wiſdom in Redemption, deface our thoughts of his Wiſdom in Creation. Though the greater Light of the Sun, obſcures the leſſer ſparkling of the Stars, yet it gives way in the Night to the diſcovery of them, that God may be ſeen, known, and conſidered, in all his Works of Wonder, and Miracles of Nature. No part of Scripture is more ſpiritual than the *Pſalms*; none filled with clearer Diſcoveries of Chriſt in the Old Teſtament; yet how often do the Pen-men conſider the Creation of God, and find their *Meditations on him to be ſweet*, as conſider'd in his Works? *Pſal.* 104. 34. *My meditation of him ſhall be ſweet.* When? why, after a ſhort Hiſtory of the Goodneſs and Wiſdom of God in the Frame of the World, and the Species of the Creatures.

2. The Wiſdom of God appears *in his Government of his Creatures.* The regular Motion of the Creatures ſpeaks for this Perfection, as well as the exact Compoſition of them. If the exquiſiteneſs of the Frame conducts us to the Skill of the Contriver; the exactneſs of their Order, according to his Will and Law, ſpeaks no leſs the Wiſdom of the Governour. It cannot be thought that a raſh and irrational Power preſides over a World ſo well diſpoſed: The diſpoſition of things hath no leſs Characters of Skill, than the Creation of them. No Man can hear an excellent Leſſon upon a *Lute*, but muſt preſently reflect upon the Art of the Perſon that touches it. The Prudence of Man appears in wrapping up the Concerns of a Kingdom in his Mind, for the well-ordering of it; and ſhall not the Wiſdom of God ſhine forth, as he is the Director of the World?

I ſhall omit his Government of *Inanimate* Creatures, and confine the Diſcourſe to his Government of *Man*, as *Rational*, as *Sinful*, as *Reſtor'd*.

1. *In his Government of Man as a Rational Creature.*

1. *In the Law he gives to Man.* Wiſdom framed it, though Will enacted it. The will of God is the Rule of Righteouſneſs to us, but the wiſdom of God is the Foundation of that Rule of Righteouſneſs which he preſcribes us. * The Compoſure of a Muſician is the Rule of ſinging to his Scholars; yet the Conſent and Harmony in that Compoſure, derives not it ſelf from his Will, but from his Underſtanding; he would not be a Muſician, if his Compoſures were contrary to the Rules of true Harmony: So the Laws of Men are compos'd by Wiſdom though they are enforc'd by Will and Authority.
* Caſtellio *Dialog. l.* 4. p. 46.

The Moral Law, which was the Law of Nature, the Law imprinted upon *Adam*, is ſo framed, as to ſecure the Rights of God, as Supream, and the Rights of Men in their diſtinctions of Superiority and Equality: 'Tis therefore called *holy and good*, *Rom.* 7. 12. *holy*, as it preſcribes our Duty to God in his Worſhip; *good*, as it regulates the Offices of human Life, and preſerves the common Intereſt of Mankind.

1. *'Tis ſuited to the Nature of Man.* As God hath given a Law of Nature, a fixed order to Inanimate Creatures, ſo he hath given a Law of Reaſon to Rational Creatures: Other Creatures are not capable of a Law differencing Good and Evil, becauſe they are deſtitute of Faculties and Capacities to make diſtinction between them. It had not been agreeable to the wiſdom of God to propoſe any Moral Law to them, who had neither Underſtanding to diſcern, nor Will to chuſe. 'Tis therefore to be obſerved, that whilſt Chriſt exhorted others to the embracing his Doctrine, yet he exhorted not little Children, though he took them in his Arms, becauſe though they had Faculties, yet they were not come to ſuch a Maturity, as to be capable of a Rational Inſtruction. But there was a neceſſity for ſome Command for the Government of Man; ſince God hath made him a rational Creature, it was not agreeable to his Wiſdom to govern him as a Brute, but as a Rational Creature, capable of knowing his Precepts, and voluntarily walking in them; and without a Law, he had not been capable of any exerciſe of his Reaſon in Services reſpecting God.

He therefore gives him a Law, with a Covenant annex'd to it, whereby man is *obliged* to Obedience, and *ſecured* of a Reward. This was enforced with ſevere Penalties, *Death*, with all the Horrors attending it, to derer him from Tranſgreſſion, *Gen.* 2. 17. wherein is implied a Promiſe of continuance of Life, and all its Felicities, to allure him to a mindfulneſs of his Obligation. So perfect a Hedge did Divine Wiſdom ſet about him to keep him within the bounds of that Obedience, which was both his Debt and Security, that whereſoever he looked, he ſaw either ſomething to invite him, or ſomething to drive him to the payment of his Duty, and perſeverance in it. Thus the Law was exactly framed to the Nature of Man; Man had twiſted in him a deſire of Happineſs, the Promiſe was ſuited to cheriſh this Natural Deſire. He had alſo the Paſſion of Fear; the proper Object of this was any thing deſtructive to his Being, Nature, and Felicity; this the Threatning met with. In the whole it was accommodated to man as rational: Precepts to the Law in his mind, Promiſes to the Natural Appetite, Threatnings to the moſt prevailing Affection, and to the implanted Deſires of preſerving both his Being and Happineſs in that Being. Theſe were rational Motives fitted to the Nature of *Adam*, which was above the life God had given Plants, and the ſenſe he had given Animals.

The Command given Man in Innocence, was ſuited to his ſtrength and power; God gave him not any Command, but what he had ability to obſerve: And ſince we want not power to forbear an Apple in our corrupted and impotent State, he wanted not ſtrength in his ſtate of Integrity. The wiſdom of God commanded nothing, but what was very eaſie to be obſerved by him, and inferior to his natural Ability. It had been both unjuſt and unwiſe to have commanded him to fly up to the Sun, when he had not wings; or ſtop the Courſe of the Sea, when he had not ſtrength.

2. *'Tis ſuited to the happineſs and benefit of man.* God's Laws are not an act of meer Authority reſpecting his own Glory, but of wiſdom and goodneſs reſpecting man's Benefit. They are perfective of man's Nature, conferring a wiſdom upon him, *rejoycing his heart, enlightning his eyes, Pſal.* 19. 7, 8. affording him both a knowledge of God, and of himſelf. To be without a Law, is for Man to be as Beaſts, without Juſtice, and without Religion: Other things are for the good of the Body, but the Laws of God for the good of the Soul: The more perfect the Law, the greater the benefit. The Laws given to the *Jews* were the honour and excellency of that Nation; *Deut.* 1. 8. *What Nation is there ſo great, that hath Statutes and Judgments ſo righteous?* They were made Stateſmen in the *Judicial* Law, Eccleſiaſticks in the *Ceremonial*, honeſt Men in the *Second Table*, and Divine in the *Firſt*. All his Laws are ſuited to the true ſatisfaction of Man, and the good of Human Society. Had God framed a Law only for one Nation, there would have been the Characters of a particular wiſdom; but now an univerſal wiſdom appears, in accommodating his Law, not only to this or that particular Society or Corporation of Men, but to the benefit of all Mankind in the variety of Climates, and Countries wherein they live: Every thing that is diſturbing to Human Society is provided againſt; nothing is enjoyn'd, but what is ſweet, rational, and uſeful: It orders us not to attempt any thing againſt the life of our Neighbour, the honour of his Bed, propriety in his Goods, and the clearneſs of his Reputation; and if well obſerved, would alter the face of the world, and make it look with another hue. The world would be alter'd from a brutiſh to a human world: It would change Lions and Wolves, Men of Lion-like and Wolviſh diſpoſition, into reaſon and ſweetneſs. And becauſe the whole Law is ſum'd up in *love*, it obligeth us to endeavour the preſervation of one anothers Beings, the favouring of one anothers Intereſts, and increaſing the Goods, as much as Juſtice will permit, and keeping up one anothers Credits; becauſe love, which is the Soul of the Law, is not ſhewn by a ceſſation from action, but ſignifies an order upon all occaſions in doing good. I ſay, were this Law well obſerved, the world would be another thing than it is. It would become a Religious Fraternity, the Voice of Enmity, and the Noiſe of Groans and Curſings would not be heard in our Streets: Peace would be in all our Borders, plenty of Charity in the midſt of Cities and Countries; Joy and ſinging would ſound in all Habitations. Man's advantage was deſign'd in God's Laws, and doth naturally reſult from the obſervance of them. God ſo ordered them by his Wiſdom, that the Obedience of Man ſhould draw forth his Goodneſs, and prevent thoſe ſmarting Judgments, which were neceſſary to reduce the Creature to order, that would not voluntarily continue in the order God had appointed. The Laws of Men are often unjuſt, oppreſſive, cruel; ſometimes againſt the Law of Nature: But an univerſal wiſdom and righteouſneſs glitters in the Divine Law: There is nothing in it, but what is worthy of God, and uſeful for the Creature; ſo that we may well ſay with *Job*, *Who teaches like God, Job* 36. 22. or as ſome render it, *who is a Law-giver like God? Who can ſay* to him, *thou haſt wrought iniquity* or folly among Men? His Precepts were framed for the preſervation of Man in that rectitude wherein he was created, in that likeneſs to God wherein he was firſt made, that there might be a correſpondence between the Integrity of the Creature and the Goodneſs of his Creator, by the Obedience of Man; that Man might exerciſe his Faculties in Operations worthy of him, and beneficial to the world.

3. The Wiſdom of God is ſeen in *ſuiting his Laws to the Conſciences, as well as the Intereſt of all Mankind.* Rom. 2. 14. *The Gentiles do by nature the things contained in the Law*; ſo great an affinity there is between the wiſe Law and the Reaſon of Man.

There is a Natural Beauty emerging from them, and darting upon the Reaſons and Conſciences of Men, which dictates to them that this Law is worthy to be obſerved in it ſelf. The two main Principles of the Law, The Love and Worſhip of God, and doing as we would be done by, have an indeliable impreſſion in the Conſciences of all Men in regard of the Principle; though they are not ſuitably expreſs'd in the Practice. Were there no Law outwardly publiſh'd, yet every man's Conſcience would dictate to him, that God was to be acknowledged, worſhipped, loved, as naturally as his Reaſon would acquaint him that there was ſuch a Being as God. This ſuitableneſs of them to the Conſciences of Men, is manifeſt, in that the Laws of the beſt governed Nations among the Heathen have had an agreement with them. Nothing can be more exactly compoſed, according to the Rules of right and exact Reaſon than this; no Man but approves of ſomething in it, yea, of the whole when he exerciſeth that dim Reaſon which he hath. Suppoſe any Man, (not an abſolute Atheiſt) he cannot but acknowledge the reaſonableneſs of worſhipping God. Grant him to be a Spirit, and it will preſently appear abſurd to repreſent him by any Corporeal Image, and derogate from his Excellency by ſo mean a reſemblance; with the ſame eaſineſs he will grant a reverence due to the Name of God; that we muſt not ſerve our turn of him, by calling him to witneſs to a lye in a Solemn Oath. That as Worſhip is due

due to him, ſo ſome ſtated time is a Circumſtance neceſſary to the performance of that Worſhip. And as to the *Second Table*, will any Man in his right Reaſon quarrel with that Command that engageth his Inferiors to honour him; that ſecures his Being from a violent Murder, and his Goods from unjuſt Rapine? And though by the fury of his Luſts he break the Laws of Wedlock himſelf, yet he cannot but approve of that Law, as it prohibits every Man from doing him the like injury and diſgrace. The ſuitableneſs of the Law to the Conſciences of Men, is further evidenced by thoſe furious reflections, and ſtrong alarms of Conſcience upon a tranſgreſſion of it, and that in all Parts of the World, more or leſs in all Men: So exactly hath Divine Wiſdom fitted the Law to the Reaſon and Conſciences of Men, as one Tally to another. Indeed, without ſuch an Agreement, no man's Conſcience could have any ground for a *Hue* and *Cry*, nor need any Man be ſtartled with the Records of it. This manifeſts the wiſdom of God in framing his Law ſo, that the Reaſons and Conſciences of all Men do one time or other ſubſcribe to it. What Governour in the world is able to make any Law diſtinct from this revealed by God, that ſhall reach all Places, all Perſons, all Hearts?

We may add to this the extent of his Commands in ordering goodneſs at the root, not only in action but affection; not only in the motion of the Members, but the diſpoſition of the Soul; which ſuiting a Law to the inward frame of man, is quite out of the compaſs of the wiſdom of any Creature.

4. His Wiſdom is ſeen *in the encouragements he gives for the ſtudying and obſerving his will*, Pſal. 19. 11. *In keeping the Commandments there is great reward.* The variety of them; there is not any particular *Genius* in man, but may find ſomething ſuitable to win upon him in the revealed will of God. There is a ſtrain of Reaſon to ſatisfie the Rational; of Eloquence, to gratifie the Fanciful; of Intereſt, to allure the Selfiſh; of Terror, to ſtartle the Obſtinate. As a ſkilful Angler ſtores himſelf with Baits, according to the Appetites of the ſorts of Fiſh he intends to catch; ſo in the Word of God, there are varieties of Baits, according to the varieties of the Inclinations of men; Threatnings to work upon Fear; Promiſes to work upon Love; Examples of holy men ſet out for Imitation; and thoſe plainly, neither his Threatnings nor his Promiſes are dark as the *Heathen* Oracles; but peremptory, as becomes a Soveraign Law-giver; and plain, as was neceſſary for the underſtanding of a Creature: As he deals graciouſly with men in exhorting and encouraging them; ſo he deals wiſely herein, by taking away all Excuſe from them if they ruin the intereſt of their Souls by denying Obedience to their Soveraign.

Again, the Rewards God propoſeth are accommodated, not to the Bruti ſh parts of man, his Carnal Senſe and Fleſhly Appetite; but to the Capacity of a Spiritual Soul, which admits only of Spiritual Gratifications; and cannot in its own Nature, without a ſordid ſubjection to the Humours of the Body, be moved by Senſual Propoſals. God backs his Precepts with that which the Nature of Man longed for, and with Spiritual Delights, which can only ſatisfie a rational Appetite: And thereby did as well gratifie the nobleſt Deſires in man, as oblige him to the nobleſt Service and Work *. Indeed Vertue and Holineſs being perfectly amiable, ought chiefly to affect our Underſtandings, and by them draw our Wills to the eſteem and purſuit of them. But ſince the deſire of Happineſs is inſeparable from the Nature of Man, as impoſſible to be diſ-joyn'd, as an Inclination to deſcend to be ſevered from heavy Bodies, or an inſtinct to aſcend from light and airy Subſtances; God ſerves himſelf of the Inclinations of our Natures to Happineſs, to ingender in us an eſteem and affection to the Holineſs he doth require. He propoſeth the enjoyment of a ſupernatural Good, and everlaſting Glory, as a Bait to that inſatiable longing our Natures have for Happineſs, to receive the impreſſion of Holineſs into our Souls. And beſides, he proportions Rewards according to the degrees of mens Induſtry, Labour, and Zeal for him; and weighs out a Recompence, not only ſuited to, but above the Service. He that improves *five Talents*, is to be Ruler over *five Cities*; that is, a greater proportion of Honour and Glory than another, *Luke* 19. 17, 18. As a wiſe Father excites the affection of his Children to things worthy of Praiſe, by varieties of Recompences according to their ſeveral Actions. It was the wiſdom of the *Steward*, in the Judgment of our *Saviour*, to give every one the *portion that belonged to him*, *Luke* 12. 42. There is no part of the Word wherein we meet not with the will and wiſdom of God, varieties of Duties, and varieties of Encouragement mingled together.

* Amyrant.

5. The Wiſdom of God is ſeen *In fitting the Revelations of his will to after-times, and for the preventing of the fore-ſeen Corruptions of men.* The whole Revelation of the mind of God is ſtored with wiſdom in the words, connexion, ſenſe; it looks backwards to paſt, and forwards to Ages to come: A hidden wiſdom lies in the bowels of it, like Gold in a Mine.

The Old Teſtament was ſo compoſed, as to fortifie the New, when God ſhould bring it to light. The Foundations of the Goſpel were laid in the Law: The Predictions of the *Prophets*, and Figures of the Law were ſo wiſely framed, and laid down in ſuch clear expreſſions, as to be Proofs of the Authority of the New Teſtament, and Convictions of Jeſus his being the *Meſſiah*, *Luke* 24. 14. Things *concerning Chriſt* were written *in Moſes, the Prophets, and Pſalms*, and do to this day ſtare the *Jews* ſo in the face, that they are fain to invent abſurd and nonſenſical Interpretations to excuſe their Unbelief, and continue themſelves in their obſtinate Blindneſs. And in purſuance of the efficacy of thoſe Predictions, it was a part of the wiſdom of God to bring forth the *Tranſlation* of the Old Teſtament, (by the means of *Ptolomy* King of *Egypt*, ſome hundreds of Years before the coming of Chriſt) into the *Greek* Language, the Tongue the moſt known in the world; And why? To prepare the *Gentiles*, by the reading of it, for that gracious Call he intended them, and for the entertainment of the Goſpel, which ſome few Years after was to be publiſh'd among them; that by reading the Predictions ſo long before made, they might more readily receive the accompliſhment of them in their due time.

The Scripture is written in ſuch a manner, as to obviate Errors foreſeen by God to enter into the Church: It may be wondred, why the *Univerſal* Particle ſhould be inſerted by Chriſt, in the giving the *Cup* in the Supper, which was not in the diſtributing the *Bread*, Mat. 26. 27. *Drink ye all of it*; Not at the diſtributing the Bread, *Eat you all of it*: And *Mark* in his Relation tells us, *They all drank of it*, *Mark* 11. 23. The Church of *Rome* hath been the occaſion of diſcovering to us the wiſdom of our Saviour in inſerting that Particle *all*, ſince they were ſo bold to exclude the Communicants from the Cup by a trick of Concomitancy. Chriſt foreſaw the Error, and therefore put in a little word to obviate a great Invaſion: And the Spirit of God hath particularly left upon Record that *Particle*, as we may reaſonably ſuppoſe to ſuch a purpoſe. And ſo in the deſcription of the *Bleſſed Virgin*, *Luke* 1. 27.

There

There is nothing of her Holineſs mentioned, which is with much diligence recorded of *Elizabeth*; *Verſe 6. Righteous, walking in all the Commandments of God blameleſs*; Probably to prevent the Superſtition which God foreſaw would ariſe in the world. And we do not find more undervaluing ſpeeches, uttered by Chriſt to any of his Diſciples in the exerciſe of his Office, than *to her*, except to *Peter*. As when ſhe acquainted him with the want of Wine at the Marriage in *Cana*, ſhe receives a ſlighting Anſwer, *Woman, what have I to do with thee? John* 2.4. And when one was admiring the *bleſſedneſs* of her that bare him, he turns the Diſcourſe another way, to pronounce a *bleſſedneſs* rather belonging to them that *hear the Word of God and keep it*, *Luke* 11.27, 28. in a mighty wiſdom to Antidote his People againſt any conceit of the prevalency of the Virgin over him in Heaven, in the Exerciſe of his Mediatory Office.

2. As his Wiſdom appears in his Government by his Laws, *ſo it appears in the various Inclinations and Conditions of Men.* As there is a diſtinction of ſeveral Creatures, and ſeveral Qualities in them, for the common good of the World; ſo among Men there are ſeveral Inclinations and ſeveral Abilities, as Donatives from God, for the common advantage of human Society; as ſeveral Chanels cut out from the ſame River run ſeveral Ways, and refreſh ſeveral Soils; one Man is qualified for one Employment, another marked out by God for a different Work, yet all of them fruitful to bring in a Revenue of Glory to God, and a Harveſt of Profit to the reſt of Mankind. How unuſeful would the Body be, if it had but one *Member*? 1 *Cor.* 12. 19. How unprovided would a Houſe be, if it had not Veſſels of Diſhonour as well as of Honour? The Corporation of Mankind would be as much a *Chaos*, as the Matter of the Heavens and the Earth was, before it was diſtinguiſht by ſeveral Forms breathed into it at the Creation. Some are inſpired with a particular Genius for one Art, ſome for another: Every Man hath a diſtinct Talent. If all were Husband-men, where would be the Inſtruments to Plow and Reap? If all were Artificers, where would they have Corn to nouriſh themſelves? All Men are like Veſſels, and Parts in the Body, deſign'd for diſtinct Offices and Functions for the good of the whole, and mutually return an Advantage to one another.

As the variety of Gifts in the Church is a fruit of the wiſdom of God, for the preſervation and increaſe of the Church, ſo the variety of Inclinations and Employments in the World is a fruit of the wiſdom of God, for the preſervation and ſubſiſtence of the World by mutual Commerce: What the Apoſtle largely diſcourſeth of the former, in 1 *Cor.* 12. may be applied to the other.

The various Conditions of Men is alſo a fruit of Divine Wiſdom. Some are Rich, and ſome Poor; the Rich have as much need of the Poor, as the Poor have of the Rich: If the Poor depend upon the Rich for their livelyhood, the Rich depend upon the Poor for their Conveniencies. Many Arts would not be learned by Men, if Poverty did not oblige them to it; and many would faint in the learning of them, if they were not thereunto encouraged by the Rich.

The Poor labour for the Rich, as the Earth ſends Vapours into the vaſter and fuller Air; and the Rich return Advantages again to the Poor, as the Clouds do the Vapours in Rain upon the Earth. As Meat would not afford a nouriſhing Juyce without Bread, and Bread without other Food would immoderately fill the Stomach, and not be well digeſted; ſo the Rich would be unprofitable in the Commonwealth without the Poor, and the Poor would be burthenſome to a Commonwealth without the Rich: The Poor could not be eaſily govern'd without the Rich, nor the Rich ſufficiently and conveniently provided for without the Poor. If all were Rich, there would be no Objects for the exerciſe of a noble Part of Charity: If all were Poor there were no Matter for the exerciſe of it. Thus the Divine Wiſdom planted various Inclinations, and diverſified the Conditions of Men for the publick Advantages of the World.

II. God's *Wiſdom* appears, *in the Government of Men, as Fallen and Sinful*; or *in the Government of Sin.* After the Law of God was broke, and Sin invaded and conquer'd the World; Divine Wiſdom had another Scene to act in, and other Methods of Government were neceſſary. The Wiſdom of God is then ſeen in ordering thoſe jarring Diſcords, drawing *Good* out of *Evil*, and Honour to himſelf out of that, which in its own Nature tended to the ſupplanting of his Glory. God being a Sovereign *Good*, would not ſuffer ſo great an *Evil* to enter, but to ſerve himſelf of it for ſome greater End; for all his Thoughts are full of Goodneſs and Wiſdom.

Now though the Permiſſion of Sin be an Act of his Sovereignty, and the Puniſhment of Sin be an Act of his Juſtice; yet the Ordination of Sin to Good, is an Act of his *Wiſdom*, whereby he doth diſpoſe the Evil, over-rules the Malice, and orders the Events of it to his own Purpoſes. Sin in it ſelf is a Diſorder, and therefore God doth not permit Sin for it ſelf; for in its own Nature it hath nothing of Amiableneſs; but he wills it for ſome Righteous End, which belongs to the manifeſtation of his Glory, which is his aim in all the Acts of his Will: He wills it not as Sin, but as his *Wiſdom* can order it to ſome greater Good than was before in the World, and make it contribute to the Beauty of the Order he intends. As a dark Shadow is not delightful and pleaſant in it ſelf, nor is drawn by a Painter for any Amiableneſs there is in the Shadow it ſelf, but as it ſerves to ſet forth that Beauty, which is the main deſign of his Art; ſo the glorious Effects which ariſe from the Entrance of Sin into the World, are not from the Creatures Evil, but the Depths of Divine Wiſdom.

Particularly,

1. *God's Wiſdom is ſeen in the bounding of Sin.* As it is ſaid of the *Wrath of Man*, it *ſhall praiſe him*, and *the remainder of Wrath* God doth *reſtrain*, Pſal. 76. 10. He ſets Limits to the boyling Corruption of the Heart, as he doth to the boiſterous Waves of the Sea, *Hitherto ſhalt thou go, and no further.* As God is the Rector of the World, he doth ſo reſtrain Sin, ſo temper and direct it, as that Human Society is preſerved, which elſe would be overflown with a Deluge of Wickedneſs, and Ruin would be brought upon all Communities. The World would be a Shambles, a Brothel-houſe, if God by his Wiſdom and Goodneſs, did not ſet Bars to that Wickedneſs which is in the Hearts of Men: The whole Earth would be as bad as Hell. Since the Heart of Man is a Hell of Corruption, by that, the Souls of all Men would be excited to the acting the worſt Villanies; ſince *every thought of the heart of Man is only evil, and that continually*, Gen. 6. 5. if the *Wiſdom* of God did not ſtop theſe Floud-gates of *Evil* in the Hearts of Men, it would over-flow the World, and fruſtrate all the Gracious Deſigns he carries on among the Sons of Men. Were it not for this *Wiſdom*, every Houſe would be filled with Violence, as well as every Nature is with Sin. What harm would not ſtrong and furious Beaſts do, did not the Skill of Man tame and bridle them? How often hath Divine Wiſdom reſtrain'd the Viciouſneſs of human Nature, and let it run, not to that point they

they deſign'd, but to the end he propoſed? *Laban*'s Fury, and *Eſau*'s Enmity againſt *Jacob*, were pent in within Bounds for *Jacob*'s Safety, and their Hearts over-ruled from an intended Deſtruction of the good Man to a perfect Amity *.

* Gen. 31. 29. and Gen. 32.

2. God's *Wiſdom* is ſeen, *in the bringing Glory to himſelf out of Sin.*

(1.) *Out of Sin it ſelf.* God erects the Trophies of Honour upon that, which is a natural means to hinder and deface it. His glorious Attributes are drawn out to our view, upon the occaſion of Sin, which otherwiſe had lain hid in his own Being. Sin is altogether black and abominable; but by the admirable *Wiſdom* of God, he hath drawn out of the dreadful darkneſs of Sin, the ſaving Beams of his Mercy, and diſplayed his Grace in the *Incarnation* and *Paſſion* of his Son for the Attonement of Sin. Thus he permitted *Adam*'s Fall, and wiſely order'd it for a fuller diſcovery of his own Nature, and a higher elevation of Man's good, that *as Sin reigned to Death, ſo might Grace reign through Righteouſneſs to Eternal Life, by Jeſus Chriſt*, *Rom.* 5. 21. The unbounded Goodneſs of God could not have appeared without it. His Goodneſs in rewarding innocent Obedience, would have been manifeſted; but not his Mercy in pardoning rebellious Crimes: An innocent Creature is the Object of the Rewards of Grace, as the ſtanding Angels are under the Beams of Grace; but not under the Beams of Mercy, becauſe they were never Sinful, and conſequently never Miſerable. Without Sin the Creature had not been Miſerable: Had Man remained Innocent, he had not been the Subject of Puniſhment; and without the Creatures Miſery, God's Mercy in ſending his Son to ſave his Enemies, could not have appeared. The abundance of Sin is a paſſive Occaſion for God to manifeſt the abundance of his Grace.

The Power of God in the changing the Heart of a rebellious Creature, had not appeared, had not Sin infected our Nature. We had not clearly known the Vindictive Juſtice of God, had no Crime been committed; for that is the proper Object of Divine Wrath. The Goodneſs of God could never have permitted Juſtice to exerciſe it ſelf upon an innocent Creature, that was not guilty either Perſonally, or by Imputation. *Pſal.* 11. 7. *The righteous Lord loveth Righteouſneſs, his Countenance doth behold the upright.* Wiſdom is illuſtrious hereby. God ſuffered Man to fall into a Mortal Diſeaſe, to ſhew the vertue of his own Reſtoratives to cure Sin, which in it ſelf is incurable by the Art of any Creature. And otherwiſe this Perfection, whereby God draws *Good* out of *Evil*, had been utterly uſeleſs, and would have been deſtitute of an Object wherein to diſcover it ſelf.

Again, *Wiſdom* in ordering a rebellious head-ſtrong World to its own ends, is greater than the ordering an innocent World, exactly obſervant of his Precepts, and complying with the end of the Creation. Now, without the entrance of Sin, this *Wiſdom* had wanted a Stage to act upon. Thus God raiſed the Honour of his *Wiſdom*, while Man ruin'd the Integrity of his Nature; and made uſe of the Creatures breach of his Divine Law, to eſtabliſh the Honour of it in a more ſignal and ſtable manner, by the Active and Paſſive Obedience of the Son of his Boſom. Nothing ſerves God ſo much, as an occaſion of glorifying himſelf, as the entrance of Sin into the World; by this occaſion God communicates to us the Knowledge of thoſe Perfections of his Nature, which had elſe been folded up from us in an Eternal Night; his Juſtice had lain in the dark, as having nothing to puniſh; his Mercy had been obſcure, as having none to pardon; a great part of his Wiſdom had been ſilent, as having no ſuch Object to order.

2. His *Wiſdom* appears, *In making uſe of ſinful Inſtruments.* He uſes the Malice and Enmity of the *Devil* to bring about his own Purpoſes, and makes the ſworn Enemy of his Honour contribute to the illuſtrating of it againſt his Will. This great Craft's-Maſter he took in his own Net, and defeated the Devil by the Devil's Malice; by turning the Contrivances he had hatch'd and accompliſh'd againſt Man, againſt himſelf. He uſed him as a *Tempter*, to grapple with our *Saviour* in the *Wilderneſs*, whereby to make him fit to ſuccour us; and as the God of this World, to inſpire the wicked *Jews* to crucifie him, whereby to render him actually the *Redeemer* of the World, and ſo made him an ignorant Inſtrument of that Divine Glory he deſign'd to ruin.

* 'Tis more Skill to make a curious piece of Workmanſhip with ill condition'd Tools, than with Inſtruments naturally fitted for the Work: 'Tis no ſuch great wonder for a Limner to draw an exact piece with a fit Pencil and ſutable Colours, as to begin and perfect a beautiful Work with a Straw and Water, things improper for ſuch a Deſign. This *Wiſdom* of God is more admirable and aſtoniſhing, than if a Man were able to rear a vaſt Palace by Fire, whoſe nature is to conſume Combuſtible matter, not to erect a Building.

* Moulins *Serm. Dedicat.* 10. *p.* 231, 232.

To make things ſerviceable contrary to their own Nature, is a *Wiſdom* peculiar to the Creator of Nature. God's making uſe of *Devils*, for the Glory of his Name, and the Good of his People, is a more amazing piece of Wiſdom, than his Goodneſs in employing the Bleſſed Angels in his Work. To promiſe, that the *World*, (which includes the *God* of the World) and *Death*, and *Things preſent*, let them be as Evil as they will, ſhould be *ours*, that is, for our Good, and for his Glory, is an act of Goodneſs; but to make them ſerviceable to the Honour of *Chriſt*, and the Good of his People, is a Wiſdom that may well raiſe our higheſt Admirations *: They are for Believers, as they are for the *glory of Chriſt*, and as *Chriſt is for the glory of God.*

* 1 Cor. 3. 22.

To Chain up *Satan* wholly, and fruſtrate his Wiles, would be an Argument of Divine Goodneſs; but to ſuffer him to run his riſque, and then improve all his Contrivances for his own glorious and gracious Ends and Purpoſes, manifeſts, beſides his Power and Goodneſs, his *Wiſdom* alſo. He uſes the Sins of Evil Inſtruments for the *glory of his Juſtice*, *Iſa.* 10. 5, 6, 7. Thus he ſerved himſelf of the Ambition and Covetouſneſs of the *Aſſyrians*, *Chaldeans*, and *Romans*, for the Correction of his People and Puniſhment of his Rebels. Juſt as the *Roman* Magiſtrates uſed the fury of *Lions* and other wild Beaſts, in their *Theatres*, for the Puniſhment of Criminals: The *Lions* acted their natural Temper in tearing thoſe that were expos'd to them for a Prey; but the intent of the Magiſtrates was to puniſh their Crimes. The Magiſtrate inſpir'd not the *Lions* with their Rage, that they had from their Natures; but ſerved themſelves of that natural Rage, to execute Juſtice.

3. God's *Wiſdom* is ſeen *in bringing good to the Creature out of Sin.* He hath ordered Sin to ſuch an end as Man never dreamt of the Devil never imagin'd, and Sin in its own Nature could never attain. Sin in its own Nature tends to no Good, but that of Puniſhment, whereby the Creature is brought into order. It hath no relation to the Creatures good in it ſelf, but to the Creatures miſchief: But God, by an act of Infinite Wiſdom brings good out of it to the Creature, as well as glory to his Name, contrary to the Nature of the Crime, the Intention of the Criminal, and the Deſign of the Tempter.

God willed Sin, that is, he willed to permit it, that he might communicate himſelf to the Creature

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in the moſt excellent manner. He willed the Permiſſion of Sin, as an occaſion to bring forth the Myſtery of the *Incarnation* and *Paſſion* of our Saviour; as he permitted the Sin of *Joſeph*'s Brethren, that he might uſe their Evil to a good end. He never, becauſe of his Holineſs, wills Sin as an End; but in regard of his Wiſdom he wills to permit it as a Means and Occaſion: And thus, to draw good out of thoſe things which are in their own Nature moſt contrary to Good, is the higheſt pitch of wiſdom.

1. *The Redemption of Man in ſo excellent a way, was drawn from the occaſion of Sin.* The greateſt Bleſſing that ever the world was bleſs'd with, was uſher'd in by Contrarieties, by the Luſt and irregular Affection of Man; the *firſt Promiſe* of the Redeemer, by the Fall of *Adam*, *Gen.* 3. 15. and the *bruiſing the heel of that Promiſed Seed*, by the blackeſt Tragedy acted by wicked Rebels, the Treachery of *Judas*, and the Rage of the *Jews*; the higheſt Good hath been brought forth by the greateſt Wickedneſs As God out of the *Chaos* of rude and indigeſted Matter framed the firſt Creation; ſo from the Sins of Men, and Malice of Satan, he hath erected the Everlaſting *Scheme* of Honour in a New Creation of all things by *Jeſus Chriſt*.

The *Devil* inſpir'd Man, to content his own fury in the Death of Chriſt; and God order'd it to accompliſh his own deſign of Redemption in the Paſſion of the *Redeemer*: The Devil had his Diabolical Ends, and God over-powers his Action to ſerve his own Divine Ends. The Perſon that betrayed him, was admitted to be a Spectator of the moſt private Actions of our *Saviour*, that his Innocence might be juſtified; to ſhew, that he was not afraid to have his Enemies Judges of his moſt retir'd Privacies. While they all thought to do their own Wills, Divine *Wiſdom* orders them to do God's Will. *Acts* 2. 23. *Him being delivered by the determinate Counſel and Fore-knowledge of God, you have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and ſlain.* And wherein the Crucifiers of Chriſt ſinned, in ſhedding the richeſt Blood, upon their Repentance they found the expiation of their Crimes, and the diſcovery of a ſuperabundant Mercy. Nothing but Blood was aimed at by them: The beſt Blood was ſhed by them; but Infinite *Wiſdom* makes the *Croſs* the Scene of his own Righteouſneſs, and the Womb of Man's Recovery.

By the occaſion of man's lapſed ſtate, there was a way open to raiſe man to a more excellent Condition, than that whereinto he was put by Creation: And the depriving man of the happineſs of an Earthly *Paradiſe*, in a way of Juſtice, was an occaſion of advancing him to a Heavenly Felicity, in a way of Grace. The Violation of the Old Covenant, occaſionally introduc'd a better: The loſs of the firſt Integrity, uſher'd in a more ſtable Righteouſneſs, an *Everlaſting Righteouſneſs*, *Dan.* 9. 24. And the falling of the Firſt Head, was ſucceeded by one whoſe ſtanding could not but be Eternal.

The fall of the *Devil* was ordered by Infinite Wiſdom, for the good of that Body from which he fell. 'Tis ſuppoſed by ſome, that the *Devil* was the Chief Angel in Heaven, the Head of all the reſt; and that he Falling, the Angels were left as a Body without a Head; and after he had Politically beheaded the Angels, he endeavoured to deſtroy Man, and rout him out of *Paradiſe*: But God takes the Opportunity to ſet up his *Son*, as the Head of Angels and Men. And thus whilſt the Devil endeavoured to ſpoil the Corporation of Angels, and make them a Body contrary to God, God makes Angels and Men one Body under one Head, for his Service.

The *Angels* in loſing a defective Head, attained a more excellent and glorious Head in another Nature, which they had not before; though of a lower Nature in his Humanity, yet of a more glorious Nature in his Divinity: From whence many ſuppoſe they derive their Confirming Grace, and the ſtability of their ſtanding. *All things in Heaven and Earth are gathered together in Chriſt*, *Eph.* 1. 10. ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι. All united in him, and reduced under one Head: That though our *Saviour* be not properly their *Redeemer*, for Redemption ſuppoſeth Captivity, yet in ſome ſenſe he is their Head and Mediator; ſo that now the Inhabitants of Heaven and Earth are but *one Family*, *Epheſ.* 3. 15. And the *Innumerable Company of Angels* are parts of that Heavenly and Triumphant *Jeruſalem*, and that *General Aſſembly*, whereof *Jeſus Chriſt* is *Mediator*, *Heb.* 12. 22. 29.

2. *The Good of a Nation often, by the skill of Divine Wiſdom, is promoted by the Sins of ſome Men.* The *Patriarchs* ſelling *Joſeph* to the *Midianites* *, was, without queſtion, a Sin, and a breach of Natural Affection; yet by God's wiſe Ordination, it proved the Safety of the whole Church of God in the world, as well as the *Egyptian* Nation *. * Gen. 37. 28. * Gen. 45. 5. 8. & Gen. 50. 30.

The *Jews* Unbelief was a ſtep whereby the *Gentiles* aroſe to the knowledge of the *Goſpel*: As the ſetting of the *Sun* in one place, is the *riſing* of it in another *. He uſes the Corruptions of men Inſtrumentally to propagate his Goſpel: He built up the True Church by the *Preaching of ſome out of envy*, *Phil.* 1. 15. as he bleſſed *Iſrael* out of the Mouth of a *Falſe Prophet*, *Numb.* 23. How often have the Hereſies of Men been the occaſion of clearing up the Truth of God, and fixing the more lively Impreſſions of it on the Hearts of Believers? * Mat. 22. 9.

Neither *Judah* nor *Tamar*, in their Luſt, dreamt of a Stock for the *Redeemer*; yet God gave a Son from that Unlawful Bed, whereof *Chriſt came according to the fleſh*; *Gen.* 38. 29. compared with *Mat.* 1. 3.

Jonah's Sin was probably the firſt and remote occaſion of the *Ninevites* giving credit to his Prophecy: His Sin was the cauſe of his Puniſhment, and his being flung into the Sea might facilitate the reception of his Meſſage, and excite the *Ninevites* Repentance, whereby a Cloud of ſevere Judgment was blown away from them.

'Tis thought by ſome, That when *Jonah* paſſed through the Streets of *Nineveh* with his Proclamation of *Deſtruction*, he might be known by ſome of the Mariners of that Ship, from whence he was caſt Over-board into the Sea, and might after their Voyage be occaſionally in that City, the *Metropolis* of the Nation, and the place of ſome of their Births; and might acquaint the People, that this was the ſame Perſon they had caſt into the Sea by his own conſent, for his acknowleg'd running from the *Preſence of the Lord*; for that he had told them, *Jonah* 1. 10. and the Mariners *Prayer*, Verſe 14. evidenceth it, whereupon they might conclude his Meſſage worthy of Belief, ſince they knew from ſuch Evidences, that he had ſunk into the Bowels of the Waters, and now ſaw him ſafe in their Streets, by a Deliverance unknown to them; and that therefore that Power that delivered him, could eaſily verifie his Word in the threatned Judgment.

Had *Jonah* gone at firſt without committing that Sin, and receiving that Puniſhment, his Meſſage had not been judged a Divine Prediction, but a fruit of ſome Enthuſiaſtick Madneſs: His Sin upon this account was the firſt occaſion of averting a Judgment from ſo great a City.

3. *The good of the Sinner himſelf is ſometimes promoted by Divine Wiſdom, ordering the Sin.* As God had not permitted Sin to enter upon the world, unleſs to bring Glory to himſelf by it; ſo he would not

not let Sin remain in the little world of a Believer's Heart, if he did not intend to order it for his good. What is done by Man to his damage and diſparagement, is directed by Divine wiſdom to his advantage; not that it is the *intent* of the Sin, or the Sinner; but it is the *event* of the Sin, by the ordination of Divine Wiſdom and Grace.

As without the *Wiſdom* of God permitting Sin to enter into the world, ſome Attributes of God had not been Experimentally known; ſo ſome Graces could not have been exercis'd: For where had there been an Object for that Noble *Zeal*, in vindicating the Glory of God, had it not been invaded by an Enemy? The intenſeneſs of Love to him could not have been ſo ſtrong, had we not an Enemy to hate for his ſake. Where had there been any place for that Noble part of Charity in Holy Admonitions and Compaſſion to the Souls of our Neighbours, and Endeavours to reduce them out of a deſtructive to a happy Path? Humility would not have had ſo many grounds for its growth and exerciſe, and holy Sorrow had had no fuel.

And as without the appearance of Sin, there had been no exerciſe of the Patience of God; ſo without Afflictions, the Fruits of Sin, there had been no ground for the exerciſe of the Pattence of a Chriſtian, one of the Nobleſt parts of Valour. Now Sin being Evil, and ſuch as cannot but be Evil, hath no reſpect in it ſelf to any good, and cannot work a gracious End, or any thing profitable to the Creature; nay, it is a hindrance to any good, and therefore what good comes from it, is *Accidental*, occaſioned indeed by Sin, but efficiently cauſed by the over-ruling *Wiſdom* of God, taking occaſion thereby to diſplay it ſelf and the Divine Goodneſs.

The *Sins* and *Corruptions* remaining in the Heart of a Man, God orders for good, and there are good effects by the direction of his Wiſdom and Grace.

I. *As the Soul reſpects God.*

1. *God often brings forth a ſenſibleneſs of the neceſſity of Dependance on him.* The Nurſe often lets the Child ſlip, that it may the better know who ſupports it, and may not be too venturous and confident of its own ſtrength. *Peter* would truſt in *Habitual* Grace, and God ſuffers him to Fall, that he might truſt more in *Aſſiſting* Grace; *Mat.* 26. 35. *Though I ſhould die with thee, yet I will not deny thee.* God leaves ſometimes the brighteſt Souls in an *Eclipſe*, to manifeſt, that their Holineſs, and the preſervation of it, depend upon the darting out his Beams upon them.

As the Falls of Men are the effects of their coldneſs and remiſsneſs in acts of Faith and Repentance, ſo the fruit of theſe Falls is often a running to him for Refuge, and a deeper ſenſibleneſs where their Security lies. It makes us lower our ſwelling Sails, and come under the Lee and Protection of Divine Grace. When the Pleaſures of Sin anſwer not the expectations of a Revolted Creature, he reflects upon his former ſtate, and ſticks more cloſe to God, when before God had little of his Company; *Hoſ.* 2. 7. *I will return to my firſt Husband, for then it was better with me than now.*

As God makes the Sins of Men ſometimes an occaſion of their Converſion, ſo he ſometimes makes them an occaſion of a further Converſion. *Oneſimus* run from *Philemon*, and was met with by *Paul*, who proved an Inſtrument of his Converſion, *Philem.* 10. *My Son* Oneſimus, *whom I have begotten in my Bonds.* His flight from his Maſter, was the occaſion of his Regeneration by *Paul* a Priſoner.

The Falls of Believers God orders to their further ſtability: He that is fallen for want of uſing his Staff, will lean more upon it to preſerve himſelf from the like Diſaſter.

God, by permitting the Lapſes of Men, doth often make them deſpair of their own ſtrength to ſubdue their Enemies, and rely upon the ſtrength of *Chriſt*, wherein God hath laid up Power for us, and ſo becomes ſtronger in that ſtrength which God hath ordained for them.

We are very apt to truſt in our ſelves, and have confidence in our own worth and ſtrength; and God lets looſe Corruptions to abate this ſwelling Humour. This was the reaſon of the Apoſtle *Paul's Thorn in the fleſh*, 2 *Cor.* 12. 9. whether it were a Temptation, or Corruption, or Sickneſs, that he might be ſenſible of his own inability, and where the *ſufficiency of Grace* for him was placed.

He that is in danger of Drowning, and hath the Waves come over his Head, will with all the might he hath, lay hold upon any thing near him, which is capable to ſave him. God lets his People ſometimes ſink into ſuch a condition, that they may lay the faſter hold on him *who is near to all that call upon him*

2. *God hereby raiſeth higher Eſtimations of the value and vertue of the Blood of Chriſt.* As the great Reaſon why God permitted Sin to enter into the World, was to honour himſelf in the *Redeemer*; ſo the Continuance of Sin, and the Conqueſts it ſometimes makes in renewed Men, are to honour the Infinite value and vertue of the *Redeemer's* Merit, which God from the beginning intended to magnifie: The Value of it, in taking off ſo much ſucceſſive Guilt; and the Vertue of it, in waſhing away ſo much daily filth.

The *Wiſdom* of God hereby keeps up the Credit of *Imputed Righteouſneſs*, and manifeſts the Immenſe Treaſure of the *Redeemer's* Merit to pay ſuch daily Debts. Were we perfectly Sanctified, we ſhould ſtand upon our own Bottom, and imagine no need of the continual and repeated Imputation of the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt for Juſtification: We ſhould confide in Inherent Righteouſneſs, and ſlight Imputed.

If God ſhould take off all Remainders of Sin, as well as the Guilt of it, we ſhould be apt to forget that we are Fallen Creatures, and that we had a *Redeemer:* But the Reliques of Sin in us, mind us of the neceſſity of ſome higher ſtrength to ſet us right: They mind us both of our own Miſery, and the Redeemer's perpetual Benefit. God by this keeps up the Dignity and Honour of our *Saviour's* Blood to the height, and therefore ſometimes lets us ſee, to our own coſt, what filth yet remains in us for the employment of that Blood, which we ſhould elſe but little think of, and leſs admire. Our Gratitude is ſo ſmall to God, as well as Man, that the firſt Obligations are ſoon forgot, if we ſtand not in need of freſh ones ſucceſſively to ſecond them; we ſhould loſe our Thankful Remembrance of the firſt vertue of *Chriſt's blood in waſhing us*, if our Infirmities did not mind us of freſh Reiterations and Applications of it.

Our *Saviour's* Office of *Advocacy* was erected eſpecially for Sins committed after a Juſtified and Renewed ſtate *. We ſhould ſcarce remember we had an *Advocate*, and ſcarce make uſe of him without ſome ſenſible Neceſſity; but our Remainders of Sin diſcover our Impotency, and an impoſſibility for us either to expiate our Sin, or conform to the Law, which neceſſitates us to have recourſe to that Perſon whom God hath appointed to make up the Breaches between God and us. * 1 John 2. 1.

So the *Apoſtle* wraps up himſelf in the Covenant of *Grace* and his Intereſt in Chriſt, after his Conflict with Sin, *Rom.* 7. *ult. I thank God through Jeſus Chriſt. Now*, after ſuch a Body of Death, a Principle within me that ſends up daily ſteams; yet as long as I

ſerve God with my Mind, as long as I keep the main Condition of the Covenant, there is *no Condemnation**: Chriſt takes my part, procures my acceptance, and holds the Band of Salvation firm in his hands. The brightneſs of Chriſt's Grace is ſet off by the darkneſs of our Sin. We ſhould not underſtand the Sovereignty of his Medicines, if there were no Reliques of Sin for him to exerciſe his Skill upon: The *Phyſician*'s Art is moſt experimented, and therefore moſt valued in Relapſes, as dangerous as the former Diſeaſe. As the *Wiſdom* of God brought our *Saviour* into Temptation, that he might have Compaſſion to us; ſo it permits us to be overcome by Temptation, that we might have due Valuations of him.

* Rom. 8. 1.

3. *God hereby often engageth the Soul to a greater Induſtry for his Glory.* The higheſt *Perſecutors*, when they have become Converts, have been the greateſt Champions for that Cauſe they both hated and oppreſt. The *Apoſtle Paul* is ſuch an Inſtance of this, that it needs no enlargement. By how much they have failed of anſwering the end of their Creation in glorifying God, by ſo much the more they ſummon up all their force for ſuch an end, after their Converſion; to reſtore as much as they can of that Glory to God, which they by their Sin had robb'd him of. Their Sins, by the Order of *Divine Wiſdom*, prove Whet-ſtones to ſharpen the edge of their Spirits for God. *Paul* never remembred his Perſecuting Fury, but he doubled his Induſtry for the Service of *God*, which before he trampled under his feet. The further we go back, the greater Leap many times we take forward.

Our *Saviour*, after his Reſurrection, put *Peter* upon the exerciſe of that *Love* to him, which had ſo lately ſhrunk his head out of Suffering*; and no doubt but the conſideration of his baſe Denial, together with a reflection upon a gracious Pardon, engag'd his ingenuous Soul to ſtronger and fiercer flames of Affection. A Believer's Courage for God, is more ſharpned oftentimes by the ſhame of his Fall: He endeavours to repair the faults of his Ingratitude and Diſingenuity, by larger and ſtronger ſteps of Obedience. As a Man in a Fight having been foil'd by his Enemy, reaſſumes new Courage by his Fall; and is many times oblig'd to his Foil, both for his Spirit and his Victory. A gracious Heart will, upon the very Motions to ſin, double its vigour, as well as by good ones: It is uſually more quickned both in its motion to God and for God, by the temptations and motions to ſin, which run upon it. This is another Good the *Wiſdom of God* brings forth from *Sin*.

* John 21. 15, 16, 17.

4. Again, *Humility towards God is another Good Divine Wiſdom brings forth from the Occaſion of Sin.* By this *God* beats down all good Opinion of our ſelves. *Hezekiah* was more humbled by his Fall into Pride, than by all the Diſtreſs he had been in by *Sennacherib*'s Army, 2 *Chron.* 32. 26. *Peter*'s Confidence before his Fall, gave way to an humble Modeſty after it: You ſee his Confidence, *Mark* 14. 24. *Though all ſhould be offended in thee, yet will not I*; and you have the mark of his Modeſty, *John* 21. 17. 'Tis not then, Lord, I will love thee to the death, I will not ſtart from thee; but, *Lord, thou knoweſt that I love thee.* I cannot aſſure my ſelf of any thing after this Miſcarriage; but, Lord, thou knoweſt there is a Principle of Love in me to thy Name. He was aſham'd, that himſelf who appeared ſuch a Pillar, ſhould bend as meanly as a Shrub to a Temptation.

The reflection upon ſin, lays a Man as low as Hell in his humiliation, as the commiſſion of ſin did in the merit. When *David* comes to exerciſe repentance for his ſin, he begins it from the Well-head *of Sin**, his original corruption, and draws down the ſtreams of it to the laſt commiſſion: Perhaps he did not ſo ſeriouſly humble himſelf for the ſin of his nature all his days, ſo much as at that time; at leaſt we have not ſuch Evidences of it. And *Hezekiah humbled himſelf for the pride of his heart*; not only for the pride of *his Act**, but for the pride in the Heart, which was the ſpring of that pride in Act, in *ſhewing his Treaſures* to the *Babyloniſh Ambaſſadors*. God lets ſin continue in the hearts of the beſt in this World, and ſometimes gives the reins to Satan, and a Man's own Corruption, to keep up a ſenſe of the ancient Sale we made of our ſelves to both.

* Pſal. 51. 5.

* 2 Chron. 32. 26.

II. *In regard of our ſelves.* Herein is the Wonder of Divine Wiſdom, that God many times makes a ſin, which meritoriouſly fits us for Hell, a providential occaſion to fit us for Heaven; when it is an occaſion of a more humble Faith and believing Humility, and an occaſion of a through Sanctification and growth in Grace, which prepares us for a ſtate of Glory.

1. *He makes uſe of one Sin's breaking out to diſcover more*; and ſo brings us to a ſelf-abhorrency and indignation againſt ſin, the firſt ſtep towards Heaven. Perhaps *David*, before his groſs fall, thought he had no Hypocriſie in him. We often find him appealing to *God* for his Integrity, and deſiring *God* to *try him*, if any *guile* could be found in his heart, as if he could find none himſelf: But his lapſe into that great wickedneſs, makes him diſcern much falſeneſs in his ſoul, when he deſires God to *renew a right ſpirit* within him, and ſpeaks of *truth in the inward parts*, Pſal. 51. 6. 10. The ſtirring of one Corruption makes all the Mud at the bottom appear, which before a ſoul did not ſuſpect. No Man would think there were ſo great a cloud of ſmoak contain'd in a little ſtick of wood, were it not for the powerful operation of the fire, that both diſcovers and ſeparates it. *Job*, that curſed the day of his birth; and uttered many impatient expreſſions againſt *God* upon the account of his own integrity; upon his recovery from his affliction, and *God*'s cloſe application of himſelf, was wrought to a greater *Abhorrency of himſelf*, than ever we read he was exercis'd in before*. The hoſtile acts of ſin encreaſe the ſoul's hatred of it; and the deeper our humiliations are for it, the ſtronger impreſſions of abhorrency are made upon us.

* Job 42. 6.

2. *He often orders it, to make Conſcience more tender, and the Soul more watchful.* He that finds by his calamity, his enemy to have more ſtrength againſt him than he ſuſpected, will double his guards and quicken his diligence againſt him. A being overtaken by ſome ſin, is by the *wiſdom of God* diſpos'd to make us more fearful of cheriſhing any occaſion to enflame it, and watchful againſt every motion and ſtart of it. By a fall, the ſoul hath more experience of the deceitfulneſs of the heart; and by obſerving its methods, is render'd better able to watch againſt them. 'Tis our ignorance of the devices of *Satan*, and our own hearts, that makes us obnoxious to their ſurprizes. A fall into one ſin is often a prevention of more which lay in wait for us: as the fall of a ſmall body into an ambuſh, prevents the deſign of the Enemy upon a greater. As God ſuffers *Hereſies* in the Church, to try our Faith; ſo he ſuffers Sins to remain, and ſometimes to break out, to try our watchfulneſs. This advantage he brings from them, to ſteel our Reſolutions againſt the ſame ſins, and quicken our Circumſpection for the future againſt new Surprizes by a Temptation. *David*'s Sin was *ever before him*, *Pſal.* 51. 3. and made his Conſcience cry, *Blood, Blood*, upon every occaſion; he refuſed the *Water of the Well of Bethlehem*,

2 *Sam.*

2 *Sam* 23. 16, 17. becauſe it was gained with the hazard of Lives: He could endure nothing that had the taſte of Blood in it. Our fear of a thing depends much upon a trial of it: A Child will not fear too near approaches to the Fire, till he feels the ſmart of it.

Mortification doth not wholly ſuppreſs the motions of Sin, though it doth the Reſolutions to commit it; but that there will be a proneneſs in the Reliques of it, to entice a Man into thoſe Faults, which upon ſight of their Blemiſhes coſt him ſo many Tears. As great Sickneſſes after the Cure are more watch'd and the Body humour'd, that a man might not fall from the Crazineſs they have left in him; which he is apt to do, if Relapſes are not carefully provided againſt. A man becomes more careful of any thing, that may contribute to the Reſurrection of an expir'd Diſeaſe.

3. *God makes it an occaſion of the Mortification of that Sin, which was the matter of the Fall.* The livelineſs of one Sin in a renewed Man, many times is the occaſion of the Death of it. A wild Beaſt, while kept cloſe in a Den, is ſecure in its Life; but when it breaks out to Rapine, it makes the Maſter reſolve to prevent any further Miſchief by the Death of it. The impetuous ſtirring of an Humour in a Diſeaſe, is ſometime *Critical*, and a *Prognoſtick* of the Strength of Nature againſt it, whereby the Diſeaſe loſeth its Strength by its ſtruggling, and makes room for Health to take place by Degrees. One Sin is uſed by God for the Deſtruction both of it ſelf and others: As the Fleſh of a *Scorpion* cures the biting of it. It ſometimes by wounding us loſeth its Sting, and like the *Bee* renders it ſelf uncapable of a ſecond Revenge. *Peter*, after his groſs Denial, never denied his Maſter afterwards. The Sin that lay undiſcovered, is by a Fall become viſible, and ſo more obvious to a mortifying ſtroke. The Soul lays the faſter hold on Chriſt and the Promiſe, and goes out againſt that Enemy in the Name of the *Lord of Hoſts*, of which he was too negligent before; and therefore, as he proves more ſtrong, ſo more ſucceſsful: He hath more Strength, becauſe he hath leſs Confidence in himſelf, and more in God, the prime Strength of his Soul. As it was with Chriſt, ſo it is with us, while the *Devil* was bruiſing his heel, he was bruiſing his head; and while the Devil is bruiſing our heel, the God of Peace and Wiſdom is ſometimes bruiſing his head both in us and for us; ſo that the ſtrugglings of Sin, are often as the faint groans or bitings of a Beaſt that is ready to expire 'Tis juſt with a Man ſometimes, as with a running Fountain that hath Mud at the bottom, when it is ſtirred the Mud tinctures, and defiles it all over; yet ſome of that Mud hath a vent with the Streams which run from it, ſo that when it is re-ſettled at the bottom, 'tis not ſo much in quantity as it was before. God by his *Wiſdom* weakens the Sin, by permitting it to ſtir and defile.

4. *Sometimes Divine Wiſdom makes it an occaſion to promote a Sanctification in all parts of the Soul.* As the working of one ill humour in the Body, is an occaſion of caſhiering not only that, but the reſt by a ſound Purge. As a Man that is a little cold, doth not think of the Fire; but if he ſlips with one Foot into an Icy-puddle, he haſtens to the Fire, whereby not only that part, but all the reſt receive a warmth and ſtrength upon that occaſion: Or, as if a Perſon fall into the Mire, his Cloaths are waſhed; and by that means cleanſed, not only from the filth at preſent contracted, but from the former Spots that were before unregarded. God by his *Wiſdom* brings ſecret Sins to a Diſcovery, and thereby cleanſeth the Soul of them.

David's Fall might be ordered as an Anſwer to his former Petition, *Pſal.* 19. 12. *Cleanſe thou me from my ſecret Sins*; and as he did earneſtly pray after his Fall, ſo no doubt but he endeavour'd a thorough Sanctification, *Pſal.* 51. 7. *Purge me, waſh me*: and that he meant not only a *Sanctification* from that ſingle ſin, but from all, Root and Branch, is evident by that Complaint of the ſtaw in his Nature, *verſe* 5. the Droſs and Chaff which lies in the Heart is hereby diſcovered, and an opportunity adminiſtred of throwing it out, and ſearching all the corners of the Heart to diſcover where it lay. As God ſometime takes occaſion from one ſin to reckon with Men in a way of Juſtice for others; ſo he ſometimes takes occaſion from the commiſſion of one ſin, to bring out all the Actions againſt the Sinner, to make him, in a way of gracious Wiſdom, ſet more cordially upon the work of *Sanctification*.

A great Fall ſometimes hath been the occaſion of Man's Converſion. The Fall of Mankind occaſioned a more bleſſed Reſtoration; and the Falls of particular Believers, oft-times occaſion a more extenſive Sanctification. Thus the *only wiſe God* makes Poyſons in Nature, to become Medicines in a way of Grace and Wiſdom.

5. *Hereby the growth in Grace is furthered.* 'Tis a wonder of Divine Wiſdom, to ſubſtract ſometimes his Grace from a Perſon, and let him fall into ſin, thereby to occaſion the increaſe of habitual Grace in him, and to augment it by thoſe Ways that ſeem'd to depreſs it. By making ſins an occaſion of a more vigorous acting the contrary Grace, the wiſdom of God makes our Corruptions in their own nature deſtructive, to become profitable to us. Grace often breaks out more ſtrongly afterwards, as the *Sun* doth with its heat, after it hath been mask'd and interrupted with a Miſt: They often, through the mighty working of the Spirit, make us more *humble*, and *Humility fits us to receive more Grace from God* *. How doth Faith, that ſunk under the Waves, liſt up its head again, and carry the Soul out with a greater livelineſs? What ardours of Love, what ſtouds of repenting Tears, what ſeverity of Revenge, what horrours at the remembrance of the Sin, what tremblings at the appearance of a ſecond Temptation? So that Grace ſeems to be awaken'd to a *new* and more vigorous *Life* *. The broken Joint is many times ſtronger in the Rupture, than it was before. The Luxuriancy of the Branches of Corruption, is an occaſion of purging, and purging is with a deſign to make Grace more fruitful; *John* 15. 2. *He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.*

* James 4. 6.

* 2 Cor. 7. 11.

Thus Divine Wiſdom doth both ſharpen and brighten us by the duſt of ſin, and ripen and mellow the fruits of Grace by the dung of Corruption. Grace grows the ſtronger by oppoſition, as the Fire burns hotteſt and cleareſt, when it is moſt ſurrounded by a cold Air; and our natural heat reaſſumes a new ſtrength by the coldneſs of the Winter. The ſoil under a *Diamond*, though an imperfection in it ſelf, increaſeth the beauty and luſtre of the Stone. The Enmity of Man was a commendation of the Grace of God: It occaſioned the breaking out of the Grace of God upon us; and is an occaſion, by the Wiſdom and Grace of God, of the increaſe of Grace many times in us.

How ſhould the Conſideration of God's Incomprehenſible Wiſdom, in the management of Evil, ſwallow us up in Admiration; who brings forth ſuch Beauty, ſuch eminent Diſcoveries of himſelf, ſuch excellent good to the Creature, out of the Bowels of the greateſt Contrarieties, making dark ſhadows ſerve to diſplay and beautifie to our apprehenſions the Divine Glory? If Evil were not in the World, men would not know what Good is: They would not behold the luſtre of Divine Wiſdom; as with-

out Night we could not underſtand the beauty of the Day.

Though God is not the Author of Sin, becauſe of his Holineſs, yet he is the Adminiſtrator of Sin by his Wiſdom, and accompliſheth his own Purpoſes, by the Iniquities of his Enemies, and the Lapſes and Infirmities of his Friends.

Thus much for the Second, *The Government of Man in his lapſed State, and the Government of Sin*, wherein the *Wiſdom* of God doth wonderfully appear.

III. *The Wiſdom of God appears in the Government of Man in his Converſion and Return to him.* If there be a Counſel in framing the loweſt Creature, and in the minuteſt Paſſages of Providence; there muſt needs be a higher *Wiſdom* in the government of the Creature to a ſupernatural end, and framing the Soul to be a monument of his Glory. The *Wiſdom* of God is ſeen with more Admirations, and in more Varieties by the Angels *in the Church*, than in the Creation *; that is, in forming a Church out of the Rubbiſh of the World, out of Contrarieties and Contradictions to him, which is greater than the framing a Celeſtial and Elementary World out of a rude *Chaos*. The moſt glorious Bodies in the World, even thoſe of the *Sun*, *Moon*, and *Stars*, have not ſuch ſtamps of Divine Skill upon them, as the *Soul* of Man, nor is there ſo much of Wiſdom in the Fabrick and Faculties of that, as in the reduction of a blind, wilful, rebellious Soul to its own Happineſs, and God's Glory; *Eph.* 1. 11, 12. *He worketh all things according to the Counſel of his own Will, that we ſhould be for the Praiſe of his Glory.* If all things, then this, which is none of the leaſt of his Works: To the Praiſe of the Glory of his Goodneſs in his Work, and to the praiſe of the Rule of his Work, his Counſel, in both the act of his *Will*, and the act of his *Wiſdom*. The reſtoring of the Beauty of the Soul, and its fitneſs for its true end, ſpeaks no leſs *Wiſdom*, than the firſt draught of it in Creation: And the application of Redemption, and bringing forth the Fruits of it is as well an act of his Prudence, as the contrivance was of his Counſel.

* Eph. 3. 10.

Divine *Wiſdom* appears,

Firſt, *In the Subjects of Converſion.* His Goodneſs reigns in the very Duſt, and he erects the Walls and Ornaments of his *Temple* from the Clay and Mud of the World: He paſſes over the *Wiſe*, and *Noble*, and *Mighty*, that may pretend ſome grounds of boaſting in their own natural or acquired Endowments; and pitches upon the moſt contemptible Materials, wherewith to build a ſpiritual Tabernacle for himſelf, 1 *Cor.* 1. 26, 27. *The fooliſh, and weak things of the World*; thoſe that are naturally moſt unfit for it, and moſt refractory to it. Herein lies the skill of an Architect, to render the moſt knotty, crooked, and inform pieces, by his Art, ſubſervient to his main purpoſe and deſign. Thus God hath ordered from the beginning of the World, contrary Tempers, various Humours, divers Nations, as Stones of ſeveral Natures, to be a *Building* for himſelf, *fitly framed together*, and to be his own Family *. Who will queſtion the Skill that alters a black Jet into a clear *Chryſtal*, a *Glow-worm* into a *Star*, a *Lion* into a *Lamb*, and a *Swine* into a *Dove*? The more intricate and knotty any Buſineſs is, the more eminent is any Man's Ability and Prudence, in untying the Knots and bringing it to a good Iſſue. The more deſperate the Diſeaſe, the more admirable is the Phyſicians Skill in the Cure.

* 1 Cor. 3. 9.

He pitches upon Men for his Service, who have natural Diſpoſitions to ſerve him in ſuch Ways as he diſpoſeth of them, after their Converſion: So *Paul* was naturally a Conſcientious Man; what he did againſt Chriſt was from the Dictates of an erroneous Conſcience, ſoak'd in the *Phariſaical* Interpretations of the *Jewiſh* Law: He had a ſtrain of Zeal to proſecute what his depraved Reaſon and Conſcience did inform him in. God pitches upon this Man, and works him in the Fire for his Service: He alters not his natural Diſpoſition, to make him of a Conſtitution and Temper contrary to what he was before; but directs it to another Object, claps in another Byaſs into the Bowl, and makes his ill-governed Diſpoſitions move in a new way of his own Appointment, and guided that natural Heat to the ſervice of that Intereſt, which he was before ambitious to extirpate. As a high metled Horſe, when left to himſelf, creates both diſturbance and Danger. But under the conduct of a wiſe Rider, moves regularly; not by a change of his natural Fierceneſs, but a skilful Management of the Beaſt to the Rider's purpoſe.

2. *In the Seaſons of Converſion.* The Prudence of Man conſiſts in the timing the execution of his Counſels; and no leſs doth the *Wiſdom* of God conſiſt in this. As he is a *God of Judgment*, or *Wiſdom*, he wairs to introduce his Grace into the Soul in the fitteſt ſeaſon.

This Attribute, *Paul* in the ſtory of his own Converſion puts a particular remark upon, which he doth not upon any other, in that Catalogue he reckons up 1 *Tim.* 1. 17. *Now unto the King Eternal, Immortal, Inviſible, the only Wiſe God, be Honour and Glory for ever and ever. Amen.* A moſt ſolemn *Doxology*, wherein *Wiſdom* ſits upon the Throne above all the reſt, with a ſpecial *Amen* to the Glory of it; which refers to the timing of his Mercy ſo to *Paul*, as made moſt for the glory of his Grace, and the encouragement of others from him as the Pattern. God took him at a time when he was upon the brink of Hell; when he was ready to devour the new-born Infant Church at *Damaſcus*; when he was arm'd with all the Authority from without, and fired with all the Zeal from within, for the Proſecution of his Deſign: *Then* God ſeizeth upon him, and runs him in a Channel for his own Honour, and his Creatures Happineſs.

'Tis obſervable * how God ſet his Eye upon *Paul* all along in his furious courſe, and lets him have the Reins, without putting out his hand to bridle him; yet no motion he could take, but the Eye of *God* runs along with him; he ſuffered him to *kick againſt the Pricks* of Miracles, and the convincing Diſcourſe of *Stephen*, at his Martyrdom. There were many that voted for *Stephen*'s Death, as the Witneſſes that flung the *Stones* firſt at him; but they are not named, only *Saul*, who teſtified his Approbation as well as the reſt, and that by watching the *Witneſſes* Cloaths while they were about that bloody Work, *Acts* 7. 58. *The Witneſſes laid their Cloaths at a young Man's Feet, named Saul.* Again, though Multitudes were conſenting to his Death, yet *Acts* 8. 1. *Saul* only is mentioned. God's Eye is upon him, yet he would not at that time ſtop his Fury. He goes on further, and makes *havock of the Church*, *Acts* 8. 3. He had ſurely many more Accomplices, but none are named (as if none regarded with any deſign of Grace) but *Saul*: Yet God would not reach out his Hand to Change him, but Eyes him; waiting for a fitter opportunity, which in his *Wiſdom* he did foreſee. And therefore, *Acts* 9. 1. the Spirit of God adds a *Yet*; *Saul yet breathing out Threatnings.* It was not God's time *yet*, but it would be ſhortly. But when *Saul* was putting in execution his Deſign againſt the Church of *Damaſcus*, when the *Devil* was at the top of his Hopes, and *Saul* in the height of his Fury, and the *Chriſtians* ſunk into the depth of their Fears; the *Wiſdom* of God lays hold of the opportunity, and by *Paul*'s Converſion at this Seaſon, defeats the Devil, diſappoints the *High Prieſts*, ſhields his People, diſcharges their Fears by pulling *Saul* out of the

* *which I have upon another occaſion noted.*

the Devil's Hands, and forming Satan's Inſtrument to a holy Activity againſt him.

3. *The Wiſdom* of God appears, *In the manner of Converſion.* So great a Change God makes, not by a deſtruction, but with a preſervation of, and ſuitableneſs to Nature. As the *Devil* Tempts us, not by offering violence to our Natures, but by propoſing things convenient to our Corrupt Natures; ſo doth God ſolicite us to a Return, by Propoſals ſuited to our Faculties. As he doth in Nature convey Nouriſhment to Men, by means of the Fruits of the Earth, and produceth the Fruits of the Earth by the Influences of Heaven; the Influences of Heaven do not force the Earth, but excite that Natural vertue and ſtrength which is in it. So God produceth Grace in the Soul by the means of the *Word*, fitted to the capacity of Man, as Man, and proportion'd to his Rational Faculties, as Rational.

It would be contrary to the *Wiſdom* of God, to move Man like a Stone, to invert the order and privilege of that Nature which he ſettled in Creation; for then God would in vain have given Man Underſtanding and Will: Becauſe without moving men according to thoſe Faculties, they would remain unprofitable and unuſeful in man. * God doth not reduce us to himſelf, as Logs, by a meer force; or as Slaves forced by a Cudgel, to go forth to that place, and do that work which they have no ſtomach to: But he doth accommodate himſelf to thoſe Foundations he hath laid in our Nature, and guides us in a way agreeable thereunto, by an Action as ſweet as powerful; clearing our Underſtandings of dark Principles, whereby we may ſee his Truth, our own Miſery, and the Seat of our Happineſs; and bending our Wills according to this Light, to deſire and move conveniently to this End of our Calling: *Efficaciouſly*, yet *agreeably*; powerfully, yet without impoſing on our Natural Faculties; * ſweetly without Violence in ordering the Means, but effectually without Failing in accompliſhing the End. And therefore the *Scripture* calleth it, *Teaching*, John 6. 45. *Alluring*, Hoſ. 2. 14. *Calling us to ſeek the Lord*, Pſal. 27. 8. *Teaching*, is an act of Wiſdom; *Alluring*, an act of Love; *Calling*, an act of Authority: But none of them argue a violent Conſtraint, the Principle that moves the will is ſupernatural; but the will, as a Natural Faculty, concurs in the act or motion.

* Daillé *ſur* Philip. *Part.* 1. *p.* 545, 546

* Sanderſon, *Part.* 2. *p.* 205.

God doth not act in this in a way of Abſolute Power, without an Infinite Wiſdom, ſuiting himſelf to the Nature of the things he acts upon: He doth not change the *Phyſical* Nature, though he doth the *Moral*. As in the Government of the world, he doth not make heavy things aſcend, nor light things deſcend, ordinarily; but guides their Motions according to their Natural qualities: So God doth not ſtrain the Faculties beyond their due pitch. He lets the Nature of the Faculty remain, but changes the Principle in it: The Underſtanding remains Underſtanding, and the Will remains Will. But where there was before Folly in the Underſtanding, he puts in a Spirit of Wiſdom; and where there was before a ſtoutneſs in the Will, he forms it to a pliableneſs to his offers. He hath a Key to fit every Ward in the Lock, and opens the Will without injuring the Nature of the Will.

He doth not change the Soul by an alteration of the Faculties, but by an alteration of ſomething in them: Not by an Inroad upon them, or by meer Power, or a blind Inſtinct; but by propoſing to the Underſtanding ſomething to be known, and informing it of the Reaſonableneſs of his Precepts, and the Innate goodneſs and excellency of his Offers, and by inclining the will to love and embrace what is propoſed. And things are propos'd under thoſe Notions, which uſually move our wills and affections. We are moved by things as they are good, pleaſant, profitable; we entertain things as they make for us, and deteſt things as they are contrary to us. Nothing affects us but under ſuch qualities; and God ſuits his Encouragements to thoſe Natural Affections which are in us: His power and wiſdom go hand in hand together; his power to act what his wiſdom orders, and his wiſdom to conduct what his power executes. He brings men to him in ways ſuited to their Natural diſpoſitions. The ſtubborn he tears like a *Lion*, the gentle he wins like a *Turtle*, by ſweetneſs; he hath a Hammer to break the ſtout, and a Cord of Love to draw the more pliable Tempers: He works upon the more Rational in a way of Goſpel-Reaſon; upon the more Ingenuous in a way of kindneſs, and draws them by the *Cords of Love*.

The *Wiſe Men* were led to Chriſt by a *Star*, and means ſuited to the knowledge and ſtudy that thoſe *Eaſtern* Nations uſed, which was much in *Aſtronomy*: He worketh upon others by Miracles accommodated to every ones ſenſe, and ſo proportions the means according to the Nature of the Subjects he works upon.

IV. *The Wiſdom of God is apparent in his Diſcipline, and Penal Evils.* The wiſdom of Humane Governments is ſeen in the matter of their Laws, and in the Penalties of their Laws, and in the proportion of the Puniſhment to the Offence, and in the good that redounds from the Puniſhment either to the Offender, or to the Community.

The *Wiſdom* of God is ſeen in the Penalty of Death upon the Tranſgreſſion of his Law; both in that it was the greateſt Evil that man might fear, and ſo was a convenient means to keep him in his due bound, and alſo in the proportion of it to the Tranſgreſſion. Nothing leſs could be in a wiſe Juſtice inflicted upon an Offender for a Crime againſt the higheſt Being, and the Supream Excellency: But this hath been ſpoken of before, in the *Wiſdom of his Laws*. I ſhall only mention ſome few, it would be too tedious to run into all.

1. His *Wiſdom* appears *in Judgments, in the ſuiting them to the qualities of Perſons, and nature of Sins.* He *deviſeth evil, Jer.* 18. 11. his Judgments are fruits of Counſel. *He alſo is wiſe, and will bring evil, Iſa.* 31. 2. Evil ſuitable to the Perſon offending, and Evil ſuitable to the Offence committed: As the Husbandman doth his Threſhing-Inſtruments to the Grain: He hath a Rod for the *Cummin*, a tenderer Seed, and a Flayl for the harder; ſo hath God greater Judgments for the obdurate Sinner, and lighter for thoſe that have ſomething of tenderneſs in their wickedneſs, *Iſa.* 28. 27. 29. *Becauſe he is wonderful in Counſel, and excellent in working*; ſo ſome underſtand the place *punctim, With the froward he will ſhew himſelf froward.*

He proportions Puniſhment to the Sin, and writes the cauſe of the Judgment in the Forehead of the Judgment it ſelf. *Sodom* burned in Luſt, and was conſumed by *Fire from Heaven*. The *Jews* ſold Chriſt for *Thirty pence*, and at the Taking of *Jeruſalem, Thirty of them* were ſold for a Penny. So *Adonibezek cut off the Thumbs and great Toes of others*, and he is ſerved in the ſame kind, *Judges* 1. 7. The *Babel* Builders deſign'd an indiſſoluble Union, and God brings upon them an unintelligible Confuſion. And in *Exod.* 9. 9. the *Aſhes of the Furnace*, where the *Iſraelites* burnt the *Egyptian* Bricks, ſprinkled towards Heaven, brought *Boyls* upon the *Egyptian* Bodies, that they might feel in their own, what Pain they had cauſed in the *Iſraelites* fleſh; and find by the ſmart of the inflamed *Scab*, what they had made the *Iſraelites* endure. The *Waters* of the River *Nilus* are *turned into Blood*, wherein they had ſtifled the breath of the *Iſraelites* Infants: And at laſt the Prince, and the flower of their Nobility, are drowned in the *Red Sea*.

'Tis

'Tis part of the *Wiſdom* of Juſtice to proportion Puniſhment to the Crime, and the degrees of wrath to the degrees of malice in the Sin. Afflictions alſo are wiſely proportion'd: God, as a *wiſe Phyſician*, conſiders the Nature of the Humour, and Strength of the Patient, and ſuits his Medicines both to the one and the other; 1 *Cor.* 10. 13.

2. *In the ſeaſons of Puniſhments and Afflictions.* He ſtays till Sin be ripe, that his Juſtice may appear more equitable, and the Offender more inexcuſable; *Dan.* 9. 14. he *watches upon the evil to bring it upon Men.* To bring it in the juſt ſeaſon and order, for his righteous and gracious purpoſe; his Righteous purpoſe on the Enemies, and his Gracious purpoſe on his People.

Jeruſalem's Calamity came upon them, when the City was full of People at the Solemnity of the *Paſſover*, that he might mow down his Enemies at once, and Time their Deſtruction to ſuch a moment wherein they had Timed the Crucifixion of his Son. He watched over the Clouds of his Judgments, and kept them from pouring down, till his People the *Chriſtians* were provided for, and had departed out of the City to the Chambers and retiring Places God had provided for them. He made not *Jeruſalem* the Shambles for his Enemies, till he had made *Pella* and other Places, the Ark of his Friends. As *Pliny* tells us, the Providence of God holds the Seas in a Calm for *fifteen days*, that the *Halcyons*, little Birds, that frequent the Shoar, may build their Neſts, and hatch up their Young. The Judgment upon *Sodom* was ſuſpended for ſome hours, till *Lot* was ſecured.

* Daillè *ſur* 1 Cor. 10. *p.* 390

* God ſuffer'd not the Church to be Invaded by Violent Perſecutions, till ſhe was eſtabliſh'd in the Faith: He would not expoſe her to ſo great Combats, while ſhe was weak and feeble, but gave her time to ſo tifie her ſelf, to be render'd more capable of bearing up under them. He ſtifled all the motions of Paſſion the Idolaters might have for their Superſtition, till Religion was in ſuch a condition, as rather to be increaſed and purified, than extinguiſh'd by Oppoſition. *Paul* was ſecur'd from *Nero*'s Chains, and the Nets of his Enemies, till he had broke off the Chain of the Devil from many *Cities* of the *Gentiles*, and catched them by the Net of the *Goſpel* out of the Sea of the World.

Thus the *Wiſdom* of God is ſeen in the Seaſons of Judgments and Afflictions.

3. *It is apparent in the gracious iſſue of Afflictions and Penal Evils.* It is a part of Wiſdom to bring *Good* out of the *Evil* of *Puniſhment*, as well as to bring *Good* out of *Sin*. The Church never was ſo like to Heaven, as when it was moſt Perſecuted by Hell: The Storms often cleans'd it, and the Lance often made it more healthful. *Job*'s Integrity had not been ſo clear, nor his Patience ſo illuſtrious, had not the *Devil* been permitted to afflict him. God by his *Wiſdom* outwits *Satan*; when he by his Temptations intends to pollute us and buffet us, God orders it to puriſie us; he often brings the cleareſt Light out of the thickeſt Darkneſs, makes Poiſons to become Medicines. * *Death* it ſelf, the greateſt Puniſhment in this Life, and the entrance into Hell in its own Nature, he hath by his wiſe contrivance, made to his People the Gate of Heaven, and the Paſſage into Immortality. Penal Evils in a Nation often end in a Publick Advantage: Troubles and Wars among a People are many times not deſtroying, but Medicinal, and cure them of that Degeneracy, Luxury, and Effeminateneſs, they contracted by a long Peace

* Turretin. *Serm. p.* 53.

4. This *Wiſdom* is evident, *In the various Ends which God brings about by Afflictions.* The attainment of various Ends by one and the ſame Means, is the fruit of the Agents Prudence. By the ſame Affliction, the wiſe God corrects ſometimes for ſome baſe Affection, excites ſome ſleepy Grace, drives out ſome lurking Corruption, refines the Soul, and ruines the Luſt; diſcovers the greatneſs of a Crime, the Vanity of the Creature, and the Sufficiency in himſelf.

The *Jews* bind *Paul*, and by the Judge he is ſent to *Rome*; while his Mouth is ſtopt in *Judea*, 'tis open'd in one of the greateſt Cities of the World, and his Enemies unwittingly contribute to the increaſe of the *knowledge of Chriſt* by thoſe *Chains*, in that *City* * that triumphed over the Earth. And his Afflictive Bonds added Courage and Reſolution to others, *Phil.* 1. 14. *Many waxing confident by my Bonds*; which could not in their own Nature produce ſuch an effect, but by the Order and Contrivance of Divine Wiſdom: In their own Nature, they would rather make them diſguſt the Doctrine he ſuffered for, and cool their Zeal in the propagating of it, for fear of the ſame diſgrace and hardſhip they ſaw him ſuffer *. But the *Wiſdom* of God changed the Nature of theſe Fetters, and conducted them to the glory of his Name, the encouragement of others, the increaſe of the Goſpel, and the comfort of the *Apoſtle* himſelf, *Phil.* 1. 12, 13. 18. The Sufferings of *Paul* at *Rome* confirm'd the *Philippians*, a People at a diſtance from thence, in the Doctrine they had already received at his hands.

* Acts 28. 31.

* Daillè *ſur* Philip. *Part.* *p.* 116, 117.

Thus God makes *Sufferings* ſometimes which appear like Judgments, to be like the *Viper* on *Paul*'s hand, *Acts* 28. 6. A means to clear up Innocence, and procure favour to the Doctrine among thoſe *Barbarians*. How often hath he multiplied the Church by Death and Maſſacres, and increaſed it by thoſe means uſed to annihilate it?

5. The Divine *Wiſdom* is apparent *in the Deliverances he affords to other parts of the World, as well as to his Church.* There are delicate compoſures, curious threds in his Webs, and he works them like an Artificer. *A goodneſs wrought* for them, *curiouſly wrought*, Pſal. 31. 19.

1. *In making the Creatures ſubſervient in their Natural Order to his gracious Ends and Purpoſes.* He orders things in ſuch a manner, as not to be neceſſitated to put forth an extraordinary Power in things, which ſome part of the Creation might accompliſh. Miraculous Productions would ſpeak his Power; but the ordering the Natural courſe of things, to occaſion ſuch effects they were never intended for, is one part of the glory of his *Wiſdom*. And that his *Wiſdom* may be ſeen in the courſe of Nature, he conducts the Motions of Creatures, and acts them in their own ſtrength; and doth that by various windings and turnings of them, which he might do in an inſtant by his Power, in a Supernatural way. Indeed, ſometimes he hath made Invaſions on Nature, and ſuſpended the Order of their Natural Law for a ſeaſon, to ſhew himſelf the Abſolute Lord and Governour of Nature: Yet if frequent Alterations of this Nature were made, they would impede the knowledge of the Nature of things, and be ſome bar to the diſcovery and glory of his *Wiſdom*; which is beſt ſeen by moving the wheels of inferiour Creatures, in an exact regularity to his own Ends. He might, when his little Church in *Jacob*'s Family was like to ſtarve in *Canaan*, have for their preſervation turn'd the *Stones* of the Country into Bread; but he ſends them down to *Egypt* to procure Corn, that a way may be opened for their removal into that Country; the Truth of his Prediction in their Captivity accompliſh'd, and a way made after the declaration of his great Name *Jehovah*, both in the fidelity of his Word, and the greatneſs of his Power, in their deliverance from that Furnace of Affliction.

He

He might have ſtruck *Goliah*, the Captain of the *Philiſtines* Army, with a Thunder-bolt from Heaven, when he blaſphemed his Name, and ſcar'd his People; but he uſed the Natural ſtrength of a *Stone*, and the Artificial motion of a *Sling*, by the Arm of *David*, to confront the *Giant*, and thereby to free *Judea* from the ravage of a Potent Enemy. He might have delivered the *Jews* from *Babylon* by as ſtrange Miracles, as he uſed in their Deliverance from *Egypt*: He might have plagu'd their Enemies, gather'd his People into a Body, and protected them by the Bulwark of a *Cloud* and a *Pillar of Fire*, againſt the Aſſaults of their Enemies. But he uſes the Differences between the *Perſians* and thoſe of *Babylon*, to accompliſh his Ends. How ſometimes hath the veering about of the Wind on a ſudden, been the loſs of a Navy, when it hath been upon the point of Victory, and driven back the Deſtruction upon thoſe which intended it for others? And the accidental ſtumbling, or the natural fierceneſs of a Horſe, flung down a General in the midſt of a Battle, where he hath loſt his Life by the throng, and his Death hath brought a Defeat to his Army, and Deliverance to the other Party, that were upon the brink of Ruine? Thus doth the *Wiſdom* of God link things together according to Natural Order, to work out his intended Preſervation of a People.

2. *In the ſeaſon of Deliverance.* The Timing of Affairs is a part of the Wiſdom of Man, and an eminent part of the *Wiſdom* of God. It is in *due ſeaſon* he ſends the *former and the latter Rain*, when the Earth is in the greateſt Indigence, and when his Influences may moſt contribute to the bringing forth and ripening the Fruit. The dumb Creatures have *their meat from him in due ſeaſon**: And in his due ſeaſon have his darling People their Deliverance. When *Paul* was upon his Journey to *Damaſcus* with a Perſecuting Commiſſion, he is ſtruck down for the ſecurity of the *Church* in that City. The Nature of the *Lion* is changed in due ſeaſon for the preſervation of the *Lambs* from worrying. The *Iſraelites* are miraculouſly reſcued from *Egypt*, when their Wits were at a loſs, when their danger, to Human Underſtanding, was unavoidable; when Earth and Sea refus'd Protection, then the Wiſdom and Power of Heaven ſtept in to effect that, which was paſt the skill of the Conductors of that Multitude And when the Lives of the *Jews* lay at the ſtake, and their Necks were upon the Block at the Mercy of their Enemies Swords by an Order from *Shuſhan*; not only a Reprieve, but a Triumph arrives to the *Jews*, by the *VViſdom* of God guiding the Affair, whereby of Perſons deſign'd to Execution, they are made Conquerors, and have Opportunity to exerciſe their Revenge inſtead of their Patience, proving *Triumphers* where they expected to be Sufferers*. How ſtrangely doth God by ſecret ways bow the hearts of Men, and the Nature of Things to the execution of that which he deſigns, notwithſtanding all the reſiſtance of that which would traverſe the ſecurity of his People? How often doth he trap the *wicked* in the work of their own hands, make their confidence to become their ruine, and enſnare them in thoſe Nets they wrought and laid for others? *Pſal.* 9. 16. *The wicked is ſnared in the works of his own hands. He ſcatters the proud in the imagination of their hearts, Luke* 1.51. in the height of their hopes, when their Deſigns have been laid ſo deep in the Foundation, and knit, and cemented ſo cloſe in their Superſtructure, that no Humane Power or Wiſdom could raze them down: He hath then diſappointed their Projects, and befool'd their Craft. How often hath he kept back the Fire, when it hath been ready to devour; broke the Arrows when they have been prepared in the Bow; turned the Spear into the bowels of the Bearers, and wounded them at the very inſtant they were ready to wound others.

*Pſal. 104. 27.

*Eſther 8 & 9.

3. *In ſuiting Inſtruments to his purpoſe.* He either finds them fit, or makes them on a ſudden fit for his gracious ends. If he hath a *Tabernacle* to build, he will fit a *Bezaleel* and *Aholiab* with the Spirit of Wiſdom and Underſtanding in all *cunning workmanſhip*, *Exod.* 31. 3. 6. If he finds them crooked pieces, he can, like a wiſe *Architect*, make them ſtrait Beams for the rearing his Houſe, and for the honour of his Name.

He ſometimes picks out Men, according to their Natural Tempers, and employs them in his Work: *Jehu*, a Man of a furious Temper, and ambitious Spirit, is called out for the Deſtruction of *Ahab*'s Houſe. *Moſes*, a Man furniſh'd with all *Egyptian* Wiſdom, fitted by a generous Education, prepared alſo by the Affliction he met with in his flight, and one who had had the benefit of Converſation with *Jethro*, a Man of more than an ordinary Wiſdom and Goodneſs, as appears by his Prudent and Religious Counſel; this Man is called out to be the Head and Captain of an oppreſs'd People, and to reſcue them from their Bondage, and ſettle the firſt National Church in the World. So *Elijah*, a high-ſpirited Man, of a hot and angry Temper, one that ſlighted the Frowns, and undervalued the Favour of Princes, is ſet up to ſtem the Torrent of the *Iſraelitiſh Idolatry*. So *Luther*, a Man of the ſame Temper, is drawn out by the ſame Wiſdom to encounter the Corruptions in the Church, againſt ſuch Oppoſition, which a milder Temper would have ſunk under. The *Earth*, in *Rev.* 12. 16. is made an Inſtrument *to help the woman*: When the Grandees of that Age transferred the Imperial Power upon *Conſtantine*, who became afterwards a Protecting and Nurſing Father to the Church, an end which many of his Favourers never deſign'd nor ever dreamt of: But God by his Infinite Wiſdom made theſe ſeveral Deſigns like ſeveral Arrows ſhot at Rovers, meet in one Mark to which he directed them, *viz.* in bringing forth an Inſtrument to render Peace to the World, and Security and Increaſe to his Church.

III. *The Wiſdom of God doth wonderfully appear in Redemption.* His Wiſdom in *Creation* raviſheth the Eye and Underſtanding; his Wiſdom in *Government*, doth no leſs affect a curious Obſerver of the Links, and Concatenation of the Means; but his Wiſdom in *Redemption* mounts the Mind to a greater aſtoniſhment. The works of Creation are the *Footſteps* of his Wiſdom; the work of Redemption is the *Face* of his Wiſdom: A Man is better known by the Features of his Face, than by the Prints of his Feet. We with *open face*, or *a revealed face, beholding the glory of the Lord*, 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. *Face* there, refers to God, not to us; the glory of God's Wiſdom is now open, and no longer covered and veiled by the ſhadows of the Law. As we behold the Light glorious, as ſcattered in the Air before the appearance of the Sun, but more glorioufly in the Face of the Sun, when it begins its Race in our Horizon. All the Wiſdom of God in Creation and Government in his variety of Laws, was like the Light, the *three firſt* days of the Creation, diſpers'd about the World, but the *fourth* day it was more glorious, when all gathered into the Body of the *Sun*, *Gen.* 1. 4. 16. So the Light of Divine Wiſdom and Glory, was ſcattered about the World, and ſo more obſcure, till the *fourth Divine* day of the World, about the *four thouſandth Year*, it was gathered into one Body, the Sun of Righteouſneſs, and ſo ſhone out more glorioufly to Men and Angels. All things are weaker, the thinner they are extended, but ſtronger, the

more

more they are united and compacted in one Body and Appearance. In Chriſt, in the diſpenſation by him, as well as in his Perſon, were *hid all the Treaſures of Wiſdom and Knowledge*, *Coloſſ.* 2. 3. Some Doles of Wiſdom were given out in Creation, but the Treaſures of it opened in Redemption; the higheſt Degrees of it that ever God did exert in the World. Chriſt is therefore called the *Wiſdom of God*, as well as the *Power of God*, 1 *Cor.* 1. 24. and the Goſpel is called the *Wiſdom of God*. Chriſt is the Wiſdom of God *principally*, and the Goſpel *inſtrumentally*, as it is the Power of God inſtrumentally to ſubdue the Heart to himſelf. This is wrapped up in the appointing Chriſt as Redeemer, and open'd to us in the Revelation of it by the Goſpel.

1. *It is a hidden Wiſdom.* In this regard, God is ſaid in the *Text* to be *only wiſe*; and it is ſaid to be a *hidden wiſdom*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 17. and *wiſdom in a myſtery*, 1 *Cor.* 2. 7. incomprehenſible to the ordinary capacity of an Angel, more than the abſtruſe qualities of the Creatures are to the underſtanding of Man. No wiſdom of Men or Angels is able to ſearch all the veins of this Mine, to tell all the threds of this Web, or to underſtand the luſtre of it; they are as far from an ability fully to comprehend it, as they were at firſt to contrive it. That wiſdom that invented it, can only comprehend it. In the uncreated underſtanding only there is a clearneſs of light without any ſhadow of darkneſs. We come as ſhort of full apprehenſions of it, as a Child doth of the Counſel of the wiſeſt Prince. It is ſo hidden from us, that without revelation we could not have the leaſt imagination of it; and though it be revealed to us, yet without the help of an infiniteneſs of underſtanding, we cannot fully fathom it. 'Tis ſuch a Tractate of divine wiſdom, that the Angels never before had ſeen the Edition of it, till it was publiſh'd to the World, *Eph.* 3. 10. *To the intent that now unto principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church, the manifold wiſdom of God. Now* made known to them, not before; and now made known to them *in the heavenly places.* They had not the knowledge of all heavenly Myſteries, though they had the poſſeſſion of heavenly Glory: They knew the *Prophecies* of it in the Word, but attained not a clear Interpretation of thoſe Prophecies, till the things that were prophecied of came upon the Stage.

2. *Manifold Wiſdom*: So 'tis called. As *manifold* as myſterious. Variety in the Myſtery, and Myſtery in every part of the Variety. It was not one ſingle act, but a variety of counſels met in it; a conjunction of excellent ends and excellent means. The glory of God, the ſalvation of Man, the defeat of the Apoſtate Angels, the diſcovery of the Bleſſed Trinity in their Nature, Operations, their combin'd and diſtinct acts and expreſſions of Goodneſs; The means are the conjunction of *two Natures* infinitely diſtant from one another; the union of Eternity and Time, of Mortality and Immortality: Death is made the way to Life, and Shame the path to Glory. The weakneſs of the Croſs is the reparation of Man; and the Creature is made wiſe by the *fooliſhneſs of preaching*: Fallen man grows rich by the poverty of the Redeemer, and man is filled by the emptineſs of God: The Heir of Hell made a Son of God, by God's taking upon him the *form of a Servant*; the Son of Man advanc'd to the higheſt degree of Honour, by the Son of God becoming of *no reputation.*

'Tis called, *Eph.* 1. 8. *abundance of Wiſdom and Prudence.* Wiſdom in the Eternal Counſel, contriving a way; Prudence in the Temporary Revelation, ordering all Affairs and Occurrences in the World for the attaining the end of his Counſel. Wiſdom refers to the Myſtery; Prudence to the manifeſtation of it in fit Ways and convenient Seaſons. Wiſdom, to the Contrivance and Order; Prudence, to the Execution and Accompliſhment. In all things God acted as *became him*, as a wiſe and juſt Governour of the World, *Heb.* 2. 10. Whether the wiſdom of God might not have found out ſome other way, or whether he were, in regard of the neceſſity and naturalneſs of his Juſtice, limited to this, is not the Queſtion: But that it is the beſt and wiſeſt way for the manifeſtation of his Glory, is out of queſtion.

This wiſdom will appear in the different Intereſts reconciled by it. In the Subject, the *ſecond Perſon* in the Trinity, wherein they were reconciled: In the *two Natures*, wherein he accompliſh'd it; whereby God is made known to Man in his Glory, Sin eternally condemned, and the repenting and believing Sinner eternally reſcued. The Honour and Righteouſneſs of the Law vindicated both in the Precept and Penalty. The *Devil's* Empire overthrown by the ſame Nature he had overturned, and the Subtilty of Hell defeated by that Nature he had ſpoiled: The Creature engaged in the very act to the higheſt Obedience and Humility, that as God appears as a God upon his Throne, the Creature might appear in the loweſt poſture of a Creature, in the depths of Reſignation and Dependance; the publication of this made in the Goſpel, by Ways congruous to the Wiſdom which appeared in the execution of his Counſel, and the Conditions of enjoying the fruit of it, moſt wiſe and reaſonable.

1. *The greateſt different Intereſts are reconcil'd, Juſtice in puniſhing, and Mercy in pardoning.* For Man had broken the Law, and plung'd himſelf into a Gulf of Miſery: The Sword of Vengeance was unſheathed by Juſtice, for the Puniſhment of the Criminal: The Bowels of Compaſſion were ſtirred by Mercy, for the reſcue of the miſerable. Juſtice ſeverely beholds the Sin, and Mercy compaſſionately reflects upon the Miſery. Two different claims are entred by thoſe concerned Attributes: Juſtice votes for Deſtruction, and Mercy votes for Salvation. Juſtice would draw the Sword, and drench it in the Blood of the Offender; Mercy would draw the Sword, and turn it from the Breaſt of the Sinner. Juſtice would edge it, and Mercy would blunt it. The Arguments are ſtrong on both ſides.

1. *Juſtice pleads.* I arraign, before the Tribunal, a Rebel, who was the glorious Work of thy Hands, the Center of thy rich Goodneſs, and a Counterpart of thy own Image; he is indeed miſerable, whereby to excite thy Compaſſion; but he is not miſerable, without being Criminal. Thou didſt create him in a State, and with Ability to be otherwiſe: The riches of thy Bounty aggravate the blackneſs of his Crime. He is a Rebel, not by neceſſity, but *will.* What conſtraint was there upon him to liſten to the Counſels of the Enemy of God? What force could there be upon him, ſince it is without the compaſs of any Creature to work upon, or conſtrain the Will? Nothing of Ignorance can excuſe him; the Law was not ambiguouſly expreſs'd, but in plain Words, both as to Precept and Penalty it was writ in his Nature in legible Characters: Had he received any diſguſt from thee after his Creation, it would not excuſe his Apoſtacy, ſince, as a Sovereign, thou wert not obliged to thy Creature. Thou hadſt provided all things richly for him; he was crowned with Glory and Honour: Thy infinite Power had beſtowed upon him an Habitation richly furniſhed, and Varieties of Servants to attend him. Whatever he viewed without, and whatever he viewed within himſelf, were ſeveral Marks of thy Divine Bounty, to engage him to Obedience: Had

there

there been ſome reaſon of any diſguſt, it could not have balanced that Kindneſs which had ſo much reaſon to oblige him: However, he had received no Courteſie from the fallen Angel to oblige him to turn into his Camp. Was it not enough, that one of thy Creatures would have ſtript thee of the Glory of Heaven, but this alſo muſt deprive thee of thy Glory upon Earth, which was due from him to thee as his Creator? Can he charge the difficulty of the Command? No: It was rather below, than above his Strength. He might rather complain that it was no higher, whereby his Obedience and Gratitude might have a larger ſcope, and a more ſpacious Field to move in, than a Precept ſo light, ſo eaſie, as to abſtain from one Fruit in the Garden. What Excuſe can he have, that would prefer the liquoriſhneſs of his Senſe before the dictates of his Reaſon, and the Obligations of his Creation? The Law thou didſt ſet him, was righteous and reaſonable, and ſhall Righteouſneſs and Reaſon be rejected by the Supream and Infallible Reaſon, becauſe the rebellious Creature hath trampled upon it? What? Muſt God abrogate his holy Law, becauſe the Creature hath ſlighted it? What Reflection will this be upon the Wiſdom that enacted it; and upon the Equity of the Command and Sanction of it? Either Man muſt ſuffer, or the Holy Law be expunged, and for ever out of date. And is it not better Man ſhould Eternally ſmart under his Crime, than any diſhonourable Reflections of Unrighteouſneſs be caſt upon the Law, and of Folly, and want of Foreſight upon the Lawgiver? Not to puniſh, would be to approve the Devil's Lye, and juſtifie the Creature's Revolt. It would be a Condemnation of thy own Law as unrighteous, and a Sentencing thy own Wiſdom as imprudent. Better Man ſhould for ever bear the Puniſhment of his Offence, than God bear the Diſhonour of his Attributes: Better Man ſhould be miſerable, than God ſhould be unrighteous, unwiſe, falſe, and tamely bear the denial of his Sovereignty. But what advantage would it be to gratifie Mercy by Pardoning the Malefactor? Beſides the irreparable diſhonour to the Law, the falſifying thy veracity in not executing the denounced Threatning, he would receive Incouragement by ſuch a Grace to ſpurn more at thy Sovereignty, and oppoſe thy Holineſs by running on in a Courſe of Sin with Hopes of Impunity: If the Creature be reſtored, it cannot be expected, that he that hath fared ſo well, after the breach of it, ſhould be very careful of a future Obſervance: His eaſie readmiſſion would abett him in the Repetition of his Offence, and thou ſhalt ſoon find him caſt off all Moral Dependance on thee. Shall he be reſtored without any Condition, or Covenant? he is a Creature not to be governed without a Law, and a Law is not to be enacted without a Penalty. What future regard will he have to thy Precept, or what fear will he have of thy Threatning, if his Crime be ſo lightly paſt over? Is it the ſtability of thy Word? What Reaſon will he have to give credit to that, which he hath found already diſregarded by thy ſelf? Thy Truth in future Threatnings will be of no force with him, who hath experienced thy laying it aſide in the former. 'Tis neceſſary therefore that the rebellious Creature ſhould be puniſhed for the Preſervation of the Honour of the Law, and the Honour of the Law-giver, with all thoſe Perfections that are united in the compoſure of it.

2. Secondly, *Mercy doth not want a Plea.* 'Tis true indeed, the Sin of Man wants not its Aggravations: He hath ſlighted thy Goodneſs, and accepted thy Enemy as his Counſellor; but it was not a pure Act of his own, as the *Devil*'s Revolt was: He had a Tempter, and the Devil had none: He had, I acknowledge, an Underſtanding to know thy Will, and a Power to obey it; yet he was mutable, and had a Capacity to fall. It was no difficult task that was ſet him, nor a hard yoke that was laid upon him; yet he had a brutiſh part, as well as a rational, and Senſe as well as Soul; whereas the fallen Angel was a pure intellectual Spirit. Did God create the World to ſuffer an eternal Diſhonour, in letting himſelf be outwitted by *Satan*, and his Work wreſted out of his Hands? Shall the Work of eternal Counſel preſently ſink into irreparable Deſtruction, and the Honour of an Almighty and wiſe Work be loſt in the ruin of the Creature? This would ſeem contrary to the Nature of thy Goodneſs, to make Man only to render him miſerable: To deſign him in his Creation for the Service of the Devil, and not for the Service of his Creator. What elſe could be the iſſue, if the chief work of thy Hand, defaced preſently after the erecting, ſhould for ever remain in this marred Condition: What can be expected upon the continuance of his Miſery, but a perpetual hatred, and enmity of thy Creature againſt thee? Did God in Creation deſign his being hated, or his being loved by his Creature? Shall God make a holy Law, and have no Obedience to that Law from that Creature whom it was made to govern? Shall the curious Workmanſhip of God, and the excellent Engravings of the Law of Nature in his Heart, be ſo ſoon defaced, and remain in that blotted Condition for ever? This Fall thou couldſt not but in the Treaſures of thy Infinite Knowledge foreſee; why hadſt thou Goodneſs then to create him in an Integrity, if thou wouldſt not have Mercy to pity him in Miſery? Shall thy Enemy for ever trample upon the Honour of thy Work, and triumph over the Glory of God, and applaud himſelf in the Succeſs of his ſubtilty? Shall thy Creature only paſſively glorifie thee as an Avenger, and not actively as a Compaſſionater? Am not I a Perfection of thy Nature as well as Juſtice? Shall Juſtice ingroſs all, and I never come into view? 'Tis reſolved already, that the fallen Angels ſhall be no Subjects for me to exerciſe my ſelf upon; and I have now leſs Reaſon than before to plead for them: They fell with a full conſent of Will, without any Motion from another; and not content with their own Apoſtacy, they envy thee, and thy Glory upon Earth, as well as in Heaven, and have drawn into their Party the beſt part of the Creation below: Shall Satan plunge the whole Creation in the ſame irreparable ruin with himſelf: If the Creature be reſtored, will he contract a boldneſs in Sin by Impunity? Haſt thou not a Grace to render him ingenious in Obedience, as well as a Compaſſion to recover him from Miſery? What will hinder, but that ſuch a Grace, which hath eſtabliſhed the ſtanding Angels, may eſtabliſh this recovered Creature? If I am utterly excluded from exerciſing my ſelf on Men, as I have been from Devils, a whole Species is loſt; nay, I can never expect to appear upon the Stage: If thou wilt quite ruin him by Juſtice, and create another World, and another Man, if he ſtand, thy Bounty will be eminent, yet there is no room for Mercy to act unleſs by the Commiſſion of Sin, he expoſeth himſelf to Miſery; and if Sin enter into another World, I have little hopes to be heard then, if I am rejected now. Worlds will be perpetually created by Goodneſs, Wiſdom, and Power: Sin entring into theſe Worlds, will be perpetually puniſhed by Juſtice; and Mercy, which is a perfection of thy Nature, will for ever be commanded ſilence, and lie wrapt up in an eternal Darkneſs. Take occaſion now therefore to expoſe me to the Knowledge of thy

Creature, ſince without Miſery, Mercy can never ſet foot into the World.

Mercy pleads, if Man be ruined, the Creation is in vain; Juſtice pleads, if Man be not ſentenced, the Law is in vain; Truth backs Juſtice, and Grace abetts Mercy. What ſhall be done in this ſeeming Contradiction? Mercy is not manfeſted, if man be not pardoned; Juſtice will complain, if man be not puniſhed.

3. *An expedient is found out by the Wiſdom of God to anſwer theſe Demands, and adjuſt the Differences between them.* The Wiſdom of God anſwers, I will ſatisfie your Pleas. The Pleas of Juſtice ſhall be ſatisfied in puniſhing, and the Pleas of Mercy ſhall be received in pardoning. Juſtice ſhall not complain for want of Puniſhment, nor Mercy for want of Compaſſion. I will have an infinite Sacrifice to content Juſtice; and the Virtue and Fruit of that Sacrifice ſhall delight Mercy. Here ſhall Juſtice have Puniſhment to accept, and Mercy ſhall have Pardon to beſtow. The Rights of both are preſerved, and the Demands of both amicably accorded in Puniſhment and Pardon, by transferring the Puniſhment of our Crimes upon a ſurety, exacting a Recompence from his Blood by *Juſtice*, and conferring Life and Salvation upon us by *Mercy*, without the Expence of one drop of our own. Thus is Juſtice ſatisfied in its Severities, and Mercy in its Indulgencies. The Riches of Grace are twiſted with the Terrors of Wrath. The Bowels of Mercy are wound about the flaming Sword of Juſtice, and the Sword of Juſtice protects and ſecures the Bowels of Mercy. Thus is God righteous without being cruel, and merciful without being unjuſt; his Righteouſneſs inviolable, and the World recoverable. Thus is a reſplendent Mercy brought forth in the midſt of all the Curſes, Confuſions, and Wrath threatned to the Offender.

Thus is the admirable temperament found out by the Wiſdom of God His *Juſtice* is honoured in the Sufferings of Man's Surety; and his *Mercy* is honoured in the Application of the *propitiation* to the Offender. *Rom.* 3. 24, 25. *Being juſtified freely by his Grace, through the Redemption that is in Jeſus Chriſt: Whom God hath ſet forth to be a propitiation through Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righteouſneſs for the Remiſſion of Sins that are paſt, through the Forbearance of God.* Had we in our Perſons been Sacrifices to Juſtice, Mercy had for ever been unknown; had we been ſolely ſoſtered by Mercy, Juſtice had for ever been ſecluded; had we, being guilty, been abſolved, Mercy might have rejoyced, and Juſtice might have complained; had we been ſolely puniſhed, Juſtice would have triumphed and Mercy grieved. But by this *medium* of Redemption, neither hath ground of Complaint: *Juſtice* hath nothing to charge, when the Puniſhment is inflicted; *Mercy* hath whereof to boaſt when the Surety is accepted. The Debt of the Sinner is transferred upon the Surety, that the Merit of the Surety may be conferred upon the Sinner; ſo that God now deals with our Sins in a way of conſuming Juſtice, and with our Perſons in a way of relieving Mercy. 'Tis highly better, and more glorious, than if the Claim of one had been granted, with the Excluſion of the Demand of the other: It had then been either an unrighteous Mercy, or a mercileſs Juſtice: 'Tis now a righteous Mercy, and a merciful Juſtice.

2. *The Wiſdom of God appears in the Subject or Perſon wherein theſe were accorded*: The *ſecond Perſon* in the bleſſed Trinity. There was a congruity in the *Sons* undertaking and effecting it rather than any other Perſon, according to the order of the Perſons, and the ſeveral Functions of the Perſons, as repreſented in *Scripture*. The Father, after Creation, is the Law-giver, and preſents Man with the Image of his own Holineſs, and the way to his Creatures Happineſs: But after the Fall, man was too impotent to perform the Law, and too polluted to enjoy a Felicity. *Redemption* was then neceſſary; not that it was neceſſary for God to redeem man, but it was neceſſary for man's Happineſs, that he ſhould be recovered. To this the *ſecond Perſon* is appointed, that by Communion with him, man might derive a Happineſs, and be brought again to God. But ſince man was blind in his *Underſtanding*, and an Enemy in his *Will* to God, there muſt be the exerting of a Vertue to enlighten his Mind, and bend his Will to underſtand, and accept of this Redemption: And this work is aſſigned to the *third Perſon*, the Holy Ghoſt.

1. *It was not congruous that the Father ſhould aſſume Human Nature, and ſuffer in it for the Redemption of Man.* He was *firſt in order*, he was the Law-giver, and therefore to be the Judge. As Lawgiver, it was not convenient he ſhould ſtand in the ſtead of the Law-breaker; and as a Judge, it was as little convenient he ſhould be reputed a Malefactor: That he who had made a Law againſt Sin, denounced a Penalty upon the Commiſſion of Sin, and whoſe part it was actually to puniſh the Sinner, ſhould become Sin for the wilful Tranſgreſſor of his Law. He being the *Rector*, how could he be an *Advocate* and Interceſſor to himſelf? How could he be the Judge and the Sacrifice? A Judge, and yet a Mediator to himſelf? If he had been the Sacrifice, there muſt be ſome Perſon to examine the validity of it, and pronounce the Sentence of Acceptance. Was it agreeable that the Son ſhould ſit upon a Throne of Judgment, and the Father ſtand at the Bar, and be reſponſible to the Son? That the Son ſhould be in the place of a Governour, and the Father in the place of the Criminal? That the Father ſhould be bruiſed * by the Son, as the Son was by the Father; * that the Son ſhould awaken a Sword againſt the Father, as the Father did againſt the Son; that the Father ſhould be ſent by the Son, as the Son was by the Father *: The order of the Perſons in the bleſſed Trinity had been inverted and diſturbed. Had the Father been ſent, he had not been firſt in Order; the Sender is before the Perſon ſent: As the Father begets, and the Son is begotten, *Joh.* 1. 14. ſo the Father ſends, and the Son is ſent. He whoſe order is to ſend, cannot properly ſend himſelf.

* Iſa. 53. 10.
* Zach. 13. 7.
* Gal. 4. 4.

2. *Nor was it congruous that the Spirit ſhould be ſent upon this Affair.* If the *Holy Ghoſt* had been ſent to redeem us, and the Son to *apply* that Redemption to us, the Order of the Perſons had alſo been inverted: The Spirit then, who was *third* in Order, had been *ſecond* in Operation. The Son would then have received of the Spirit, as the Spirit doth now of *Chriſt, and ſhew it unto us, Joh.* 1. 15. As the *Spirit* proceeded from the Father and the Son, ſo the proper Function and Operation of it, was in order after the Operations of the Father and the Son: Had the Spirit been ſent to redeem us, and the Son ſent by the Father and the Spirit to apply that Redemption to us; the Son in his Acts had proceeded from the Father and the Spirit; the Spirit, as Sender, had been in order before the Son; whereas the Spirit is called the *Spirit of Chriſt*, as ſent by Chriſt from the *Father*, *Gal.* 4. 6 *Joh.* 15. 27. But as the Order of the Works, ſo the Order of the Perſons is preſerved in their ſeveral Operations *Creation*, and a Law to govern the Creature, precedes *Redemption*. Nothing, or that which hath no Being, is not capable of a redeemed Being. Redemption ſuppoſeth the exiſtence and the miſery of a Perſon redeemed. As Creation preceeds Redemption, ſo Redemption preceeds the *application* of it. As Redemption ſuppoſeth the Being of the Creature, ſo Application of Redemption

Redemption ſuppoſeth the efficacy of Redemption. According to the order of theſe works is the order of the Operations of the *three Perſons*. *Creation* belongs to the Father, the firſt Perſon. *Redemption*, the ſecond work, is the Function of the Son, the ſecond Perſon. *Application*, the third work, is the Office of the Holy Ghoſt, the third Perſon. The Father orders it, the Son acts it, the Holy Ghoſt applies it. He purifies our Souls to underſtand, believe, and love theſe Myſteries. He forms Chriſt in the womb of the Soul, as he did the Body of Chriſt in the womb of the Virgin. As the Spirit of God *moved upon the waters*, to garniſh and adorn the world, after the matter of it was formed, *Gen.* 1. 2. ſo he moves upon the heart, to ſupple it to a complyance with Chriſt, and draws the Lineaments of the new Creation in the Soul, after the Foundation is laid.

The Son pays the Price that was due from us to God, and the Spirit is the earneſt of the Promiſes of Life and Glory purchaſed by the Merit of that Death. * 'Tis to be obſerved, that the *Father*, under the diſpenſation of the Law, propoſed the Commands, with the Promiſes and Threatnings, to the Underſtandings of Men; and *Chriſt*, under the diſpenſation of Grace, when he was upon the Earth, propoſeth the Goſpel as the Means of Salvation, exhorts to Faith as the Condition of Salvation; but it was neither the Function of the one, or the other, to diſplay ſuch an Efficacy in the Underſtanding, and Will to make Men believe and obey, and therefore there were ſuch few Converſions in the time of Chriſt, by his Miracles: But this work was reſerved, for the fuller and brighter appearance of the *Spirit*, whoſe Office it was to convince the World of the neceſſity of a Redeemer, becauſe of their loſt condition; of the Perſon of the Redeemer, the Son of God; of the ſufficiency and efficacy of Redemption, becauſe of his Righteouſneſs and acceptation by the Father. The Wiſdom of God is ſeen in preparing and preſenting the Objects, and then in making impreſſion of them upon the Subjects he intends. And thus is the *order of the three Perſons* preſerved.

* Amyrant. *Moral. Tom.* 5. *p.* 478, 479 480.

3. *The ſecond Perſon had the greateſt congruity to this work.* He by whom God created the World, was moſt conveniently employed in reſtoring the defaced World: Who more fit to recover it from its lapſed ſtate, than he that had *erected* it in its Primitive ſtate? *Heb.* 1. 2. *He was the light of men* in Creation, and therefore it was moſt reaſonable he ſhould be the light of men in Redemption. Who fitter to reform the Divine Image, than he that firſt formed it? Who fitter to ſpeak for us to God, than he who was *the Word*? *John* 1. 1. Who could better intercede with the Father, than he who was the only begotten and beloved Son? Who ſo fit to redeem the forfeited Inheritance, as the *Heir of all things*? Who fitter and better to prevail for us to have the Right of Children, than he that poſſeſſed it by Nature? We fell from being the Sons of God, and who fitter to introduce us into an adopted ſtate, than the Son of God? Herein was an expreſſion of the richer Grace, becauſe the firſt ſin was immediately againſt the wiſdom of God, by an ambitious affectation of a wiſdom equal to God: That that Perſon, who was the *Wiſdom of God*, ſhould be made a Sacrifice for the expiation of the ſin againſt wiſdom.

John 1. 4.

3. *The Wiſdom of God is ſeen in the two Natures of Chriſt, whereby his Redemption was accompliſhed.* The Union of the two Natures was the Foundation of the Union of God, and the fallen Creature.

1. *The Union it ſelf is admirable: The Word is made Fleſh*, John 1. 14. One *equal with God in the form of a Servant*, *Phil.* 2. 7. When the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks of *God manifeſted in the fleſh*, he ſpeaks *the Wiſdom of God in a Myſtery*, 1 *Tim.* 3. 16. That which is incomprehenſible to the Angels, which they never imagined before it was revealed, which perhaps they never knew till they beheld it. I am ſure, under the Law the Figures of the *Cherubims* were placed in the Sanctuary with their *faces looking towards the Propitiatory*, in a perpetual poſture of Contemplation and Admiration, *Exod.* 37. 9. to which the Apoſtle alludes, 1 *Pet.* 1. 12.

Myſterious is the wiſdom of God to unite Finite and Infinite, Almightineſs and Weakneſs, Immortality and Mortality, Immutability with a Thing ſubject to Change; to have a Nature from Eternity, and yet a Nature ſubject to the Revolutions of Time; a Nature to make a Law, and a Nature to be ſubjected to the Law; to be *God bleſſed for ever*, in the boſom of his Father, and an Infant expoſed to Calamities from the womb of his Mother: Terms ſeeming moſt diſtant from union, moſt uncapable of conjunction, to ſhake hands together, to be moſt intimately conjoyned; Glory and Vileneſs, Fulneſs and Emptineſs, Heaven and Earth, the Creature with the Creator; he that made all things, in one Perſon with a Nature that is made; *Immanuel*, God and Man in one: That which is moſt Spiritual, to partake of that which is Carnal Fleſh and Blood: * One with the Father in his Godhead, one with us in his Manhood: The Godhead to be in him in the fulleſt Perfection, and the Manhood in the greateſt Purity: The Creature one with the Creator, and the Creator one with the Creature. Thus is the incomprehenſible wiſdom of God declared in the *Word being made Fleſh*.

* Heb. 2. 14.

2. *In the manner of this Union.* A Union of *two Natures*, yet no Natural Union. It tranſcends all the Unions viſible among Creatures *: It is not like the Union of Stones in a Building, or of two pieces of Timber faſtned together, which touch one another only in their Superficies and outſide, without any intimacy with one another. By ſuch a kind of Union, God would not be Man: The Word could not ſo be made Fleſh. Nor is it Union of Parts to the whole, as the Members and the Body; the Members are Parts, the Body is the whole; for the whole reſults from the Parts, and depends upon the Parts: But Chriſt being God, is independent upon any thing. The parts are in order of Nature before the whole, but nothing can be in order of Nature before God. Nor is it as the Union of two Liquors, as when wine and water are mixed together; for they are ſo incorporated, as not to be diſtinguiſh'd from one another; no man can tell which Particle is wine, and which is water. But the Properties of the Divine Nature are diſtinguiſhable from the Properties of the Humane. Nor is it as the Union of the Soul and Body, ſo as that the Deity is the form of the Humanity, as the Soul is the form of the Body: For as the Soul is but a part of the Man, ſo the Divinity would be then but a part of the Humanity; and as a form, or the Soul is in a ſtate of Imperfection, without that which it is to inform; ſo the Divinity of Chriſt would have been imperfect, till it had aſſumed the Humanity. And ſo the perfection of an Eternal Deity would have depended on a Creature of Time.

* Savana *triump. cruci.* Lib. 3. cap. 7. *p.* 211.

This Union of *two Natures* in Chriſt is incomprehenſible: And it is a Myſtery we cannot arrive to the top of. How the Divine Nature, which is the ſame with that of the Father and the Holy Ghoſt, ſhould be united to the Humane Nature; without its being ſaid, that the Father and the Holy Ghoſt were united to the Fleſh; but the Scripture doth not encourage any ſuch Notion; it ſpeaks

only of the Word, the Perſon of the Word being made Fleſh. And in his being made Fleſh, diſtinguiſheth him from the Father, as *the only begotten of the Father*, *John* 1 14. The Perſon of the Son was the term of this Union.

1. *This Union doth not confound the Properties of the Deity, and thoſe of the Humanity.* They remain diſtinct and entire in each other. The Deity is not changed into Fleſh, nor the Fleſh transform'd into God: They are diſtinct, and yet united: They are conjoyned, and yet unmixt: The dues of either Nature are preſerved. 'Tis impoſſible that the Majeſty of the Divinity can receive an alteration: 'Tis as impoſſible that the meanneſs of the Humanity can receive the Impreſſions of the Deity, ſo as to be changed into it; and a Creature be metamorphos'd into the Creator, and Temporary Fleſh become Eternal, and Finite mount up into Infinity: As the Soul and Body are united, and make one Perſon; yet the Soul is not changed into the perfections of the Body, nor the Body into the perfections of the Soul. There is a change made in the Humanity by being advanced to a more Excellent Union, but not in the Deity; as a change is made in the Air, when it is enlightned by the Sun, not in the Sun, which communicates that brightneſs to the Air. *Athanaſius* makes the *burning Buſh* to be a Type of Chriſt's Incarnation, *Exod.* 3. 2. The Fire ſignifying the Divine Nature, and the Buſh the Human. The Buſh is a branch ſpringing up from the Earth, and the Fire deſcends from Heaven; as the Buſh was united to the Fire, yet was not hurt by the flame, nor converted into Fire, there remained a difference between the Buſh and the Fire, yet the properties of the Fire ſhined in the Buſh, ſo that the whole Buſh ſeemed to be on Fire. So in the Incarnation of Chriſt, the Human Nature is not ſwallowed up by the Divine, nor changed into it, nor confounded with it: But ſo united, that the properties of both remain firm; *Two* are ſo become *one* that they remain *two* ſtill: One Perſon in Two Natures, containing the glorious perfections of the Divine, and the weakneſſes of the Humane. *The fulneſs of the Deity dwells bodily in Chriſt*, *Col.* 2. 9.

2. *The Divine Nature is united to every part of the Humanity.* The whole Divinity to the whole Humanity; ſo that no part but may be ſaid to be the Member of God, as well as the Blood is ſaid to be the *Blood of God*, *Acts* 20. 28. By the ſame reaſon it may be ſaid, the Hand of God, the Eye of God, the Arm of God. As God is infinitely preſent every where, ſo as to be excluded from no place; ſo is the Deity hypoſtatically every where in the Humanity not excluded from any part of it: As the light of the Sun in every part of the Air, as a ſparkling ſplendor in every part of the Diamond. Therefore it is concluded by all that acknowledge the Deity of Chriſt, that when his Soul was ſeparated from the Body, the Deity remained united both to Soul and Body, as light doth in every part of a broken Cryſtal.

3. Therefore *perpetually united*, *Coloſſ.* 2. 9. The *fulneſs of the Godhead dwells in him bodily.* It *Dwells* in him, not lodges in him as a Traveller in an Inn; it reſides in him as a fixed Habitation. As God deſcribes the perpetuity of his Preſence in the Ark by his habitation or *dwelling* in it, *Exod.* 29. 44. ſo doth the *Apoſtle* the inſeparable duration of the Deity in the Humanity, and the indiſſoluble Union of the Humanity with the Deity. It was united on Earth, it remains united in Heaven. It was not an Image or an Apparition, as the Tongues wherein the Spirit came upon the *Apoſtles*, were a Temporary Repreſentation, not a thing united perpetually to the Perſon of the Holy Ghoſt.

4. It was a *Perſonal Union.* It was not an Union of Perſons, though it was a Perſonal Union: So *Davenant* expounds *Col.* 2. 9. Chriſt did not take the Perſon of Man, but the Nature of Man into ſubſiſtence with himſelf. The Body and Soul of Chriſt were not united in themſelves, had no ſubſiſtence in themſelves, till they were united to the Perſon of the Son of God. If the Perſon of a Man were united to him, the Human Nature would have been the Nature of the Perſon ſo united to him, and not the Nature of the Son of God, *Heb.* 2 14. 16. *For-aſmuch then as the Children are partakers of fleſh and blood, he alſo himſelf likewiſe took part of the ſame, that through Death he might deſtroy him that had the power of Death, that is, the Devil. For verily he took not on him the nature of Angels: But he took on him the ſeed of Abraham.* He took Fleſh and Blood to be his own Nature, perpetually to ſubſiſt in the Perſon of the Λόγος, which muſt be by a Perſonal Union, or no way: The Deity united to the Humanity, and both Natures to be *one* Perſon. This is the myſterious and manifold Wiſdom of God.

3. *The end of this Union.*

1. *He was hereby fitted to be Mediator.* He hath ſomething like to Man, and ſomething like to God. If he were in all things only like to Man, he would be at a diſtance from God: If he were in all things only like to God, he would be at a diſtance from Man. He is a true Mediator between Mortal Sinners, and the Immortal Righteous One. He was near to us by the Infirmities of our Nature, and near to God by the Perfections of the Divine; as near to God in his Nature, as to us in ours; as near to us in our Nature, as he is to God in the Divine. Nothing that belongs to the Deity, but he poſſeſſes; nothing that belongs to the Human Nature, but he is clothed with.

He had both the Nature which had offended, and that Nature which was offended; a Nature to pleaſe God, and a Nature to pleaſure us: A Nature whereby he experimentally knew the Excellency of God, which was injured, and underſtood the Glory due to him, and conſequently the greatneſs of the Offence, which was to be meaſur'd by the Dignity of his Perſon: And a Nature whereby he might be ſenſible of the Miſeries contracted by, and endure the Calamities due to the Offender, that he might both have Compaſſion on him, and make due Satisfaction for him * He had *two diſtinct Natures*, capable of the Affections and Sentiments of the two Perſons he was to accord; he was a juſt Judge of the Rights of the one, and the demerit of the other. He could not have this full and perfect Underſtanding, if he did not poſſeſs the Perfections of the one, and the Qualities of the other: The one fitted him for *things appertaining to God*, *Heb.* 5. 1. and the other furniſh'd him with a ſenſe of the *Infirmities of Man*, *Heb.* 4. 15. * Gomb. de relig. p. 42.

2. *He was hereby fitted for the working out the happineſs of Man.* A Divine Nature to communicate to Man, and a Human Nature to carry up to God.

1. *He had a Nature whereby to ſuffer for us, and a Nature whereby to be meritorious in thoſe Sufferings.* A Nature to make him capable to bear the Penalty, and a Nature to make his Sufferings ſufficient for all that embraced him. A Nature capable to be expoſed to the flames of Divine Wrath, and another Nature uncapable to be cruſh'd by the weight, or conſum'd by the heat of it: A Human Nature to ſuffer, and ſtand a Sacrifice in the ſtead of Man; a Divine Nature to ſanctifie theſe Sufferings, and fill the Noſtrils of God with a ſweet ſavour, and thereby atone his wrath: The one to bear the ſtroke due to us, and the other to add merit to his Sufferings for us. Had he not been Man, he could not have filled our place

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in ſuffering; and could he otherwiſe have ſuffered, his Sufferings had not been applicable to us; and had he not been God, his Sufferings had not been meritoriouſly and fruitfully applicable. Had not his Blood been the Blood of God, it had been of as little advantage as the Blood of an ordinary Man, or the Blood of the *Legal Sacrifices* *. Nothing leſs than God, could have ſatisfied God for the Injury done by Man. Nothing leſs than God, could have countervail'd the Torments due to the offending Creature: Nothing leſs than God, could have reſcued us out of the hands of the Jaylor, too powerful for us.

* Heb. 9. 12.

2. He had therefore *a Nature to be compaſſionate to us, and victorious for us.* A Nature ſenſibly to compaſſionate us, and another Nature to render thoſe Compaſſions effectual for our Relief; he had the Compaſſions of our Nature to pity us, and the Patience of the Divine Nature to bear with us. He hath the Affections of a Man to us, and the Power of a God for us: A Nature to diſarm the Devil for us, and another Nature to be ſenſible of the working of the Devil in us, and againſt us. If he had been only God, he would not have had an Experimental ſenſe of our Miſery; and if he had been only Man, he could not have vanquiſh'd our Enemies: Had he been only God, he could not have died; and had he been only Man, he could not have conquered Death.

3. *A Nature efficaciouſly to inſtruct us.* As Man, he was to inſtruct us ſenſibly; as God, he was to inſtruct us infallibly. A Nature whereby he might converſe with us, and a Nature whereby he might influence us in thoſe Converſes A Human Mouth to miniſter Inſtructions to Man, and a Divine Power to imprint it with efficacy.

4. *A Nature to be a Pattern to us.* A Pattern of Grace as Man, as *Adam* was to have been to his Poſterity. * A Divine Nature ſhining in the Human, the Image of the inviſible God in the Glaſs of our Fleſh, that he might be a perfect Copy for our Imitation, *Col.* 1. 15. *The Image of the inviſible God, and the firſt-born of every Creature* in conjunction. The Vertues of the Deity are ſweetned and tempered by the Union with the Humanity, as the Beams of the Sun are by ſhining through a colour'd Glaſs, which condeſcends more to the weakneſs of our Eye

* Amyraunt. *Moral. Tom.* 5. *p.* 463, 469

Thus the Perfections of the inviſible God, breaking through the firſt-born of every Creature, glittering in Chriſt's created State, became more ſenſible for Contemplation by our Mind; and more imitable for Conformity in our Practice.

5. *A Nature to be a ground of Confidence in our approach to God.* A Nature wherein we may behold him, and wherein we may approach to him. A Nature for our Comfort, and a Nature for our Confidence. Had he been only Man, he had been too feeble to aſſure us; and had he been only God, he had been too high to attract us: But now we are allured by his Human Nature; and aſſured by his Divine, in our drawing near to Heaven. Communion with God was deſired by us, but our Guilt ſtifled our hopes, and the infinite Excellency of the Divine Nature, would have dampt our hopes of ſpeeding; but ſince theſe *two Natures*, ſo far diſtant, are met in a Marriage-knot, we have a ground of hope, nay, an Earneſt that the Creator and believing Creature ſhall meet and converſe together.

And ſince our Sins are expiated by the Death of the human Nature in conjunction with the Divine, our Guilt, upon believing, ſhall not hinder us from this comfortable approach. Had he been only Man, he could not have aſſured us an approach to God. Had he been only God, his Juſtice would not have admitted us to approach to him; he had been too terrible for guilty Perſons, and too holy for polluted Perſons to come near to him: But by being made Man, his Juſtice is tempered, and by his being God and Man, his Mercy is enſured. A human Nature he had, one with us, that we might be related to God, as one with him.

6. *A Nature to derive all good to us.* Had he not been Man, we had had no ſhare or part in him: A Satisfaction by him had not been imputed to us. If he were not God, he could not communicate to us Divine Graces and Eternal Happineſs; he could not have had power to convey ſo great a good to us, had he been only Man; and he could not have done it, according to the Rule of inflexible Righteouſneſs, had he been only God. As Man, he is the way of Conveyance; as God, he is the ſpring of Conveyance. From this Grace of Union, and the Grace of Unction, we find *Rivers of Waters flowing, to make glad the City of God.* Believers are his Branches, and draw Sap from him as he is their Root in his human Nature, and have an endleſs duration of it from his Divine. Had he not been Man, he had not been in a State to obey the Law. Had he not been God as well as Man, his Obedience could not have been valuable to be imputed to us.

How ſhould this Myſtery be ſtudied by us, which would afford us both Admiration and Content? Admiration in the incomprehenſibleneſs of it; Contentment in the fitneſs of the Mediator. By this Wiſdom of God we receive the props of our Faith, and the fruits of Joy and Peace. Wiſdom conſiſts in chuſing fit means, and conducting them in ſuch a method, as may reach with good ſucceſs the variety of Marks which are aimed at. Thus hath the Wiſdom of God ſet forth a Mediator, ſuted to our wants, fitted for our ſupplies, and ordered ſo the whole Affair by the Union of theſe *two Natures* in the Perſon of the Redeemer, that there could be no diſappointment, by all the buſtle Hell and helliſh Inſtruments could raiſe againſt it.

4. *The Wiſdom of God is ſeen in this way of Redemption, in vindicating the Honour and Righteouſneſs of the Law, both as to Precept and Penalty.* The firſt and irreverſible deſign of the Law, was Obedience. The Penalty of the Law had only entrance upon Tranſgreſſion. Obedience was the Deſign, and the Penalty was added to enforce the obſervance of the Precept. *Gen.* 2. 17. *Thou ſhalt not eat*; there is the Precept: *In the Day thou eateſt thereof thou ſhalt die*; there is the Penalty. Obedience was our Debt to the Law, as Creatures; Puniſhment was due from the Law to us, as Sinners: We were bound to endure the Penalty for our firſt Tranſgreſſion, but the Penalty did not cancel the Bond of future Obedience: The Penalty had not been incurr'd without tranſgreſſing the Precept; yet the Precept was not abrogated by enduring the Penalty. Since Man ſo ſoon revolted, and by his Revolt fell under the threatning, the Juſtice of the Law had been honoured by Man's Sufferings, but the Holineſs, and Equity of the Law had been honoured by Man's Obedience. The Wiſdom of God finds out a *Medium* to ſatisfie both: The Juſtice of the Law is preſerved in the Execution of the Penalty; and the Holineſs of the Law is honoured in the obſervance of the Precept.

The Life of our Saviour is a Conformity to the Precept, and his Death is a Conformity to the Penalty; the Precepts are exactly performed, and the Curſe punctually executed, by a voluntary obſerving the one, and a voluntary undergoing the other. It is obeyed, as if it had not been tranſgreſs'd, and executed as if it had not been obeyed.

It *became* the Wiſdom, Juſtice, and Holineſs of God, as the Rector of the World, to exact it, *Heb.* 2. 10. and it *became* the holineſs of the Mediator to * Rom. 8. 3 Mat. 3. 15 *fulfil all the Righteouſneſs of the Law* *. And thus the honour of the Law was vindicated in all the parts of it. The Tranſgreſſion of the Law was condemned in the Fleſh of the Redeemer, and the Righteouſneſs of the Law was fulfilled in his Perſon: And both theſe acts of Obedience, being counted as one Righteouſneſs, and imputed to the Believing Sinner, render him a ſubject to the Law, both in its preceptive and minatory part. By *Adam*'s ſinful acting we were made ſinners, and by *Chriſt*'s righteous acting we are *made righteous*, Rom. 5. 10. *As by one man's diſobedience many were made ſinners, ſo by the obedience of one ſhall many be made righteous.* The Law was obeyed by him, that *the righteouſneſs* of it *might be fulfilled in us*, *Rom.* 8. 4. 'Tis not fulfilled in us, or in our actions, by inherency, but fulfilled in us by imputation of that Righteouſneſs which was exactly fulfilled by another. As he died for us, and roſe again for us, ſo he lived for us. The Commands of the Law were as well obſerved for us, as the Threatnings of the Law were endured for us. This juſtification of a Sinner, with the preſervation of the holineſs of the Law in truth, in the inward parts, in ſincerity of intention, as well as the conformity in action, is the wiſdom of God, the Goſpel-wiſdom which *David* deſires to know, *Pſal.* 51. 6. *Thou deſireſt truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part thou ſhalt make me to know wiſdom*; or as ſome render it, *the hidden things of wiſdom.* Not an inherent wiſdom in the acknowledgments of his ſin, which he had confeſs'd before; but the wiſdom of God in providing a Medicine, ſo as to keep up the holineſs of the Law in the obſervance of it in Truth, and the averting the Judgment due to the ſinner. In and by this way methodiz'd by the wiſdom of God, all doubts and troubles are diſcharg'd. Naturally if we take a view of the Law to behold its Holineſs and Juſtice, and then of our hearts, to ſee the contrariety in them to the command, and the pollution repugnant to its holineſs; and after this caſt our eyes upward, and behold a flaming Sword, edg'd with Curſes and Wrath: Is there any matter, but that of Terror, afforded by any of theſe? But when we behold, in the Life of Chriſt, a conformity to the Mandatory part of the Law, and in the Croſs of Chriſt, a ſuſtaining the minatory part of the Law; this wiſdom of God gives a well-grounded and rational diſmiſs to all the horrors that can ſeize upon us.

5. The wiſdom of God in Redemption is viſible *in manifeſting two contrary Affections at the ſame time, and in one act: The greateſt hatred of Sin, and the greateſt love to the Sinner.* In this way he puniſhes the ſin without ruining the ſinner, and repairs the ruins of the ſinner, without indulging the ſin. Here is eternal love, and eternal hatred; a condemning the ſin to what it merited, and an advancing the ſinner to what he could not expect. Herein is the choiceſt love, and the deepeſt hatred manifeſt. An implacableneſs againſt the ſin, and a placableneſs to the ſinner. His hatred of ſin hath been diſcovered in other ways; in puniſhing the Devil without remedy; ſentencing Man to an expulſion from Paradiſe, though ſeduced by another; in accurſing the Serpent, an irrational Creature, though but a miſguided Inſtrument. The whole tenor of his Threatnings declare his loathing of ſin, and the ſprinklings of his Judgments in the World, and the horrible expectations of terrified Conſciences confirm it. But what are all theſe Teſtimonies to the higheſt Evidence that can poſſibly be given in the ſheathing the Sword of his wrath in the heart of his Son? If a Father ſhould order his Son to take a mean Garb below his Dignity, order him to be dragg'd to Priſon, ſeem to throw off all Affection of a Father for the Severity of a Judge, condemn his Son to a horrible Death, be a Spectator of his bleeding Condition, withhold his hand from aſſwaging his Miſery, regard it rather with Joy than Sorrow, give him a bitter Cup to drink, and ſtand by to ſee him drink it off to the bottom, dregs and all, and flaſh frowns in his face all the while; and this not for any fault of his own, but the Rebellion of ſome Subjects he undertook for, and that the Offenders might have a Pardon ſeal'd by the Blood of the Son the ſufferer; all this would evidence his deteſtation of the Rebellion, and his affection to the Rebels; his hatred to their Crime, and his love to their Welfare. This did God do; *He delivered Chriſt up for our Offences*, Rom. 8. 32. *the Father gave him the Cup*, *John* 18. 18. the Lord *bruiſed him* with *pleaſure*, *Iſa.* 53. 10. and that for ſin: He transferr'd upon the ſhoulders of his Son the pain we had merited, that the Criminal might be reſtored to the place he had forfeited. He hates the ſin ſo, as to condemn it for ever, and wrap it up in the Curſe he had threatned; and loves the ſinner believing and repenting, ſo as to mount him to an expectation of a happineſs exceeding the firſt ſtate, both in glory and perpetuity. Inſtead of an Earthly Paradiſe, lays the Foundation of an Heavenly Manſion, brings forth a weight of Glory from a weight of Miſery, ſeparates the comfortable light of the Sun, from the ſcorching heat we had deſerved at his hands. Thus hath God's hatred of ſin been manifeſted. He is at an eternal Defiance with ſin, yet nearer in alliance with the ſinner, than he was before the Revolt: As if Man's miſerable Fall had endeared him to the Judge. This is the wiſdom and prudence of *Grace*, *wherein God hath abounded*, *Eph.* 1. 9. A wiſdom in twiſting the happy reſtoration of the broken Amity, with an everlaſting Curſe upon that which made the breach, both upon ſin the Cauſe, and upon *Satan* the Seducer to it. Thus is hatred and love in their higheſt glory manifeſted together: Hatred to ſin, in the death of Chriſt, more than if the torments of Hell had been undergone by the ſinner; and love to the ſinner, more than if he had, by an abſolute and ſimple Bounty, beſtowed upon him the poſſeſſion of Heaven; becauſe the gift of his Son, for ſuch an end, is a greater token of his boundleſs Affections, than a reinſtating Man in Paradiſe. Thus is the wiſdom of God ſeen in Redemption; conſuming the ſin, and recovering the ſinner.

6. *The wiſdom of God is evident in overturning the Devil's Empire, by the Nature he had vanquiſh'd, and by ways quite contrary to what that malicious Spirit could imagine.* The Devil indeed read his own doom in the firſt Promiſe, and found his ruin reſolved upon, by the means of the *Seed of the Woman*, but by what Seed, was not ſo eaſily known to him *. And the methods whereby it was to be brought about, was a Myſtery kept ſecret from the malicious Devils, ſince it was not diſcovered to the obedient Angels. He might know from *Iſa.* 53. that the Redeemer was aſſured to divide the Spoil with the ſtrong, reſcue a part of the loſt Creation out of his hands; and that this was to be effected, by making his Soul an Offering for ſin: But could he imagine which way his Soul was to be made ſuch an Offering? He ſhrewdly ſuſpected Chriſt juſt after his Inauguration into his Office by Baptiſm, to be the Son of God But did he ever dream that the *Meſſiah*, by dying as a reputed Malefactor, ſhould be a Sacrifice for the expiation of the ſin the *Devil* had introduced by his ſubtilty? Did he ever imagine a Croſs ſhould diſpoſſeſs him of his Crown, and that dying groans ſhould wreſt the Victory out of his hands? He

* *And indeed the Heathen Oracles, managed by the Devils, declared that they were not long to hold their Scepter in the World, but the Hebrew Child ſhould vanquiſh them.*

He was conquer'd by that Nature he had caſt headlong into ruin: A Woman, by his ſubtilty, was the occaſion of our Death; and Woman, by the conduct of the only wiſe God, brings forth the Author of our Life, and the Conqueror of our Enemies. The Fleſh of the old *Adam* had infected us, and the Fleſh of the new *Adam* cures us, 1 *Cor.* 15. 21. *By man came death; by man alſo came the reſurrection from the dead.* We are killed by the old *Adam*, and raiſed by the new. As among the *Iſraelites*, a fiery Serpent gave the wound, and a brazen Serpent adminiſters the Cure. The Nature that was deceived bruiſeth the Deceiver, and razeth up the Foundations of his Kingdom. *Satan* is defeated by the Counſels he took to ſecure his Poſſeſſion, and loſes the Victory by the ſame means whereby he thought to preſerve it.

His tempting the *Jews* to the ſin of Crucifying the Son of God, had a contrary ſucceſs to his tempting *Adam* to eat of the Tree. The firſt death he brought upon *Adam*, ruined us, and the death he brought by his Inſtruments upon the *ſecond Adam*, reſtored us. By a Tree, if one may ſo ſay, he had triumphed over the World, and by the Fruit of a Tree, one hanging upon a Tree, he is diſcharged of his Power over us. *Heb.* 2. 14. *Through death he deſtroyed him that had the power of death.* And thus the Devil ruins his own Kingdom, while he thinks to confirm and enlarge it. And is defeated by his own Policy, whereby he thought to continue the World under his Chains, and deprive the Creator of the World of his purpoſed honour. What deeper Counſel could he reſolve upon for his own ſecurity, than to be inſtrumental in the death of him, who was God, the terror of the Devil himſelf, and to bring the Redeemer of the World to expire with diſgrace in the ſight of a multitude of men? Thus did the Wiſdom of God ſhine forth in reſtoring us by Methods ſeemingly repugnant to the end he aimed at, and above the ſuſpicion of a ſubtle Devil, whom he intended to baffle.

Could he imagine that we ſhould be healed by ſtripes, quickned by death, purified by blood, crowned by a croſs, advanced to the higheſt honour by the loweſt humility, comforted by ſorrows, glorified by diſgrace, abſolved by condemnation, and made rich by poverty? That the ſweeteſt Honey ſhould at once ſpring out of the belly of a dead Lion, the Lion of the Tribe of *Judah*, and out of the boſom of the living God? How wonderful is this wiſdom of God! That the Seed of the Woman, born of a mean Virgin, brought forth in a Stable, ſpending his days in affliction, miſery, and poverty, without any pomp and ſplendor, paſſing ſome time in a *Carpenter*'s Shop, with Carpenter's Tools, and afterwards expoſed to a horrible and diſgraceful Death, ſhould by this way pull down the gates of Hell, ſubvert the Kingdom of the Devil, and be the hammer to break in pieces that power, which he had ſo long exerciſed over the world! Thus became he the Author of our Life, by being bound for a while in the Chains of Death, and arrived to a Principality over the moſt malicious Powers, by being a Priſoner for us, and the Anvil of their Rage and Fury.

* Mark 6. 6.

7. The Wiſdom of God appears, *In giving us this way the ſureſt ground of Comfort, and the ſtrongeſt incentive to Obedience.* The Rebel is reconciled, and the Rebellion ſhamed; God is propitiated, and the Sinner ſanctified by the ſame Blood. What can more contribute to our comfort and confidence, than God's richeſt gift to us? What can more enflame our love to him, than our recovery from death by the oblation of his Son to miſery and death for us? It doth as much engage our duty as ſecure our happineſs. It preſents God glorious and gracious, and therefore every way fit to be truſted, in regard of the intereſt of his own glory in it, and in regard of the effuſions of his grace by it. It renders the Creature obliged in the higheſt manner, and ſo awakens his induſtry to the ſtricteſt and nobleſt obedience. Nothing ſo effectual as a crucified Chriſt to wean us from ſin, and ſtifle all motions of deſpair, a means, in regard of the Juſtice ſignaliz'd in it, to make man to hate the ſin which had ruined him; and a means, in regard of the love expreſs'd, to make him *delight in that Law* he had violated, 2 *Cor.* 5. 14, 15. *The love of Chriſt*, and therefore the love of God expreſs'd in it, *conſtrains us no longer to live to our ſelves.*

1. *It is a ground of the higheſt comfort and confidence in God.* Since he hath given ſuch an evidence of his impartial Truth to his threatning for the honour of his Juſtice, we need not queſtion but he will be as punctual to his promiſe for the honour of his Mercy. 'Tis a ground of confidence in God, ſince he hath redeemed us in ſuch a way as glorifies the ſteadineſs of his veracity, as well as the ſeverity of his Juſtice; We may well truſt him for the performance of his promiſe, ſince we have experience of the execution of his threatning; his merciful truth will as much engage him to accompliſh the one, as his juſt truth did to inflict the other. The goodneſs which ſhone forth in weaker rays in the Creation, breaks out with ſtronger beams in Redemption. And the Mercy which before the appearance of Chriſt was manifeſted in ſome ſmall Rivulets, diffuſeth himſelf like a boundleſs Ocean. That God that was our Creator, is our Redeemer, the *Repairer of our Breaches*, and the *Reſtorer of our Paths to dwell in*, and the plenteous Redemption from all Iniquity, manifeſted in the Incarnation and Paſſion of the Son of God, is much more a ground of hope in the Lord, than it was in the paſt Ages, when it could not be ſaid, *The Lord hath, but the Lord ſhall redeem* Iſrael *from all his iniquities*, *Pſal.* 130. 8. It is a full Warrant to caſt our ſelves into his Arms.

2. *An incentive to Obedience.*

1. The *Commands of the Goſpel require the Obedience of the Creature.* There is not one Precept in the Goſpel which interferes with any Rule in the Law, but ſtrengthens it, and repreſents it in its true exactneſs: The heat to ſcorch us is allayed, but the light to direct us is not extinguiſh'd. Not the leaſt allowance to any ſin is granted; not the leaſt affection to any ſin is indulg'd. The Law is temper'd by the Goſpel, but not null'd and caſt out of doors by it: It enacts, that none but thoſe that are ſanctified, ſhall be glorified; that there muſt be Grace here, if we expect glory hereafter; that we muſt not preſume to expect an admittance to the Viſion of God's Face, unleſs our Souls be cloathed with a Robe of *Holineſs*, *Heb.* 12. 14. It requires an obedience to the whole Law in our intention and purpoſe, and an endeavour to obſerve it in our actions: It promotes the honour of God, and ordains an univerſal Charity among men; it reveals the whole Counſel of God, and furniſheth men with the holieſt Laws.

2. *It preſents to us the exacteſt Pattern for our Obedience.* The redeeming Perſon is not only a Propitiation for the ſin, but a Pattern to the ſinner, 1 *Pet.* 2. 21. The Conſcience of man, after the Fall of *Adam*, approved of the reaſon of the Law, but by the corruption of nature, man had no ſtrength to perform the Law. The poſſibility of keeping the Law by Human Nature, is evidenced by the appearance and life of the Redeemer, and an aſſurance given that it ſhall be advanc'd to ſuch a ſtate, as to be able to obſerve it: We aſpire to it in this Life, and

and have hopes to attain it in a future: And while we are here, the Actor of our Redemption is the Copy for our Imitation. The Pattern to imitate is greater than the Law to be ruled by. What a luſtre did his Vertues caſt about the World? How attractive are his Graces? With what high Examples for all Duties hath he furniſh'd us out of the Copy of his Life?

3. *It preſents us with the ſtrongeſt motives to Obedience.* Titus 2. 11, 12. *The Grace of God teaches us to deny ungodlineſs.* What Chains bind faſter and cloſer than love? Here is love to our Nature, in his Incarnation; love to us though Enemies, in his Death and Paſſion; encouragements to Obedience by the proffers of Pardon for former Rebellions: By the diſobedience of Man, God introduceth his redeeming Grace, and engageth his Creature to more ingenuous and excellent returns than his Innocent ſtate could oblige him to. In his created ſtate he had goodneſs to move him, he hath the ſame goodneſs now to oblige him as a Creature, and a greater love and mercy to oblige him as a repaired Creature; and the terror of Juſtice is taken off, which might invenom his heart as a Criminal. In his revolted ſtate he had miſery to diſcourage him, in his redeemed ſtate he hath love to attract him. Without ſuch a way, black deſpair had ſeized upon the Creature expoſed to a remedileſs miſery: And God would have had no returns of love from the beſt of his earthly Works: But if any ſpark of ingenuity be left, they will be excited by the efficacy of this Argument.

This willingneſs of God to receive returning ſinners, is manifeſted in the higheſt degree; and the willingneſs of a ſinner to return to him in duty hath the ſtrongeſt engagements. He hath done as much to encourage our Obedience, as to illuſtrate his Glory. We cannot conceive what could be done greater for the Salvation of our Souls, and conſequently what could have been done more to enforce our obſervance. We have a Redeemer, as Man, to Copy it to us, and as God, to perfect us in it. It would make the heart of any to tremble to wound him that hath provided ſuch a ſalve for our Sores, and to make Grace a warrant for Rebellion: Motives capable to form Rocks into a flexibleneſs. Thus is the Wiſdom of God ſeen in giving us a ground of the ſureſt confidence, and furniſhing us with incentives to the greateſt Obedience by the horrors of wrath, death, and ſufferings of our Saviour.

8. The Wiſdom of God is apparent *in the Condition he hath ſettled for the enjoying the fruits of Redemption, and this is Faith, a wiſe and reaſonable Condition:* And *the concomitants of it.*

1. *In that it is ſuited to man's lapſed ſtate and God's Glory.* Innocence is not required here; that had been a Condition impoſſible in its own Nature after the Fall: The rejecting of Mercy is now only condemning, where Mercy is propoſed: Had the Condition of Perfection in Works been required, it had rather been a Condemnation than Redemption. Works are not demanded whereby the Creature might aſcribe any thing to himſelf; but a Condition which continues in Man a ſenſe of his Apoſtacy, abates all aſpiring Pride, and makes the Reward of Grace, not of Debt: A Condition whereby Mercy is owned, and the Creature emptied: Fleſh ſilenc'd in the Duſt, and God ſet upon his Throne of Grace and Authority: The Creature brought to the loweſt debaſement, and Divine Glory raiſed to the higheſt pitch. The Creature is brought to acknowledge Mercy, and ſeal to Juſtice; to own the Holineſs of God in the hatred of ſin, the Juſtice of God in the puniſhment of ſin, and the Mercy of God in the pardoning of ſin: A Condition that deſpoils Nature of all its pretended Excellency: Beats down the glory of Man at the foot of God, 1 *Cor.* 1. 29. 31. It ſubjects the Reaſon and Will of Man to the Wiſdom and Authority of God; it brings the Creature to an unreſerved ſubmiſſion, and entire reſignation. God is made the Soveraign Cauſe of all; the Creature continued in his emptineſs, and reduced to a greater dependence upon God than by a Creation; depending upon him for a conſtant influx for an entire happineſs. A Condition that renders God glorious in the Creature, and the fallen Creature happy in God: God glorious in his Condeſcenſion to Man, and Man happy in his emptineſs before God.

Faith is made the Condition of man's recovery, that the *lofty looks* of man might be humbled, and the *haughtineſs of man be pulled down*, *Iſa.* 2. 11. That every towring *imagination* might be levelled, 2 *Cor.* 10. 5. Man muſt have all from without doors; he muſt not live upon himſelf, but upon another's allowance. He muſt ſtand to the proviſion of God, and be a perpetual Suitor at his Gates.

2. *A Condition oppoſite to that which was the cauſe of the Fall.* We fell from God by an unbelief of the threatning, he recovers us by a belief of the Promiſe; by Unbelief we laid the Foundation of God's diſhonour, by Faith therefore God exalts the Glory of his free Grace. We loſt our ſelves by a deſire of ſelf-dependence, and our return is ordered by a way of ſelf-emptineſs. 'Tis reaſonable we ſhould be reſtored in a way contrary to that whereby we fell: We ſinned by a refuſal of cleaving to God, 'tis a part of Divine Wiſdom to reſtore us in a denial of our own Righteouſneſs and Strength *. *Man having ſinned by Pride, the Wiſdom of God humbles him* (ſaith one) *at the very Root of the Tree of Knowledge, and makes him deny his own Underſtanding, and ſubmit to Faith, or elſe, for ever to loſe his deſired Felicity.*

* Laud againſt Fiſher, p. 5.

3. It is a Condition *ſuited to the Common Sentiment and Cuſtom of the World.* There is more of belief than reaſon in the World. All Inſtructers and Maſters in Sciences and Arts, require firſt a belief in their Diſciples, and a reſignation of their Underſtandings and Wills to them. And it is the Wiſdom of God to require that of Man, which his own reaſon makes him ſubmit to another which is his fellow Creature. He therefore that quarrels with the Condition of Faith, muſt quarrel with all the World, ſince Belief is the beginning of all Knowledge *; yea, and moſt of the Knowledge in the World, may rather come under the Title of Belief, than of Knowledge: For what we think we know this day, we may find from others ſuch Arguments as may ſtagger our Knowledge, and make us doubt of that we thought our ſelves certain of before: Nay, ſometimes we change our Opinions our ſelves, without any Inſtructor; and ſee a reaſon to entertain an Opinion quite contrary to what we had before. And if we found a general Judgment of others to vote againſt what we think we know, it would make us give the leſs Credit to our ſelves, and our own Sentiments. All Knowledge in the World, is only a belief depending upon the teſtimony or arguings of others; for indeed it may be ſaid of all men as in *Job*, Job 8. 9. *We are but of yeſterday, and know nothing:* Since therefore Belief is ſo univerſal a thing in the World, the Wiſdom of God requires that of us which every man muſt count reaſonable, or render himſelf utterly ignorant of any thing. It is a Condition that is common to all Religions. All Religions are founded upon a belief: Unleſs men did believe future things, they would not hope nor fear. A Belief and Reſignation was required in all the Idolatries in the World; ſo that God requires nothing but what an univerſal Cuſtom of the World gives

* Bradward. 28.

gives its ſuffrage to the reaſonableneſs of it: Indeed juſtifying Faith is not ſuited to the Sentiments of men; but that Faith which muſt precede juſtifying; a belief of the Doctrine, though not comprehended by reaſon, is common to the Cuſtom of the World *. 'Tis no leſs madneſs not to ſubmit our Reaſon to Faith, than not to regulate our Fancies by Reaſon.

* Janeway, p. 88.

4. This Condition *of Faith and Repentance is ſuited to the Conſciences of Men.* The Law of Nature teaches us, that we are bound to believe every Revelation from God, when it is made known to us: And not only to aſſent to it as true, but embrace it as good. This Nature dictates, that we are as much obliged to believe God, becauſe of his Truth, as to love him becauſe of his Goodneſs. Every man's Reaſon tells him, he cannot obey a Precept, nor depend upon a Promiſe, unleſs he believes both the one and the other. No man's Conſcience, but will inform him upon hearing the Revelation of God, concerning his excellent contrivance of Redemption, and the way to enjoy it, that it is very reaſonable he ſhould ſtrip off all affections to ſin, lie down in ſorrow, and bewail what he hath done amiſs againſt ſo tender a God. Can you expect that any man that promiſes you a great Honour, or a rich Donative, ſhould demand leſs of you than to truſt his word, bear an affection to him, and return him kindneſs? Can any leſs be expected by a Prince than obedience from a pardoned Subject, and a redeemed Captive? If you have injured any man in his Body, Eſtate, Reputation, would you not count it a reaſonable Condition for the partaking of his Clemency and Forgiveneſs, to expreſs a hearty ſorrow for it, and a reſolution not to fall into the like Crime again? Such are the Conditions of the Goſpel, ſuited to the Conſciences of men.

5. The Wiſdom of God appears, in *that this condition was only likely to attain the end.* There are but *two Common Heads* appointed by God, *Adam* and *Chriſt*: By one we are made a *living Soul*, by the other a *quickning Spirit*: By the one we are made Sinners, by the other we are made Righteous. *Adam* fell as a Head, and all his Members, his whole Iſſue and Poſterity fell with him, becauſe they proceeded from him by Natural Generation. But ſince the *ſecond Adam* cannot be our Head by Natural Generation, there muſt be ſome other way of ingrafting us in him, and uniting us to him as our Head, which muſt be Moral and Spiritual; this cannot rationally be conceived to be by any other way than what is ſuitable to a reaſonable Creature, and therefore muſt be by an act of the Will, Conſent, and Acceptance, and owning the terms ſettled for an Admiſſion to that Union. And this is that we properly call Faith, and therefore called a *receiving of him*, *John* 1. 12.

1. Now this Condition of enjoying the Fruits of Redemption *could not be a bare Knowledge*; for that is but only an act of the Underſtanding, and doth not in it ſelf include the act of the Will, and ſo would have united only one Faculty to him, not the whole Soul: But Faith is an act both of the Underſtanding and Will too; and principally of the Will, which doth preſuppoſe an act of the Underſtanding: For there cannot be a Perſwaſion in the Will, without a propoſition from the Underſtanding. The Underſtanding muſt be convinced of the Truth and goodneſs of a thing, before the Will can be perſwaded to make any motion towards it; and therefore all the Promiſes, Invitations, and Proffers are ſuited to the Underſtanding and Will; To the Underſtanding in regard of Knowledge, to the Will in regard of Appetite; to the Underſtanding as true, to the Will as good; to the Underſtanding as practical and influencing the Will.

2. Nor could it be *an entire Obedience.* That, as was ſaid before, would have made the Creature have ſome matter of boaſting, and this was not ſuitable to the Condition he was ſunk into by the Fall. Beſides, Man's Nature being corrupted, was rendered uncapable to obey, and unable to have one *thought* of a due Obedience, 2 *Cor.* 3. 5.

When Man turned from God, and upon that was turned out of Paradiſe, his return was impoſſible by any ſtrength of his own; his Nature was as much corrupted as his re-entrance into *Paradiſe* was prohibited. That Covenant, whereby he ſtood in the Garden, required a perfection of action and intention in the obſervance of all the Commands of God: But his Fall had crack'd his Ability to recover happineſs by the terms and condition of an entire Obedience; yet Man being a Perſon governable by a Law, and capable of happineſs by a Covenant; if God would reſtore him, and enter into a Covenant with him, we muſt ſuppoſe it to have ſome Condition, as all Covenants have. That Condition could not be works, becauſe man's Nature was polluted. Indeed, had God reduced man's Body to the duſt, and his Soul to nothing, and framed another man, he might have govern'd him by a Covenant of Works: But that had not been the ſame man that had revolted, and upon his revolt was ſtain'd and diſabled. But ſuppoſe God had by any tranſcendent Grace, wholly purified him from the ſtain of his former Tranſgreſſion, and reſtored to him the ſtrength and ability he had loſt, might he not as eaſily have rebelled again? And ſo the Condition would never have been accompliſh'd, the Covenant never have been performed, and Happineſs never have been enjoyed. There muſt be ſome other Condition than in the Covenant God would make for man's Security.

Now Faith is the moſt proper for receiving the Promiſe of Pardon of Sin: Belief of thoſe Promiſes is the firſt Natural Reflection that a Malefactor can make upon a Pardon offered him, an acceptance of it is the firſt conſequent from that belief. Hence is Faith entituled a *perſwaſion of*, and *embracing the Promiſes*, *Heb.* 11. 13. and *a receiving the atonement*, *Rom.* 5. 11.

Thus the Wiſdom of God is apparent in annexing ſuch a Condition to the Covenant, whereby man is reſtored, as anſwers the end of God for his Glory, the State, Conſcience, and neceſſity of Man, and had the greateſt congruity to his recovery.

9. This Wiſdom of God is manifeſt *in the manner of the publiſhing and propagating this Doctrine of Redemption.*

1. *In the gradual diſcoveries of it.* Flaſhing a great light in the face of a ſudden, is amazing; ſhould the Sun glare in our Eyes in all its brightneſs on a ſudden, after we have been in a thick darkneſs, it would blind us inſtead of comforting us: So great a Work as this muſt have ſeveral digeſtions.

God *firſt* reveals of what Seed the Redeeming Perſon ſhould be, *the Seed of the Woman*, *Gen.* 3. 15. Then of what Nation, *Gen.* 26. 4. then of what Tribe, *Gen.* 49. 12. of the Tribe of *Judah*; then of what Family, the Family of *David*; then what works he was to do, what ſufferings to undergo. The firſt Predictions of our Saviour were obſcure. *Adam* could not well ſee the Redemption in the Promiſe, for the Puniſhment of Death which ſucceeded in the Threatning; the Promiſe exerciſed his Faith, and the Obſcurity and bodily Death, his Humility. The Promiſe made to *Abraham* was clearer than the Revelations made before, yet he could not tell how to reconcile his Redemption with his Exile. God ſupported his Faith by the Promiſe,

and exerciſed his Humility, by making him a Pilgrim. and keeping him in a perpetual dependance upon him in all his motions.

The Declarations to *Moſes* are brighter than thoſe to *Abraham*. The delineations of *Chriſt* by *David* in the *Pſalms*, more illuſtrious than the former. And all thoſe exceeded by the Revelations made to the Prophet *Iſaiah*, and the other *Prophets*, according as the Age did approach, wherein the Redeemer was to enter into his Office.

God wrapt up this Goſpel in a multitude of Types and Ceremonies, fitted to the Infant-ſtate of the Church, *Gal.* 4. 3. An Infant State is uſually affected with ſenſible things; yet thoſe Ceremonies were fitted to that great end of the Goſpel, which he would bring forth in time to the world. And the wiſdom of God in them would be amazing, if we could underſtand the Analogy between every Ceremony in the Law and the thing ſignified by it. As it cannot but affect a diligent Reader to obſerve that little account of them we have by the *Apoſtle Paul*, ſprinkled in his Epiſtles, and more largely in that to the *Hebrews*. As the Political Laws of the *Jews* flowed from the depth of the Moral Law, ſo their Ceremonial did from the depth of Evangelical Counſels, and all of them had a ſpecial relation to the honour of God, and the debaſing the Creature.

Though God formed the Maſs and Matter of the World at the firſt Creation at once, yet his Wiſdom took *ſix days* time for the diſpoſing and adorning it. The more Illuſtrious Truths of God are not to be comprehended on a ſudden by the weakneſs of men: Chriſt did not declare all Truths to his Diſciples in the time of his Life, becauſe they were not able at that preſent to bear them, *John* 16. 12. *Ye cannot bear them now.* Some were reſerved for his Reſurrection, others for the coming of the Spirit; and the full diſcovery of all kept back for another World. This Doctrine God figured out in the Law, Oracled by the Prophets, and unveil'd by Chriſt and his Apoſtles.

2. The Wiſdom of God appeared, *in uſing all proper means to render the belief of it eaſie.*

1. *The moſt minute things that were to be tranſacted, were predicted in the Ancient foregoing Age, long before the coming of the Redeemer*: The Vinegar and Gall offered to him upon the Croſs, the parting his Garments, the not breaking of his Bones, the piercing of his Hands and Feet, the betraying of him, the ſlighting of him by the multitude, all were exactly painted and repreſented in variety of Figures. There was Light enough to good men not to miſtake him; and yet not ſo plain, as to hinder bad men from being Serviceable to the Counſels of God in the crucifying of him when he came.

2. *The Tranſlation of the Old Teſtament from the private Language of the Jews into the moſt publick Language of the World.* That Tranſlation which we call *Septuagint*, from *Hebrew* into *Greek*, ſome Years before the coming of Chriſt, that Tongue being moſt diffuſed at that time, by reaſon of the *Macedonian* Empire raiſed by *Alexander*, and the Univerſity of *Athens*, to which other Nations reſorted for Learning and Education: This was a Preparation for the Sons of *Japhet* to *dwell in the Tents of Shem.* By this was the Entertainment of the Goſpel facilitated: When they compar'd the Prophecies of the *Old* Teſtament, with the Declarations of the *New*, and found things ſo long predicted before they were tranſacted in the publick view.

3. *By ordering concurrent Teſtimonies as to matter of Fact, that the matter of Fact was not deniable.* That there was ſuch a Perſon as Chriſt, that his Miracles were ſtupendous, that his Doctrine did not encline to Sedition, that he affected not worldly Applauſe, that he did ſuffer at *Jeruſalem*, was acknowledged by all: Not a man among the greateſt Enemies of Chriſtians was found, that denied the matter of Fact. And this great Truth, that Chriſt is the *Meſſiah* and Redeemer, hath been, with univerſal conſent, owned by all the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity throughout the World: Whatever Bickerings there have been among them about ſome particular Doctrines, they all centred in that Truth of Chriſt's being the Redeemer. The firſt publication of this Doctrine was ſealed by a Thouſand Miracles, and ſo illuſtrious, that he was an utter ſtranger to the world that was ignorant of them.

4. *In keeping up ſome Principles and Opinions in the World to facilitate the belief of this, or render men inexcuſable for rejecting of it.* The Incarnation of the Son of God could not be ſo ſtrange to the world, if we conſider the general belief of the *Appearances* * of their Gods among them; that the *Epicureans*, and others that denied any ſuch Appearances, were accounted *Atheiſts* *. And *Pythagoras* was eſteemed to be one, not of the inferior *Genii* and *Lunar Dæmons*, but one of the higher Gods, who appeared in a Human Body, for the curing and rectifying Mortal Life *. And himſelf tells *Abaris* the *Scythian*, that he was ἀνθρωπόμορφος, that he *took the fleſh of Man*, that Men might not be aſtoniſhed at him, and in a fright fly from his Inſtructions. It was not therefore accounted an irrational thing among them, that God ſhould be Incarnate: But indeed the great ſtumbling-block was a *crucified* God. But had they known the holy and righteous Nature of God, the Malice of Sin, the univerſal Corruption of Human Nature, the firſt threatning and the neceſſity of Vindicating the honour of the Law, and clearing the Juſtice of God; the Notion of his Crucifixion would not have appeared ſo incredible, ſince they believed the poſſibility of an Incarnation.

* Ἔμφ. vide.

* Dionyſ. Halicar. *Antiq. l.* 2. *p.* 128.

* Jamblich. *Vit. Pythag. l.* 1. *cap.* 6. *p.* 44. & *lib.* 2. *c.* 19. *p.* 94.

Another Principle was that univerſal One of *Sacrifices for Expiation*, and rendring God propitious to Man, and was practiſed among all Nations. I remember not any wherein this Cuſtom did not prevail; for it did even among thoſe People where the *Jews*, as being no Trading Nation, had not any Commerce; and alſo in *America*, found out in theſe latter Ages. It was not a Law of Nature, no Man can find any ſuch thing written in his own heart, but a Tradition from *Adam*. Now, that among the loſs of ſo many other Doctrines, that were handed down from *Adam* to his immediate Poſterity, as in particular that of the *Seed of the Woman*, which one would think a neceſſary Appendix to that of Sacrificing: This latter ſhould be preſerved as a Fragment of an Ancient Tradition, ſeems to be an Act of Divine Wiſdom, to prepare Men for the Entertainment of the Doctrine of the *great Sacrifice* for the Expiation of the ſin of the World. And as the *Apoſtle* forms his Argument from the Jewiſh Sacrifices in the *Epiſtle* to the *Hebrews*, for the convincing them of the end of the Death of Chriſt, ſo did the Ancient Fathers make uſe of this practice of the *Heathen*, to convince them of the ſame Doctrine.

5. The Wiſdom of God appeared *in the time and circumſtances of the firſt Solemn Publication of the Goſpel by the Apoſtles at* Jeruſalem. The Relation you may read in *Acts* 2. from *verſe* 1. to the 12*th.* The *Spirit* was given to the *Apoſtles* on the day of *Pentecoſt*; a time wherein there were multitudes of *Jews* from all Nations, not only near, but remote, that heard the great things of God ſpoken in the ſeveral Languages of thoſe Nations, where their Habitations were fixed; and that by *twelve illiterate men.* That two or three hours before knew no Language but that of their Native Country.

It was the Cuſtom of the *Jews*, that dwelt among other Nations, at a diſtance from *Jeruſalem*, to aſſemble together at *Jeruſalem* at the Feaſt of *Pentecoſt*: And God pitched upon this Seaſon, that there might be Witneſſes of this Miracle in many Parts of the World: There were ſome *of every Nation under Heaven*, verſe 5. That is, of that known part of the World, ſo ſaith the Text. *Fourteen* ſeveral Nations are mentioned; and *Proſelytes* as well as *Jews* by Birth. They are called *devout men*, men of Conſcience, whoſe Teſtimony would carry weight with it among their Neighbours at their return, becauſe of their Reputation by their Religious Carriage.

Again, this was not heard and ſeen by ſome of them at one time, and ſome at another, by ſome one hour, by others the next *ſucceſſively* *, but *all together* in a Solemn Aſſembly, that the teſtimony of ſo many witneſſes at a time, might be more valid, and the truth of the Doctrine appear more illuſtrious and undeniable. And it muſt needs be aſtoniſhing to them, to hear that Perſon magnified in ſo miraculous a manner, who had ſo lately been condemned by their Country-men as a Malefactor.

* Faucheur *in loc. p.* 294, 295.

Wiſdom conſiſts in the *timing* of things. And in this Circumſtance doth the wiſdom of God appear, in furniſhing the Apoſtles with the Spirit at ſuch a time, and bringing forth ſuch a Miracle, as the gift of Tongues, on a ſudden, that every Nation might hear in their own Language, the wonder of Redemption, and as witneſſes, at their returns into their own Countries, report it to others; that the Credit they had, in their ſeveral places, might facilitate the belief and entertainment of the Goſpel, when the *Apoſtles*, or others, ſhould arrive to thoſe ſeveral Charges and Dioceſſes appointed for them to Preach the Goſpel in. Had this Miracle been wrought in the preſence only of the Inhabitants of *Judea*, that underſtood only their own Language, or one or two of the Neighbouring Tongues, it had been counted by them rather a Madneſs than a Miracle. Or had they underſtood all the Tongues which they ſpoke, the News of it had ſpread no further than the limits of their own Habitations, and had been confin'd within the narrow bounds of the Land of *Judea*. But now it is carried to ſeveral remote Nations, where any of thoſe Auditors then aſſembled had their Reſidence.

As God choſe the time of the *Paſſeover* for the Death of Chriſt, that there might be the greateſt Number of the Inhabitants of the Country, as witneſſes of the Matter of Fact, the Innocence and Sufferings of Chriſt, ſo he choſe the time of *Pentecoſt* for the firſt publiſhing the value and end of this Blood to the world.

Thus the *Evangelical Law* was given in a Confluence of People from all Parts and Nations, becauſe it was a *Covenant with all Nations*: And the variety of Languages ſpoken by a Company of poor *Galileans*, bred up at the Lake of *Tiberias*, and in poor corners of *Canaan*, without the Inſtructions of men for ſo great a Skill, might well evidence to the hearers, that God, that brought the *Confuſion of Languages* firſt at *Babel*, did only work that Cure of them, and combine all together at *Jeruſalem*.

3. The wiſdom of God is ſeen *in the Inſtruments he employed in the publiſhing the Goſpel*. He did not employ *Philoſophers*, but *Fiſhermen*, uſed not acquired Arts, but infus'd wiſdom and courage. This Treaſure was put into, and preſerved in Earthen Veſſels, that the wiſdom, as well as the power of God, might be magnified. The weaker the means are which attain the end, the greater is the skill of the Conductor of them.

Wiſe Princes choſe Men of moſt Credit, Intereſt, Wiſdom, and Ability to be Miniſters of their Affairs, and Embaſſadors to others. But what were theſe that God choſe for ſo great a work, as the publiſhing a new Doctrine to the world? What was their quality, but mean? what was their Authority, without Intereſt? What was their Ability, without eminent Parts for ſo great a work, but what Divine Grace in a ſpecial manner endowed them with? Nay, what was their diſpoſition to it? As dull and unweildy. Witneſs the frequent rebukes for their ſlow-heartedneſs, from their Maſter, when he converſed in the Fleſh with them. And *One* of the greateſt of them, ſo fond of the *Jewiſh* Ceremonies and Phariſaical Principles, wherein he had been more than ordinarily principled, that he hated the Chriſtian Religion to extirpation, and the Profeſſors of it to death; by thoſe ways which were out of the Road of Human wiſdom, and would be accounted the greateſt abſurdity to be practis'd by Men that have a repute for diſcretion, did God advance his wiſdom. 1 *Cor.* 1. 25. *The fooliſhneſs of God is wiſer than Man.* By this means it was indiſputably evidenc'd to unbyaſſed Minds, that the Doctrine was Divine. It could not rationally be imagined, that Inſtruments deſtitute of all Human Advantages, ſhould be able to vanquiſh the world, confound *Judaiſm*, overturn *Heatheniſm*, chaſe away the *Devils*, ſtrip them of their Temples, alienate the Minds of Men from their ſeveral Religions, which had been rooted in them by Education, and eſtabliſhed by a long ſucceſſion. It could not, I ſay, reaſonably be imagined to be without a Supernatural Aſſiſtance, an Heavenly and efficacious working: Whereas, had God taken a Courſe agreeable to the Prudence of Man, and uſed thoſe that had been furniſhed with Learning, tip'd with Eloquence, and armed with Human Authority, the Doctrines would have been thought to have been of a Human Invention, and to be ſome ſubtle Contrivance for ſome unworthy and ambitious end: The *nothingneſs* and weakneſs of the Inſtruments manifeſt them to be conducted by a Divine Power, and declare the Doctrine it ſelf to be from Heaven.

When we ſee ſuch feeble Inſtruments Proclaiming a Doctrine repugnant to Fleſh and Blood, ſounding forth a crucified Chriſt to be believed in, and truſted on, and declaiming againſt the Religion and Worſhip, under which the *Roman* Empire had long flouriſhed; exhorting them to the contempt of the world, preparation for Afflictions, denying themſelves, and their own Honours, by the hopes of an unſeen Reward, things ſo repugnant to Fleſh and Blood. And theſe Inſtruments concurring in the ſame Story, with an admirable Harmony in all parts, and ſealing this Doctrine with their Blood; can we upon all this aſcribe this Doctrine to a Human Contrivance, or fix any lower Author of it than the wiſdom of Heaven? 'Tis the wiſdom of God that carries on his own Deſigns in Methods moſt ſuitable to his own Greatneſs, and different from the Cuſtoms and Modes of Men, that leſs of Humanity, and more of Divinity might appear.

4. The Wiſdom of God appears *in the ways and manner, as well as in the Inſtruments of its propagation.* By ways ſeemingly contrary. You know how God had ſent the *Jews* into Captivity in *Babylon*, and though he ſtruck off their Chains, and reſtored them to their Country, yet many of them had no mind to leave a Country wherein they had been born and bred. The diſtance from the Place of the Original of their Anceſtors, and their affection to the Country wherein they were born, might have occaſioned their embracing the Idolatrous Worſhip of the Place. Afterwards the Perſecutions of *Antiochus* ſcatter'd many of the *Jews* for their ſecurity into other Nations; yet a great part, and perhaps

the greateſt, preſerved their Religion, and by that were obliged to come every Year to *Jeruſalem* to Offer, and ſo were preſent at the effuſion of the Spirit on the day of *Pentecoſt*, and were witneſſes of the miraculous effects of it: Had they not been diſpers'd by Perſecution, had they not reſided in ſeveral Countries, and been acquainted with their Languages, the Goſpel had not ſo eaſily been diffuſed into ſeveral Countries of the world. The *firſt Perſecutions* alſo raiſed againſt the Church propagated the Goſpel; the *ſcattering of the Diſciples* enflamed their courage, and diſpers'd the Doctrine*, according to the *Prophecy* of *Daniel*, *Dan.* 12. 4. *Many ſhould run to and fro, and knowledge ſhould be increaſed.* The flights and hurryings of Men ſhould enlarge the Territories of the Goſpel. There was not a Tribunal, but the Primitive Chriſtians were cited to; not a horrible Puniſhment, but was inflicted upon them. Treated they were, as the dregs and offals of Mankind, as the common Enemies of the world; yet the Flames of the *Martyrs* brightned the Doctrine and the Captivity of its Profeſſors, made way for the Throne of its Empire. The Impriſonment of the *Ark* was the downfal of *Dagon*. Religion grew ſtronger by Sufferings, and Chriſtianity taller by Injuries. What can this be aſcribed to, but the conduct of a wiſdom ſuperiour to that of Men and Devils, defeating the Methods of Human and Helliſh Policy; thereby making the *Wiſdom of this world fooliſhneſs with God?* 1 *Cor.* 3. 19.

* Acts 3. 3.

Fifthly, The Uſe: I. *Of Information.* If wiſdom be an Excellency of the Divine Nature; then,

1. *Chriſt's Deity may hence be aſſerted.* Wiſdom is the emphatical Title of Chriſt in *Scripture*, *Prov.* 8. 12, 13. 31. where *Wiſdom* is brought in ſpeaking as a *diſtinct Perſon*; aſcribing Counſel, and Underſtanding, and the Knowledge of witty Inventions to it ſelf. He is called alſo the *Power of God*, and the *Wiſdom* of God. * And the *Ancients* generally underſtood that place, *Col.* 2. 3. *In him are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge*, as an aſſertion of the *Godhead* of Chriſt, in regard of the infiniteneſs of his knowledge; referring wiſdom to his knowledge of Divine things, and knowledge to his underſtanding of all Human things. But the Natural ſenſe of the place ſeems to be this, that *all wiſdom* and knowledge is diſplayed by Chriſt in the Goſpel; and the words, ἐν ᾧ, refer either to *Chriſt*, or the *Myſtery* of God ſpoken of, *verſ.* 2. But the Deity of Chriſt, in regard of infinite wiſdom, may be deduc'd from his Creation of things, and his Government of things; both which are aſcribed to him in Scripture. The firſt aſcribed to him, *John* 1. 3. *All things were made by him*; and *verſe* 27. *Without him was not any thing made, that was made.* The ſecond, *John* 5. 22. *The Father hath committed all Judgment to the Son*; and both put together, *Col.* 2. 16, 17.

* 1 Cor. 1. 24.

Now, ſince he hath the Government of the world, he hath the Perfections neceſſary to ſo great a work. As the *Creation* of the world, which is aſcribed to him, requires an infinite power, ſo the *Government* of the world requires an infinite wiſdom. That he hath the knowledge of the hearts of men, was proved in handling the *Omniſcience* of God. That knowledge would be to little purpoſe without wiſdom to order the motions of mens hearts, and conduct all the qualities and actions of Creatures, to ſuch an end as is anſwerable to a wiſe Government; we cannot think ſo great an Employment can be without an Ability neceſſary for it. The Goverment of Men and Angels is a great part of the Glory of God; and if God ſhould entruſt the greateſt part of his Glory in hands unfit for ſo great a Truſt, it would be an Argument of weakneſs in God, as it is in Men, to pitch upon unfit Inſtruments for particular Charges: Since God hath therefore committed to him his greateſt Glory, the Conduct of all things for the higheſt end, he hath a wiſdom requiſite for ſo great an end, which can be no leſs than infinite: If then Chriſt were a finite Perſon, he would not be capable of an infinite Communication; he could not be a Subject wherein infinite wiſdom could be lodged; for the terms finite and infinite are ſo diſtant, that they cannot commence one another; finite can never be changed into infinite, no more than infinite can into finite.

2. Hence we may aſſert, *The right and fitneſs of God for the Government of the World, as he is the wiſeſt Being.* Among Men, thoſe who are excellent in Judgment, are accounted fitteſt to preſide over, and give Orders to others; the wiſeſt in a City are moſt capable to govern a City; or at leaſt, though ignorant Men may bear the Title, yet the advice of the ſoundeſt and skilfulleſt Heads ſhould prevail in all Publick Affairs: We ſee in Nature, that the Eye guides the Body, and the Mind directs the Eye.

* Power and Wiſdom are the two Arms of Authority: Wiſdom knows the end, and directs the means; Power executes the means deſign'd for ſuch an end. The more ſplendid and ſtrong thoſe are in any, the more Authority reſults from thence, for the conduct of others that are of an inferiour Orb: Now God being infinitely excellent in both, his Ability and Right to the management of the world, cannot be ſuſpected; the whole world is but one *Commonwealth*, whereof God is the *Monarch*. Did the Government of the world depend upon the Election of Men and Angels, where could they pitch, or where would they find Perfections capable of ſo great a work, but in the Supream Wiſdom? His wiſdom hath already been apparent in thoſe Laws, whereby he formed the world into a Civil Society, and the *Iſraelites* into a *Commonwealth*: The one ſuited to the Conſciences and Reaſons of all his Subjects, and the other ſuited to the *Genius* of that particular Nation, drawn out of the Righteouſneſs of the Moral Law, and applicable to all Caſes that might ariſe among them in their Government; ſo that *Moſes* aſſerts, that the wiſdom apparent in their Laws enacted by God, as their chief Magiſtrate, would render them famous among other Nations, in regard of their *Wiſdom*, as well as their *Righteouſneſs*, *Deut.* 4. 6, 7, 9. Alſo this Perfection doth evidence, that God doth actually govern the world. It would not be a commendable thing for a Man, to make a curious Piece of *Clock-work*, and take no care for the orderly *motion* of it. Would God diſplay ſo much of his Skill in framing the Heaven and Earth, and none in actual guidance of them to their particular and univerſal ends? Did he lay the Foundation in order, and fit every Stone in the Building, make all things in weight and meaſure, to let them afterwards run at hap-hazard? Would he bring forth his Power to view in the Creation, and let a more glorious Perfection lie idle, when it had ſo large a Field to move in? Infinite wiſdom is inconſiſtent with inactivity. All Prudence doth illuſtrate it ſelf in untying the hardeſt Knots, and diſpoſing the moſt difficult Affairs to a happy and ſucceſsful Iſſue: All thoſe various Arts and Inventions among Men, which lend their aſſiſting hand to one another, and thoſe various Employments, their ſeveral *Genius's* led them to, whereby they ſupport one anothers welfare, are Beams and Inſtincts of Divine wiſdom in the Government of the world. He that *made all things in wiſdom**, would not leave his works to act and move only according to their own folly, and idly behold them jumble together, and run counter to that end

* Amyraut. *Moral. Tom.* 1. *p.* 258, 259

* Pſal. 104. 24.

he deſigned them for; we muſt not fancy a Divine Wiſdom to be deſtitute of Activity.

3. Here we may ſee *a ground of God's Patience.* The moſt impotent Perſons are the moſt impatient, when unforeſeen Emergencies ariſe, or at Events expected by them, when their feeble Prudence was not a ſufficient match to conteſt with them, or prevent them. But the wiſer any Man is, the more he bears with thoſe things which ſeem to croſs his Intentions, becauſe he knows he graſps the whole Affair, and is ſure of attaining the End he propoſeth to himſelf; yet as a finite Wiſdom can have but a finite Patience, ſo an *infinite Wiſdom* poſſeſſes an *infinite Patience.*

The wiſe God intends to bring Glory to himſelf, and good to ſome of his Creatures, out of the greateſt Evils that can happen in the World: He beholds no exorbitant Afflictions, and monſtrous Actions, but what he can diſpoſe to a good and glorious End, even to *work together for Good to them that love God* *; and therefore doth not preſently fall foul upon the Actors, till he hath wrought out that temporary Glory to himſelf, and Good to his People, which he deſigns. *The times of Ignorance God winks at,* till he had brought his Son into the World, and manifeſted his Wiſdom in Redemption, and when this was done, he preſſeth Men to a *ſpeedy Repentance* *; that as, he forebore puniſhing their Crimes, in order to the diſplaying his Wiſdom in the deſign'd Redemption, ſo when he had effected it, they muſt forbear any longer abuſing his *Patience.*

* Rom. 8. 28.

* Acts 17. 30.

4. Hence appears the *Immutability of God in his Decrees.* He is not deſtitute of a Power, and Strength to change his own Purpoſes; but his infinite Perfection of *Wiſdom* is a Bar to his laying aſide his Eternal Reſolves, and forming new ones; *Iſa.* 46. 10. He reſolves *the end from the beginning,* and *his Counſel ſtands*; ſtands immovable, becauſe it is Counſel. 'Tis an impotent Counſel, that is ſubject to a daily thwarting it ſelf. Inconſtant Perſons are accounted by Men, deſtitute of a due meaſure of Prudence. If God change his Mind, 'tis either for the better or the worſe; if for the better, he was not wiſe in his former Purpoſe; if for the worſe, he is not wiſe in his preſent Reſolve. No Alteration can be, without a Reflection of Weakneſs upon the former or preſent Determination. God muſt either ceaſe to be as wiſe as he was before, or begin to be wiſer than he was before the change; which to think or imagine, is to deny a Diety. If any Man change his Reſolution, he is apprehenſive of a Flaw in his former Purpoſe, and finds an Inconvenience in it, which moves him to ſuch a change; which muſt be either for want of fore-ſight in himſelf, or want of a due Conſideration of the Object of his Counſel: Neither of which can be imagined of God, without a denial of the Deity. No, there are no Blots and Blemiſhes in his Purpoſes and Promiſes. Repentance indeed is an Act of Wiſdom in the Creature; but it preſuppoſeth Folly in his former Actions, which is inconſiſtent with infinite Perfection. Men are often too raſh in Promiſing; and therefore what they promiſe in haſt, they perform at Leaſure, or not at all: They conſider not before they Vow, and make After-enquiries, whether they had beſt ſtand to it.

The *only wiſe God* needs not any After-game: As he is Sovereignly Wiſe, he ſees no Cauſe of reverſing any thing, and wants not Expedients for his own Purpoſe; and as he is infinitely Powerful, he hath no Superior to hinder him from executing his Will, and making his People enjoy the Effects of his Wiſdom. If he had a Recollection of Thoughts (as Man hath) and ſaw a Neceſſity to mend them, he were not infinitely Wiſe in his firſt Decrees. As in Creation, he looked back upon the ſeveral Pieces of that goodly Frame he had erected, and ſaw them ſo exact, that he did not take up his Pencil again to mend any Particle of the firſt Draught; ſo his Promiſes are made with ſuch infinite Wiſdom and Judgment, that what he writes is Irreverſible, and for Ever, as the Decrees of the *Medes* and *Perſians.* All the Words of God are Eternal, becauſe they are the Births of *Righteouſneſs* and *Judgment,* Hoſ. 2. 19. *I will betroth thee to me for ever, in Righteouſneſs and Judgment.* He is not of a wavering and flitting Diſcretion: If he *Threatens,* he wiſely conſiders what he Threatens; if he *Promiſes,* he wiſely conſiders what he Promiſes, and therefore is Immutable in both.

5. Hence it follows, that *God is a fit Object for our Truſt and Confidence.* For God being infinitely Wiſe, when he Promiſes any thing, he ſees every thing which may hinder, and every thing which may promote the Execution of it; ſo that he cannot diſcover any thing afterwards, that may move him to take up After-thoughts. He hath more Wiſdom than to promiſe any thing hand-over-head, or any thing which he knows he cannot accompliſh. Though God, as *True,* be the Object of our Truſt; yet God, as *Wiſe,* is the Foundation of our Truſt. We truſt him in his Promiſe; the Promiſe was made by Mercy, and 'tis perform'd by Truth; but Wiſdom conducts all Means to the Accompliſhment of it. There are many Men, whoſe Honeſty we can confide in, but whoſe Diſcretion we are diffident of: But there is no Defect either of the one or the other, which may ſcare us from a depending upon God in our Concerns. The Words of *Man's Wiſdom,* the *Apoſtle* entitles *Enticing,* 1 Cor. 2. 4. in Oppoſition to the Words of *God's Wiſdom,* which are firm, ſtable, and undeniable Demonſtrations. As the Power of God is an Encouragement of Truſt, becauſe he is able to effect; ſo the Wiſdom of God comes into the Rank of thoſe Attributes which ſupport our Faith. To put a Confidence in him, we muſt be perſwaded, not only that he is Ignorant of nothing in the World, but that he is Wiſe to manage the whole Courſe of Nature, and diſpoſe of all his Creatures, for the bringing his Purpoſes and his Promiſes to their deſigned Perfection.

6. Hence appears *the neceſſity of a publick review of the Management of the World, and of a Day of Judgment.* As a *Day of Judgment* may be inferr'd from many Attributes of God; as his *Sovereignty, Juſtice, Omniſcience, &c.* ſo among the reſt from this of Wiſdom. How much of this Perfection will lie unveil'd and obſcure, if the Sins of Men be not brought to view, whereby the ordering the unrighteous Actions of Men, by his directing and over-ruling Hand of Providence, in ſubſerviency to his own Purpoſes, and his Peoples Good, may appear in all its Glory? Without ſuch a publick Review, this part of Wiſdom will not be clearly viſible; how thoſe Actions, which had a vile Foundation in the Hearts and Deſigns of Men, and were formed there to gratifie ſome baſe Luſt, Ambition, and Covetouſneſs, *&c.* were by a ſecret Wiſdom preſiding over them, conducted to amazing Ends.

'Tis a part of Divine Wiſdom to right it ſelf, and convince Men of the reaſonableneſs of its Laws, and the unreaſonableneſs of their Contradictions to it. The Execution of the Sentence, is an Act of Juſtice; but the Conviction of the reaſonableneſs of the Sentence, is an Act of Wiſdom, clearing up the Righteouſneſs of the Proceeding; and this precedes, and the other follows, *Jude* 15. *To convince all that are ungodly, of all their ungodly Deeds.* That Wiſdom which contrived Satisfaction, as well as that *Juſtice* which required it, is concerned in righting the Law, which was enacted by it. The Wiſdom of a Sovereign Law-giver is engag'd not to ſee his Law vilified

vilified and trampled on, and expoſed to the Luſts and Affronts of Men, without being concerned in vindicating the Honour of it. It would appear a a Folly to enact and publiſh it, if there were not a Reſolution to right and execute it.

The Wiſdom of God can no more aſſociate Iniquity and Happineſs together, than the Juſtice of God can ſeparate Iniquity from Puniſhment. It would be defective, if it did always tamely bear the Inſolencies of Offenders, without a time of remark of their Crimes, and a Juſtification of the Precept rebelliouſly ſpurn'd at. He would be Unwiſe, if he were Unjuſt; Unrighteouſneſs hath no better a Title in Scripture, than that of *Folly*. 'Tis no part of Wiſdom, to give birth to thoſe Laws which he will always behold ineffectual, and neither vindicate his Law by a due Execution of the Penalty, nor right his own Authority, contemn'd in the Violation of his Law, by a juſt Revenge. Beſides, What Wiſdom would it be for the Sovereign Judge, to lodge ſuch a Spokeſman for himſelf, as *Conſcience* in the Soul of Man, if it ſhould be alway found ſpeaking, and at length be found falſe in all that it ſpeaks? There is therefore an apparent Proſpect of the Day of Account, from the Conſideration of this Perfection of the Divine Nature.

7. Hence we have *a ground for a mighty Reverence and Veneration of the Divine Majeſty*. Who can contemplate the Sparklings of this Perfection in the variety of the Works of his Hands, and the exact Government of all his Creatures, without a raiſed Admiration of the Excellency of his Being, and a falling flat before him, in a Poſture of Reverence to ſo great a Being? Can we behold ſo great a Maſs of Matter, digeſted into ſeveral Forms, ſo exact a Harmony and Temperament in all the Creatures, the Proportions of Numbers and Meaſures, and one Creature anſwering the Ends and Deſigns of another, the diſtinct Beauties of all, the perpetual Motion of all things, without checking one another; the variety of the Nature of things, and all acting according to their Nature with an admirable Agreement; and all together, like differing Strings upon an Inſtrument, emitting divers Sounds, but all reduc'd to order in one delightful Leſſon. I ſay, Can we behold all this without Admiring and Adoring the Divine Wiſdom, which appears in all?

And from the Conſideration of this, let us paſs to the Conſideration of his Wiſdom in Redemption; in reconciling divided Intereſts, untying hard Knots, drawing one contrary out of another; and we muſt needs acknowledge, that the Wiſdom of all the Men on Earth, and Angels in Heaven, is worſe than nothing, and Vanity in Compariſon of this vaſt Ocean. And as we have a greater eſteem for thoſe that invent ſome excellent Artificial Engines; what Reverence ought we to have for him that hath ſtampt an unimitable Wiſdom upon all his Works? Nature orders us to give Honour to our Superiours in Knowledge, and confide in their Counſels; but none ought to be reverenc'd as much as God, ſince none equals him in Wiſdom.

8. If God be infinitely Wiſe, *it ſhews us the neceſſity of our Addreſs to him, and Invocation of his Name*. We are ſubject to Miſtakes, and often overſeen; we are not able rightly to Counſel our ſelves. In ſome Caſes all Creatures are too ſhort-ſighted to apprehend them, and too ignorant to give Advice proper for them, and to contrive Remedies for their Eaſe; but with the Lord there is Counſel, *Jer.* 32. 19. *He is great in counſel, and mighty in working*; great in Counſel to adviſe us, mighty in Working to aſſiſt us. We know not how to effect a Deſign, or prevent an expected Evil. We have an infinite Wiſdom to go to, that is every way skilful to manage any Buſineſs we deſire, to avert any Evil we fear, to accompliſh any thing we commit into his Hands. When we know not what to reſolve, he hath a Counſel to *guide us*, Pſal. 73. 24. He is not more Powerful to effect what is needful, than Wiſe to direct what is fitting All Men ſtand in need of the help of God, as one Man ſtands in need of the Aſſiſtance of other Men, and will not do any thing without Advice; and he that takes Advice, deſerves the Title of a *Wiſe Man*, as well as he that gives Advice. But no Man needs ſo much the Advice of another Man, as all Men need the Counſel and Aſſiſtance of God: Neither is any Man's Wit and Wiſdom ſo far inferiour to the Prudence and Ability of an Angel, as the Wiſdom of the wiſeſt Man, and the moſt ſharp-ſighted Angel, is inferior to the infinite Wiſdom of God. We ſee therefore, that it is beſt for us to go to the Fountain, and not content our ſelves with the Streams; to beg Advice from a *Wiſdom* that is Infinite and Infallible, rather than from that which is Finite and Fallible.

Uſe I. If Wiſdom be the Perfection of the Divine Majeſty, *How prodigious is the Contempt of it in the World?*

In General.

All Sin ſtrikes at this Attribute, and is in one part or other a degrading of it: The firſt Sin directed its Venom againſt this. As the Devils endeavoured to equal their Creator in Power; ſo Man endeavoured to equal him in Wiſdom: Both indeed ſcorn'd to be ruled by his Order; but Man evidently exalted himſelf againſt the Wiſdom of God, and aſpired to be a ſharer with him in his infinite Knowledge: Would not let him be the *only wiſe God*, but cheriſhed an Ambition to be his Partner. Juſt as if a Beam were able to imagine, it might be as bright as the Sun; or a Spark Fancy, it could be as full fraught with Heat, as the whole Element of Fire. Man would not ſubmit to the infinite Wiſdom of God in the Prohibition of one ſingle *Fruit* in the *Garden*, when by the right of his Sovereign Authority, he might have granted him only the uſe of one. All preſumptuous Sins are of this Nature, they are therefore called *Reproaches of God*, Numb. 15. 30. *the Soul that doth ought preſumptuouſly, reproacheth the Lord*. All Reproaches are either for *Natural*, *Moral*, or *Intellectual* Defects. All Reproaches of God, muſt imply either a Weakneſs or Unrighteouſneſs in God. If Unrighteouſneſs, his Holineſs is denied; if Weakneſs, his Wiſdom is blemiſhed.

In General, All Sin ſtrikes at this Perfection Two Ways.

1. *As it defaceth the wiſe Workmanſhip of God*. Every Sin is a deforming and blemiſhing our own Souls, which, as they are the prime Creatures in the lower World, ſo they have greater Characters of Divine Wiſdom in the Fabrick of them: But this Image of God is ruin'd and broken by Sin. Though the ſpoiling of it be a ſcorn to his Holineſs, 'tis alſo an affront to his Wiſdom; for though his Power was the cauſe of the Production of ſo fair a Piece, yet his Wiſdom was the guide of his Power, and his Holineſs the Pattern whereby he wrought it: His Power effected it, and his Holineſs was exemplified in it, but his Wiſdom contrived it.

If a Man had a curious Clock or Watch, which had coſt him many Years Pains, and the Strength of his Skill to frame it; for another, after he had ſeen and conſidered it, to trample upon it, and cruſh it in Pieces, would argue a Contempt of the Artificer's Skill. God hath ſhewn infinite Art in the Creation of Man; but Sin unbeautifies Man, and raviſheth his Excellency. It cuts and ſlaſheth the Image of God ſtampt by Divine Wiſdom, as though it were an Object only of Scorn and Contempt. The

Sinner

Sinner in every Sin acts, as if he intended to put himſelf in a better Poſture, and in a fairer Dreſs, than the Wiſdom of God hath put him in by Creation.

2. *In the ſlighting his Laws.* The Laws of God are highly Rational; they are drawn from the Depths of the Divine Underſtanding, wherein there is no Unclearneſs, and no Defect. As his Underſtanding apprehends all things in their true Reaſon; ſo his Will enjoins all things for worthy and wiſe Ends: His Laws are contrived by his Wiſdom for the Happineſs of Man, whoſe Happineſs, and the Methods to it, he underſtands better than Men or Angels can do. His Laws being the Orders of the wiſeſt Underſtanding, every breach of his Law is a flying in the Face of his Wiſdom. All human Laws, though they are enforced by Sovereign Authority; yet they are, or ought to be in the compoſing of them, founded upon Reaſon, and ſhould be particular Applications of the Law of Nature, to this or that particular Emergency. The Laws of God then, who is *ſumma ratio*, are the Birth of the trueſt Reaſon; though the Reaſon of every one of them may not be ſo clear to us.

Every Law, though it conſiſts in an Act of the Will, yet doth preſuppoſe an Act of the Underſtanding. The Act of the Divine Underſtanding in framing the Law, muſt be ſuppoſed to precede the Act of his Will, in commanding the obſervance of that Law. So every Sin againſt the Law, is not only againſt the Will of God commanding, but the Reaſon of God contriving; and a cleaving to our own Reaſon, rather than the Underſtanding or Mind of God: As if God had miſtaken in making his Law, and we had more Underſtanding to frame a better, and more conducing to our Happineſs: As if God were not Wiſe enough to govern us, and preſcribe what we ſhould do, and what we ſhould avoid; as if he deſigned not our Welfare, but our Misfortune.

Whereas the Precepts of God are not tyrannical Edicts, or Acts of meer Will, but the Fruits of Counſel; and therefore every Breach of them is a real Declamation againſt his Diſcretion and Judgment, and preferring our own Imaginations, or the Suggeſtions of the Devil, as our Rule, before the Reſults of Divine Counſel: While we acknowledge him Wiſe in our Opinion, we ſpeak him fooliſh by our Practice; when inſtead of being guided by him, we will guide our ſelves. No Man will queſtion, but it is a controuling Divine Wiſdom, to make Alterations in his Precepts; dogmatically, either to add ſome of their own, or expunge any of his: And is it not a Crime of the like Reflection to alter them Practically? When we will obſerve one part of the Law, and not another part; but pick and chooſe where we pleaſe our ſelves, as our Humours and Carnal Intereſt prompt us. It is to charge that part of the Law with Folly, which we refuſe to conform unto.

The more cunning any Man is in Sin, the more his Sin is againſt Divine Wiſdom, as if he thought to out-wit God. He that receives the Promiſes of God, and the *Teſtimony of Chriſt, ſets to his Seal, that God is true*, John 3. 33. By the like Strength of Argument it will undeniably follow, That he that refuſeth Obedience to his Precept, ſets to his Seal, that God is fooliſh. Were they not Rational, God would not enjoin them; and if they are Rational, we are Enemies to infinite Wiſdom, by not complying with them. If infinite Prudence hath made the Law, why is not every part of it obſerved? If it were not made with the beſt Wiſdom, why is any part of it obſerved? If the defacing his Image be any Sin, as being a defaming his Wiſdom in Creation; the breaking his Law is no leſs a Sin, as being a diſgracing his Wiſdom in his Adminiſtration. 'Tis upon this account, likely, that the Scripture ſo often counts Sinners Fools, ſince it is certainly inexcuſable Folly, to contradict undeniable and infallible Wiſdom; yet this is done in the leaſt Sin: And as *he that breaks one tittle of the Law*, is deſervedly accounted guilty of the breach of the whole, *James* 2. 10. ſo he that deſpiſeth the leaſt Stamp of Wiſdom in the minuteſt part of the Law, is deſervedly counted as a Contemner of it, in the frame of the whole Statute-Book.

But in Particular, the Wiſdom of God is affronted and invaded.

1. *By introducing new Rules and Modes of Worſhip, different from Divine Inſtitutions.* Is not this a manifeſt Reflection on this Perfection of God, as though he had not been Wiſe enough to provide for his own Honour, and model his own Service; but ſtood in need of our Directions, and the *Caprichio*'s of our Brains? Some have obſerved, that it is a greater Sin in Worſhip to do what we ſhould not, than to omit what we ſhould perform*. The one ſeems to be out of Weakneſs, becauſe of the high Exactneſs of the Law; and the other out of Impudence, accuſing the Wiſdom of God of Imperfection, and controuling it in its Inſtitutions. At beſt, it ſeems to be an Imputation of human Baſhfulneſs to the Supream Sovereign; as if he had been aſhamed to preſcribe all that was neceſſary to his own Honour, but had left ſomething to the Ingenuity and Gratitude of Men.

* *Strong* of the Will.

Man has ever ſince the fooliſh Conceit of his old Anceſtor *Adam*, preſumed he could be as Wiſe as God; and if he who was created upright entertain'd ſuch Conceits, much more doth Man now, under a maſs of Corruption, ſo capable to foment them. This hath been the continual practice of Men; not ſo much to reject what once they had received as Divine, but to add ſomething of their own Inventions to it.

The Heathens renounced not the Sacrificing of Beaſts for the Expiation of their Offences (which the Old World had received by Tradition from *Adam*, and the New World, after the Deluge, from *Noah*.) But they had blended that Tradition with Rites of their own, and offered Creatures unclean in themſelves, and not fit to be offered to an infinitely pure being; for the Diſtinction of *Clean* and *Unclean*, was as Ancient as *Noah*, *Gen.* 8. 20. yea before, *Gen.* 7. 2.

So the Jews did not diſcard what they had received from God, as *Circumciſion*, the *Paſſover*, and *Sacrifices*; but they would mix a Heap of Heathenish Rites with the Ceremonies of Divine Ordination, and practiſe things which he had not commanded, as well as things which he had enjoined them. And therefore 'tis obſervable, that when God taxeth them with this Sin; he doth not ſay, They brought in thoſe things which he had forbidden into his Worſhip; but thoſe things which he had not commanded, and had given no order for, to intimate, that they were not to move a Step without his Rule; (*Jer.* 7. 31. *They have built the high places of* Tophet, *which I commanded them not, nor came it into my Heart*; and *Lev.* 10. 1. *Nadab*'s and *Abihu*'s ſtrange *Fire* was *not commanded*;) ſo charging them with Impudence and Raſhneſs in adding ſomething of their own, after he had revealed to them the manner of his Service, as if they were as Wiſe as God. So loth is Man to acknowledge the Supremacy of Divine Underſtanding, and be ſenſible of his own Ignorance.

So after the divulging of the Goſpel, the Corrupters of Religion did not fling off, but preſerved the Inſtitutions of God, but painted and patch'd them

up

up with Pagan Ceremonies; impoſed their own Dreams with as much Force, as the Revelations of God. Thus hath the Papacy turn'd the Simplicity of the Goſpel into Pagan Pomp, and Religion into Politie' and revived the Ceremonial Law, and raked ſ.me Limbs of it out of the Grave, after the Wiſdom of God had rung her Knell, and honourably Interr'd her; and ſhelter'd the Heatheniſh Superſtitions in Chriſtian Temples, after the Power of the Goſpel had chas'd the Devils, with all their Trumpery, from their ancient Habitations.

Whence ſhould this proceed, but from a partial Atheiſm, and a mean Conceit of the Divine Wiſdom? As though God had not Underſtanding enough to preſcribe the Form of his own Worſhip; and not Wiſdom enough to ſupport it, without the Crutches of Human Prudence.

Human Prudence is too low to parallel Divine Widſom; 'tis an incompetent Judge of what is fit for an infinite Majeſty. 'Tis ſufficiently ſeen in the ridiculous and ſenſeleſs Rites among the Heathens; and the Cruel and Deviliſh ones, fetch'd from them by the Jews. What Work will Human Wiſdom make with Divine Worſhip, when it will preſume to be the Director of it, as a Mate with the Wiſdom of God? Whence will it take its Meaſures, but from Senſe, Humour, and Fancy? As though what is grateful aud comely to a depraved Reaſon, were as beautiful to an unſpotted, and infinite Mind. Do not ſuch tell the World, that they were of God's Cabinet Counſel, ſince they will take upon them to judge, as well as God, what is well-pleaſing to him? Where will it have the Humility to ſtop, if it hath the Preſumption to add any one thing to Revealed Modes of Worſhip? How did God tax the Iſraelites with making *Idols according to their own Underſtanding*? *Hoſ.* 13. 2. imagining their own Underſtandings to be of a finer make, and a perfecter Mould than their Creators; and that they had fetched more Light from the Chaos of their own Brains, than God had from Eternity in his own Nature? How ſlight will the Excuſe be, *God hath not forbidden this, or that*, when God ſhall ſilence Men with the Queſtion, *Where, or when did I command this, or that?* There was no Addition to be made under the Law to the meaneſt Inſtrument God had appointed in his Service. The Sacred Perfume was not to have one Ingredient more put into it, than what God had preſcribed in the Compoſition; nor was any Man upon pain of Death to imitate it; nor would God endure, that Sacrifices ſhould be conſumed with any other Fire, than that which came down from Heaven. So tender is God of any Invaſions of his Wiſdom and Authority. In all things of this Nature, whatſoever *voluntary humility* and reſpect to God they may be diſguiſed with, there is a ſwelling of the *fleſhly mind* againſt Infinite Underſtanding, which the Apoſtle nauſeates.

Such Mixtures have not been bleſt by God: As God never proſper'd the Mixtures of ſeveral kinds of Creatures, to form and multiply a new Species, as being a Diſſatisfaction with his Wiſdom, as Creator; ſo he doth not proſper Mixtures in Worſhip, as being a Conſpiracy againſt his Wiſdom, as a Lawgiver. * The Deſtruction of the Jews, was judged by ſome of their Doctors to be, for preferring Human Traditions before the written Word; which they ground on *Iſa.* 29. 33. *Their Fear of me was taught by the Precepts of Men.* The Injunctions of Men were the Rule of their Worſhip, and not the Preſcripts of my Law.

To conclude: Such as make Alterations in Religion, different from the firſt Inſtitution, are intollerable Buſie Bodies, that will not let God alone with his own Affairs. Vain Man would be wiſer than his Maker, and be dabbling in that which is his ſole Prerogative.

2. *In neglecting Means Inſtituted by God.* When Men have riſings of Heart againſt God's Ordinances. *They reject the Counſel of the Lord againſt themſelves*, or *in themſelves*, Luke 7. 30. εἰς ἑαυτούς. They diſannull'd the Wiſdom of God, the Spring of his Ordinances: All Neglects are Diſregards of Divine Preſcriptions, as impertinent and unavailable to that End for which they were appointed, as not being ſuted to the common Dictates of Reaſon; ſometimes out of a voluntary Humility, ſuch as *Peter's* was, when he denied Chriſt's Condeſcenſion *to waſh his Feet*, John 13. 8. and thereby judged of the Comelineſs of his Maſter's Intention and Action. Such as continually neglect the great Inſtitution of the *Lords Supper* out of a ſenſe of *Unworthineſs*, are in the ſame rank with *Peter*, and do, as well as he, fall under the blame and reproof of Chriſt.

Men would be ſaved, and uſe the Means; but either Means of their own Appointment, or not all the Means of God's ordering*. They would have God's Wiſdom and Will condeſcend to theirs, and not theirs conformed to God. As if our blind Judgments were fitteſt to make the election of the Paths to Happineſs. Like *Naaman*, who when he was ordered by the *Prophet*, for the cure of his *Leproſie*, to *waſh ſeven times in Jordan*, would be the *Prophet's* Director, and have him touch him with his Hand: As if a Patient ſick of a deſperate Diſeaſe, ſhould preſcribe to his Skilful Phyſician, what Remedies he ſhould order for his Cure, and make his own infirm Reaſon, or his Guſt and Palate the Rule, rather than the Phyſician's Skill.

* Pont. Medit. part. 3. p. 336.

Mens Inquiries are, *Who will ſhew us any good?* They rather faſten upon any Means, than what God hath ordained. * We invert the Order *Divine Wiſdom* hath eſtabliſhed, when we would have God ſave us in our own way, not in his. 'Tis the ſame thing, as if we would have God nouriſh us without Bread, and cure our Diſeaſes without Medicines, and increaſe our Wealth without our Induſtry, and cheriſh our Souls without his Word and Ordinances. 'Tis to demand of him an alteration of his Methods and a ſeparation of that which he hath by his Eternal Judgment joyned together. Therefore for a Man to pray to God to ſave him, when he will not uſe the Means he hath appointed for Salvation, when he ſlights the *Word*, which is the Inſtrument of Salvation, is a Contempt of the *Wiſdom* of Divine Inſtitutions.

* Durant. de Tent. p. 403, 404.

Alſo in *Omiſſions* of Prayer; when we conſult not with God upon emergent Occaſions, we truſt more to our own wiſdom than Gods, and imply, that we ſtand not in need of his Conduct, but have ability to direct our ſelves, and accompliſh our Ends without his guidance. Not *ſeeking God*, is by the Prophet tax'd to be a reflection upon this Perfection of God, *Iſai.* 31. 1, 2. *They look not to the Holy One of Iſrael, neither ſeek the Lord, &c.* And the like Charge he brings againſt them, *Hoſ.* 8. 9. *They are gone up to Aſſyria, a wild Aſs alone by himſelf, not conſulting God.*

3. *In cenſuring Gods Revelations and Actions, if they be not according to our Schemes.* When we will, not ſubmit to his plain Will, without penetrating into the unrevealed Reaſon of it, nor adore his Counſels without controuling them; as if we could correct both *Law* and *Goſpel*, and frame a better Method of Redemption than that of Gods contriving. Thus Men ſlighted the *Wiſdom* of God in the Goſpel, becauſe it did not agree with that *Philoſophical* Wiſdom and Reaſon they had ſuckt in

* Vaſin. *The Talmud takes notice, that the Court of Bethany was waſted three Years before* Jeruſalem, *becauſe they preferred their own Words before the Words of the Law.*

* 1 Cor. 1. 21, 22. by Education from their Masters *, contrary to their Practice in their Superstitious Worship; where the Oracles they thought Divine, were entertained with Reverence, not with Dispute; and though ambiguous, were not counted ridiculous by the Worshippers. How foolish is man in this, wherein he would be accounted wise? *Adam* in Innocence was unfit to controul the Doctrine of God, when the Eye of his Reason was clear; and much more are we, since the depravation of our Nature.

The Revelations of God tower above Reason in its Purity; much more above Reason in its Mud and Earthiness. The Rays of *Divine Wisdom* are too bright for our Human Understandings, much more for our Sinful Understandings. 'Tis base to set up Reason, a Finite principle, against an Infinite Wisdom; much baser to set up a depraved and pur-blind Reason, against an All-seeing and holy Wisdom. If we would have a Reason for all that God speaks, and all that God acts; our Wisdom must become Infinite as his, or his Wisdom become Finite as ours.

All the Censures of God's Revelations arise from some prejudicate Opinions, or Traditional Maxims, that have enthroned themselves in our Minds, which are made the Standard whereby to judge of the things of God, and receive or reject them, as they agree with, or dissent from, those *Prin-*
*Coloss. 2. 8. *ciples* *. Hence it was that the *Philosophers* in the Primitive Times were the greatest Enemies to the Gospel: And the Contempt of *Divine Wisdom*, in making Reason the Supream Judge of Divine Revelation, was the fruitful Mother of the *Heresies* in all Ages springing up in the Church, and especially of that *Socinianism*, that daily insinuates it self into the minds of Men.

This is a wrong to the *Wisdom* of God. He that censures the Words or Actions of another, implies, that he is in his Censure wiser than the Person censured by him. 'Tis as insupportable to determine the Truth of God's plain Dictates by our Reason, as it is to measure the suitableness or unsuitableness of his Actions by the humour of our Will. We may sooner think to span the *Sun*, or grasp a *Star*, or see a *Gnat* swallow a *Leviathan*, than fully understand the Debates of Eternity.

To this we may refer too curious Enquiries into Divine Methods, and *intruding into those things which are not revealed*, *Coloss.* 2. 18. It is to affect a Wisdom equal with God, and an Ambition to be of his Cabinet-Counsel. We are not content to be Creatures, that is, to be every way below God, below him in Wisdom, as well as Power.

4. *In prescribing God methods of Acting.* When we pray for a thing without a due submission to God's Will; as if we were his Counsellors, yea his Tutors, and not his Subjects, and God were bound to follow our humours, and be swayed according to the Judgment of our Ignorance; when we would have such a mercy which God thinks not fit to give, or have it in this method, which God designs to convey through another Chanel. Thus we would have the *only wise God* take his measures from our Passions: Such a controuling of God was *Jonah*'s Anger about a *Gourd*, *Jonah* 3. 10. *It displeased* Jonah *exceedingly, and he was very angry.*

We would direct him how to dispose of us; as though he that had Infinite *Wisdom* to contrive, and rear the Excellent Fabrick of the World, had not *Wisdom* enough, without our Discretion, to place us in a sphere proper for his own Ends, and the use he intends us in the Universe. All the Speeches of Men, (*Would I had been in such an Office, had such a Charge: Would I had such a Mercy, in such a method, or by such instruments*) are Intrenchments upon God's wise disposal of Affairs.

This imposing upon God is a Hellish disposition, and in Hell we find it. The *Rich man* in Hell, that pretends some Charity for his Brethren on Earth, would direct God a way to prevent their ruin, by sending *one from the dead* to school them, as a more effectual Means than *Moses and the Prophets*, *Luke* 16. 29, 30. 'Tis a Temper also to be found on Earth; what else was the language of *Saul*'s saving the *Amalekites Cattle* against the plain Command of God, 1 *Sam.* 15. 15. As if God in his Fury had overshot himself, and overlooked his *Altar*, in depriving it of so great a Booty for its Service: As if it were an unwise thing in God, to lose the Prey of so many stately Cattle, that might make the Altar smoke with their Entrals, and serve to expiate the Sins of the People; and therefore he would rectifie that which he thought to be an oversight in God, and so magnifies his own Prudence and Discretion above the Divine.

We will not let God act as he thinks fit, but will be directing him, and *teaching him knowledge*, *Job* 21. 22. As if God were a Statue, an *Idol*, that had *Eyes* and saw not, *Hands*, but acted not; and could be turned as an Image may be, to what quarter of the Heaven we please our selves. The *Wisdom* of God is unbyast; he orders nothing but what is fittest for his End, and we would have our shallow Brains the byas of God's acting. And will not God resent such an Indignity, as a reflection upon his Wisdom as well as Authority, when we intimate that we have better Heads than he, and that he comes short of us in Understanding?

5. *In Murmuring and Impatience.* One demands a Reason, why he hath this or that Cross? Why he hath been deprived of such a Comfort, lost such a Venture, languisheth under such a Sickness, is tormented with such Pains, oppress by Tyrannical Neighbours, is unsuccessful in such Designs? In these, and such like the *Wisdom* of God is questioned and defam'd. All Impatience, is a suspicion, if not a condemnation of the Prudence of God's Methods, and would make Human Feebleness and Folly the Rule of God's dealing with his Creatures. This is a presuming to instruct God, and a reproving him for Unreasonableness in his Proceedings, when his dealings with us do not exactly answer our Fancies and Wishes; as if God, who made the World in Wisdom, wanted Skill for the management of his Creatures in it, *Job* 40. 2. *Shall he that contends with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it.* We that are not wise enough to know our selves, and what is needful for us; presume to have Wit enough to guide God in his dealing with us. The *Wisdom* of God rendred *Job* more useful to the World by his Afflictions, in making him a Pattern of *Patience*, than if he had continued him in a confluence of all Worldly Comforts, wherein he had been beneficial only in communicating his Morsels to his Poor Neighbours. All Murmuring is a fastening Error upon unerring *Wisdom*.

6. *In Pride and Haughtiness of Spirit.* No Proud man, but sets *his* Heart *as the heart of God*, *Ezek.* 28. 2, 3. The *Wisdom* of God hath given to Men divers Offices, set them in divers places; some have more honourable Charges, some meaner. Not to give that respect their Offices and Places call for, is to quarrel with the *Wisdom* of God, and overturn the Rank and Order wherein he hath placed things.

'Tis unfit we should affront God in the disposal of his Creatures, and intimate to him by our Carriage, that he had done more wisely in placing

another, and that he hath done fooliſhly in placing this or that Man in ſuch a Charge. Sometimes Men are unworthy the Place they fill; they may be ſet there in Judgment to themſelves and others: But the *Wiſdom* of God in his management of things, is to be honoured and regarded.

'Tis an infringing the *Wiſdom* of God, when we have a vain Opinion of our ſelves, and are blind to others. When we think our ſelves Monarchs, and treat others as Worms or Flies in compariſon of us. He who would reduce all things to his own honour, perverts the Order of the World, and would conſtitute another Order than what the *Wiſdom* of God hath eſtabliſhed; and move them to an End contrary to the intention of God, and charges God with want of Diſcretion and Skill.

9. *Diſtruſt of God's Promiſe is an impeachment of his Wiſdom.* A ſecret Reviling of it, as if he had not taken due conſideration before he paſt his Word; or a ſuſpicion of his Power, as if he could not accompliſh his Word. We truſt the *Phyſician's* Skill with our Bodies, and the *Lawyer's* Counſel with our Eſtates; but are loath to rely upon God for the concerns of our Lives. If he be Wiſe to diſpoſe of us, why do we diſtruſt him? If we diſtruſt him, why do we embrace an opinion of his Wiſdom.

Unbelief alſo is a contradiction to the *Wiſdom* of God in the Goſpel, &c. but that I have already handled in a *Diſcourſe of the Nature of Unbelief.*

III. Uſe of *Comfort.* God hath an *Infinite Wiſdom*, to conduct us in our Affairs, rectifie us in our Miſtakes, and aſſiſt us in our Straits. 'Tis an ineſtimable privilege to have a God in Covenant with us; ſo Wiſe, to communicate all Good, to prevent all Evil; who hath Infinite ways to bring to paſs his gracious Intentions towards us. *How unſearchable are his Judgments, and his ways paſt finding out? Rom.* 11. 33. His Judgment or Decrees are incomprehenſibly Wiſe, and the ways of effecting them, are as wiſe as his Reſolves effected by them. We can as little ſearch into his Methods of Acting, as we can into his Wiſdom of Reſolving; both his Judgments and Ways are unſearchable.

1. *Comfort in all Straits and Afflictions.* There is a Wiſdom in inflicting them, and a Wiſdom in removing them. He is wiſe to ſute his Medicines to the humor of our Diſeaſe, though he doth not to the humour of our Wills: He cannot miſtake the nature of our Diſtemper, or the vertue of his own Phyſick. Like a skillful Phyſician, he ſometimes preſcribes bitter Potions, and ſometimes cheering Cordials, according to the ſtrength of the Malady, and neceſſity of the Patient to reduce him to health. As nothing comes from him, but what is for our good; ſo nothing is acted by him in a raſh and temerarious way. His Wiſdom is as Infinite as his Goodneſs; and as exact in managing as his Goodneſs is plentiful in ſtreaming out to us. He underſtands our Griefs, weighs our Neceſſities and no Remedies are beyond the reach of his Contrivance. When our feeble Wits are bewildred in a maze, and at the end of their Line for a reſcue; the Remedies unknown to us, are not unknown to God. When we know not how to prevent a Danger, the Wiſe God hath a *Thouſand Blocks* to lay in the way: When we know not how to free our ſelves from an oppreſſive Evil, he hath a *Thouſand ways* of Relief.

He knows how to Time *our Croſſes*, and his *own Bleſſings.* The heart of a Wiſe God, as well as the heart of a wiſe Man, *diſcerns both time and judgment, Eccleſ.* 8. 5. There is as much Judgment in ſending them, as Judgment in removing them. How comfortable is it to think, that our Diſtreſſes, as well as our Deliverances, are the fruits of *Infinite Wiſdom?* Nothing is done by him too ſoon or too ſlow; but in the true point of Time, with all its due circumſtances, moſt conveniently for his glory and our good. How Wiſe is God to bring the glory of our Salvation out of the depths of a ſeeming Ruin, and make the Evils of Affliction ſubſervient to the good of the Afflicted?

2. *In Temptations, his Wiſdom is no leſs employed in permitting them, than in bringing them to a good iſſue.* His *Wiſdom* in leading our Saviour to be Tempted of the Devil, was to fit him for our ſuccour; and his *Wiſdom* in ſuffering us to be Tempted, is to fit us for his own Service, and our Salvation. He makes a *Thorn in the fleſh* to be an occaſion of a refreſhing Grace to the Spirit, and brings forth cordial Grapes from thoſe pricking Brambles, and magnifies his Grace by his *Wiſdom*, from the deepeſt ſubtilties of Hell. Let *Satan's* Intentions be what they will, he can be for him at every turn, to outwit him in his Stratagems, to baffle him in his Enterprizes; to make him inſtrumental for our good, where he deſigns nothing but our hurt. The Lord hath his methods of Deliverance from him, 2 *Pet.* 2. 9. *The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of Temptation.*

3. *In Denials, or delays of Anſwers of Prayer.* He is gracious to Hear; but he is wiſe to Anſwer in an *acceptable time*, and ſuccour us in a day proper for our *ſalvation*, 2 *Cor.* 6. 2. We have partial Affections to our ſelves, *Ignorance* is natural to us, *Rom.* 8. 26. *We ask we know not what*, becauſe we ask out of Ignorance. God grants what he knows, what is fit for him to do, and fit for us to receive; and the exact ſeaſon wherein it is fitteſt for him to beſtow a Mercy. As God would have us bring forth our Fruit in ſeaſon, ſo he will ſend forth his Mercies in ſeaſon.

He is wiſe to ſute his Remedy to our Condition, to Time it ſo, as that we ſhall have an evident proſpect of his *Wiſdom* in it; that more of Divine Skill, and leſs of Human, may appear in the Iſſue. He is ready at our Call; but he will not Anſwer, till he ſee the Seaſon fit to reach out his hand He is wiſe to prove our Faith, to humble us under the ſenſe of our own Unworthyneſs, to whet our Affections, to ſet a better eſtimate on the Bleſſings prayed for, and that he may double the Bleſſing, as we do our Devotion: But when his *Wiſdom* ſees us fit to receive his Goodneſs, he grants what we ſtand in need of. He is Wiſe to chuſe the fitteſt Time, and Faithful to give the beſt Covenant, Mercy.

4. *In all Evils threatned to the Church by her Enemies.* He hath Knowledge to fore-ſee them, and Wiſdom to diſappoint them; *Job* 5. 13. *He taketh the wiſe in their own craftineſs, and the counſel of the froward is carried headlong.*

The Church hath the *Wiſdom* of God, to enter the Liſts with the Policy of Hell. He defeated the *Serpent* in the firſt Net he laid, and brought a glorious Salvation out of Hells Rubbiſh; and is yet as Skilful to diſappoint the After-game of the *Serpentine*-brood. The *Policy* of Hell, and the Subtilty of the World, are no better than *Folly with God*, 1 *Cor.* 3. 19. All Creatures are Fools, as Creatures, in compariſon with the Creator. The *Angels* he chargeth with *Folly*, much more us Sinners.

Depraved Underſtands are not fit Mates for a pure and unblemiſh'd Mind. *Pharaoh*, with his wiſdom, finds a Grave in the Sea; and *Achitophel's* Plots are finiſhed in his own murder: He breaks the

the Enemies by his Power, and orders them by his Skill to be a feaſt to his People. *Pſal.* 74. 14. *Thou brakeſt the Head of the Leviathan, and gaveſt him to be meat to the people in the Wilderneſs.* The Spoils of the *Egyptians* Carkaſſes caſt upon the ſhore ſerved the *Iſraelites* Neceſſities (or were as Meat to them;) as being a Deliverance the Church might feed upon in all Ages, in a *Wilderneſs* Condition, to maintain their *Faith*, the vital Principle of the Soul.

There is a *Wiſdom* ſuperiour to the ſubtilties of Men, which laughs at their Follies, and *hath them in deriſion*, *Pſal.* 2. 4. *There is no wiſdom or counſel againſt the Lord*, *Prov.* 21. 30. You never queſtion the wiſdom of an *Artiſt*, to uſe his File, when he takes it into his hand: Wicked Inſtruments are God's Axes and Files; let him alone, he hath Skill enough to manage them: God hath too much Affection to deſtroy his People, and Wiſdom enough to beautifie them by the worſt Tools he uſes. He can make all things conſpire in a perfect harmony for his own Ends, and his Peoples good, when they ſee no way to eſcape a Danger feared, or attain a Bleſſing wanted.

Uſe IV.

I. For *Exhortation*

1. *Meditate on the Wiſdom of God in Creation and Government.* How little do we think of God when we behold his Works? Our Senſe dwells upon the ſurface of Plants and Animals, beholds the variety of their Colours, and the progreſs in their Motion: Our Reaſon ſtudies the qualities of them; our Spirits ſeldom take a flight to the *Divine Wiſdom* which framed them. Our Senſes engroſs our Minds from God, that we ſcarce have a Thought free to beſtow upon the Maker of them, but only on the bye. The conſtancy of ſeeing things that are common, ſtifles our admiration of God, due upon the ſight of them. How ſeldom do we raiſe our Souls as far as Heaven in our views of the Order of the World, the Revolutions of the Seaſons, the Natures, of the Creatures that are common among us, and the mutual Aſſiſtances they give to each other? Since God hath manifeſted himſelf in them, to neglect the Conſideration of them, is to neglect the Manifeſtation of God, and the way whereby he hath tranſmitted ſomething of his Perfections to our Underſtanding. It renders Men *inexcuſably guilty* of not *glorifying of God*, *Rom.* 1. 19, 20. We can never neglect the meditation of the Creatures, without a blemiſh caſt upon the Creators Wiſdom. As every River can conduct us to the Sea; ſo every Creature points us to an Ocean of *Infinite Wiſdom*. Not the minuteſt of them, but rich tracts of this may be obſerved in them, and a due ſenſe of God reſult from them. They are expoſed to our view, that ſomething of God may be lodged in our Minds; that as our Bodies extract their quinteſſence for our Nouriſhment, ſo our Minds may extract a quinteſſence for the Makers Praiſe.

Though God is principally to be praiſed in and for Chriſt; yet as Grace doth not raze out the Law of Nature, ſo the operations of Grace put not the dictates of Nature to ſilence, nor ſuſpend the Homage due to God upon our inſpection of his Works. God hath given full Teſtimonies of this Perfection in the Heavenly Bodies, diſperſing their Light, and diſtributing their Influences to every part of the World: In framing Men into Societies, giving them various Diſpoſitions, for the preſervation of Governments; making ſome Wiſe for Counſel, others Martial for Action; changing Old *Empires*, and raiſing New. Which way ſoever we caſt our Eyes, we ſhall find frequent occaſions to cry out, *Oh the depth of the Riches, both of the Wiſdom and Knowledge of God*, Rom. 11. 33.

To this purpoſe, we muſt not only look upon the bulk and outſide of his Works, but conſider from what Principles they were raiſed, in what order diſpoſed, and the exact ſymmetry and proportion of their parts. When a Man comes into a City or Temple, and only conſiders the ſurface of the Buildings, they will amaze his Senſe, but not better his Underſtanding; unleſs he conſiders the Methods of the Work and the Art whereby it was erected.

1. *This was an End for which they were created.* God did not make the World for Mans uſe only, but chiefly for his own Glory; for Mans uſe to enjoy his Creatures, and for his own Glory to be acknowledged in his Creatures, that we may conſider his Art in framing them, and his Skill in diſpoſing them; and not only gaze upon the Glaſs without conſidering the Image it repreſents, and acquainting our ſelves whoſe Image it is. The Creatures were not made for themſelves, but for the ſervice of the Creator, and the ſervice of Man. Man was not made for himſelf, but for the Service of the Lord that created him. He is to conſider the beauty of the Creation, that he may thereby glorifie the Creator. He knows in part their excellency; the Creatures themſelves do not. If therefore Man be idle and unobſervant of them, he deprives God of the glory of his *Wiſdom*, which he ſhould have by his Creatures.

The Inferiour Creatures themſelves cannot obſerve it. If Man regard it not, what becomes of it; his Glory can only be handed to him by Man. The other Creatures cannot be active Inſtruments of his Glory, becauſe they know not themſelves and therefore cannot render him an active Praiſe. Man is therefore bound to praiſe God for himſelf, and for all his Creatures; becauſe he only knows himſelf, and the Perfections of the Creatures, and the Author both of himſelf and them.

God Created ſuch Variety, to make a Report of himſelf, to us; we are to receive the Report, and to reflect it back to him. To what purpoſe did he make ſo many things, not neceſſary, for the ſupport and pleaſure of our Lives, but that we ſhould behold him in them, as well as in the other?

We cannot behold the *Wiſdom* of God in his own Eſſence and Eternal *Idea's*, but by the reflection of it in the Creatures: As we cannot ſteadily behold the *Sun* with our Eye, but either through a Glaſs, or by reflection of the Image of it in the Water. God would have us meditate on his Perfections; he therefore choſe the ſame Day wherein he reviewed his Work, and reſted from it, to be celebrated by Man for the contemplation of him, *Gen.* 2. 2, 3. that we ſhould follow his Example, and rejoyce as himſelf did, in the frequent reviews of his Wiſdom and Goodneſs in them. In vain would the Creatures afford Matter for this ſtudy, if they were wholly neglected.

God offers ſomething to our Conſideration in every Creature: Shall the Beams of God ſhine round about us, and ſtrike our Eyes and not affect our Minds? Shall we be like Ignorant Children, that view the Pictures, or point to the Letters in a Book without any ſenſe and meaning? How ſhall God have the homage due to him from his Works, if Man hath no care to obſerve them? The 148. *Pſalm* is an Exhortation to this, The view of them ſhould often extract from us, a wonder of the like nature of that of *David's*, *Pſal.* 104. 24. *Oh Lord, how wonderful are thy Works, in wiſdom haſt thou made them all.* The World was not Created to be forgotten, nor Man created to be unobſervant of it.

2. *If we obſerve not the Wiſdom of God in the views of the Creatures, we do no more than Brutes.* To look

upon the Works of God in the World, is no higher an act than meer Animals perform. The Glories of Heaven, and Beauties of the Earth, are viſible to the ſenſe of Beaſts and Birds. A Brute beholds the motion of a Man, as it may ſee the Wheels of a Clock, but underſtands not the inward Springs of Motion; the End for which we move, or the Soul that acts us in our motion; much leſs that Inviſible Power which preſides over the Creatures, and conducts their motion. If a Man do no more than this, he goes not a ſtep beyond a Brutiſh Nature, and may very well acknowledge himſelf with *Aſaph*, a fooliſh and *ignorant Beaſt before God*, *Pſal.* 73. 22. The World is viewed by Beaſts, but the Author of it to be contemplated by Man. Since we are in a higher rank than Beaſts, we owe a greater Debt than Beaſts; not only to enjoy the Creatures, as they do, but behold God in the Creatures, which they cannot do.

The Contemplation of the Reaſon of God in his Works, is a noble and ſutable employment for a Rational Creature: We have not only Senſe to perceive them, but Souls to mind them. The Soul is not to be without its operation: Where the operation of ſenſe ends, the work of the Soul ought to begin. We travel over them by our Senſes, as Brutes; but we muſt pierce further by our Underſtandings, as men, and perceive and praiſe him that lies Inviſible, in his viſible Manufactures. Our Senſes, are given us as Servants to the Soul, and our Souls, beſtowed upon us for the knowledge and praiſe of their and our Common Creator.

3. *This would be a means to increaſe our Humility.* We ſhould then flag our Wings, and veil our Sails, and acknowledge our own wiſdom to be as a drop to the Ocean, and a Shadow to the Sun. We ſhould have mean thoughts of the Nothingneſs of our Reaſon, when we conſider the ſublimity of the *Divine Wiſdom*. Who can ſeriouſly conſider the Sparks of infinite Skill in the Creature, without falling down at the feet of the Divine Majeſty, and acknowledging himſelf a dark and fooliſh Creature, *Pſal.* 8. 4, 5. *When* the Pſalmiſt *conſidered the Heavens*, the *Moon* and *Stars*, and God's ordination and diſpoſal of them, the uſe that reſults from it, is, *What is Man, that thou art mindful of him?* We ſhould no more think to mate him in Prudence, or ſet up the ſpark of our Reaſon to vie with the Sun. Our Reaſon would more willingly ſubmit to the Revelation, when the Characters of *Divine Wiſdom* are ſtampt upon it, when we find his *Wiſdom* in Creation incomprehenſible to us.

4 *It would help us in our acknowledgments of God, for his Goodneſs to us.* When we behold the *Wiſdom* of God in Creatures below us, and how ignorant they are of what they poſſeſs. It will cauſe us to reflect upon the deeper Impreſſions of Wiſdom in the frame of our own Bodies and Souls, an excellency far ſuperiour to theirs; this would make us admire the magnificence of his Wiſdom and Goodneſs, and ſound forth his Praiſe for advancing us in dignity above other Works of his hands, and ſtamping on us by Infinite Art, a Nobler Image of himſelf.

And by ſuch a Compariſon of our ſelves with the Creatures below us, we ſhould be induced to act excellently, according to the nature of our Souls; not brutiſhly, according to the nature of the Creatures God hath put under our feet.

5. *By the Contemplation of the Creatures, we may receive ſome aſſiſtance in clearing our knowledge in the Wiſdom of Redemption.* Though they cannot of themſelves inform us of it; yet ſince God hath revealed his Redeeming Grace, they can illuſtrate ſome particulars of it to us. Hence the Scripture makes uſe of the Creatures, to ſet forth things of a higher orb to us: Our *Saviour* is called a *Sun*, a *Vine*, and a *Lion*; the *Spirit* likened to a *Dove*, *Fire*, and *Water*. The Union of *Chriſt* and his *Church*, is ſet forth by the Marriage Union of *Adam* and *Eve*.

God hath placed in Corporeal things the Images of Spiritual, and wrapped up in his Creating *Wiſdom* the repreſentations of his Redeeming Grace: Whence ſome call the Creatures, *Natural Types* of what was to be tranſacted in a new formation of the World, and *Alluſions* to what God intended in and by Chriſt.

6. The Meditation of God's Wiſdom in the Creatures, *is in part a beginning of Heaven upon Earth.* No doubt but there will be a perfect opening of the Model of *Divine Wiſdom*. Heaven is for clearing what is now obſcure, and a full diſcovering of what ſeems at preſent intricate. *Pſal.* 36. 9. *In his light ſhall we ſee light:* All the Light in Creation, Government, and Redemption. The *Wiſdom* of God in the *New Heavens*, and the *New Earth*, would be to little purpoſe if that alſo were not to be regarded by the Inhabitants of them. As the Saints are to be reſtored to the ſtate of *Adam* and higher; ſo they are to be reſtored to the employment of *Adam*, and higher: But his employment, was to *behold God in the Creatures*. The World was ſo ſoon depraved, that God had but little joy in, and Man but little knowledge of his Works.

And ſince the *Wiſdom* of God in Creation is ſo little ſeen by our Ignorance here, would not God loſe much of the glory of it, if the glorified Souls ſhould loſe the underſtanding of it above; When their Darkneſs ſhall be expelled, and their Advantages improved; when the Eye that *Adam* loſt, ſhall be fully reſtored and with a greater clearneſs; when the Creature ſhall be reſtored to its true End, and Reaſon to its *true Perfection* *; when the Fountains of the depths of Nature and Government ſhall be opened, Knowledge ſhall increaſe, and according to the increaſe of our Knowledge, ſhall the admiration of *Divine Wiſdom* increaſe alſo. * Rom. 8. 21. 22.

The *Wiſdom* of God in Creation, was not ſurely intended to lie wholly unobſerved in the greateſt part of it; but ſince there was ſo little time for the full obſervation of it, there will be a time wherein the *Wiſdom* of God ſhall enjoy a reſurrection, and be fully contemplated by his underſtanding and glorified Creature.

II. Exhortation. *Study and admire the Wiſdom of God in Redemption.* This is the Duty of all Chriſtians. We are not called to underſtand the great depth of *Philoſophy*; we are not called to a skill in the Intricacies of Civil Government, or underſtand all the Methods of Phyſick: But we are called to be Chriſtians, that is Studiers of Divine *Evangelical Wiſdom*. There are firſt Principles to be learned; but not thoſe Principles to be reſted in, without a further progreſs. *Heb.* 6. 1. *Therefore leaving the principles of the Doctrine of Chriſt, let us go on to perfection.* Duties muſt be practiſed, but Knowledge is not to be neglected. The ſtudy of Goſpel Myſteries, the harmony of Divine Truths, the ſparkling of Divine Wiſdom, in there mutual combination to the great ends of God's Glory and Man's Salvation, is an Incentive to Duty, a Spur to Worſhip, and particularly to the greateſt and higheſt part of Worſhip, that part which ſhall remain in Heaven; the Admiration and Praiſe of God, and Delight in him. If we acquaint not our ſelves with the Impreſſions of the Glory of *Divine Wiſdom* in it, we ſhall not much regard

it

it as worthy our obſervance in regard of that Duty.

The *Goſpel* is a Myſtery; and as a Myſtery hath ſomething Great and Magnificent in it, worthy of our daily inſpection; we ſhall find freſh Springs of New wonders, which we ſhall be invited to adore with a Religious Aſtoniſhment. It will both raiſe and ſatisfie our Longings. Who can come to the depths of *God manifeſted in the fleſh*? How amazing is it, and unworthy of a ſlight thought that the Death of the Son of God ſhould purchaſe the happy Immortality of a Sinful Creature, and the glory of a Rebel be wrought by the Ignominy of ſo great a Perſon? That our Mediator, ſhould have a Nature whereby to Covenant with his Father, and a Nature whereby to be a Surety for the Creature? How admirable is it, that the Fallen Creature ſhould receive an advantage by the Forfeiture of his Happineſs? How Myſterious is it, that the Son of God ſhould bow down to Death upon a *Croſs*, for the ſatisfaction of Juſtice; and riſe Triumphantly out of the Grave, as a declaration, that Juſtice was contented and ſatisfied? That he ſhould be exalted to Heaven, to Intercede for us; and at laſt return into the World, to receive us, and inveſt us with a Glory for ever with himſelf?

Are theſe things worthy of a Careleſs regard, or a Blockiſh amazement? What Underſtanding can pierce into the depths of the Divine Doctrine of the Incarnation and Birth of Chriſt; the indiſſoluble Union of the *two* Natures? What Capacity is able to meaſure the miracles of that *Wiſdom*, found in the whole Draught and Scheme of the Goſpel? Doth it not merit then to be the Object of our daily Meditation? How comes it to paſs then, that we are ſo little curious to concern our thoughts in thoſe wonders, that we ſcarce taſte, or ſip of theſe Delicacies? That we buſie our ſelves in Trifles, and conſider what we ſhall eat, and in what faſhion we ſhall be dreſt; pleaſe our ſelves with the ingeniouſneſs of a Lace or Feather; admire a Moth-eaten Manuſcript, or ſome Half-worn piece of Antiquity, and think our time Ill-ſpent in the contemplating and celebrating that wherein God hath buſied himſelf, and Eternity is deſign'd for the perpetual expreſſions of?

How Inquiſitive are the Bleſſed *Angels*? with what vigour do they renew their daily Contemplations of it, and receive a freſh Contentment from it; ſtill learning, and ſtill *enquiring*? 1 *Pet.* 1. 12. there Eye is never off the *Mercy Seat*; they ſtrive to ſee the bottom of it, and employ all the Underſtanding they have to conceive the Wonders of it. Shall the *Angels* be raviſht with it, and bend, themſelves down to ſtudy it, who have but little intereſt in it in compariſon of us, for whom it was both contrived and diſpenſed? And ſhall not our Pains be greater for this *hidden Treaſure*? Is not that worthy the ſtudy of a Rational Creature, that is worthy the ſtudy of the Angelical? There muſt indeed be pains, 'tis expreſt by *Digging*, *Prov.* 2. 4, A lazy Arm will not ſink to the depth of a Mine The neglect of meditating on it is inexcuſable, ſince it hath the Title and Character of the *Wiſdom* of God.

The Ancient *Prophets* ſearched into it, when it was folded up in *Shadows*, when they ſaw only the fringes of *Wiſdoms* Garment*; and ſhall not we, ſince the Sun hath mounted up in our Horizon, and ſenſibly ſcattered the light of the knowledge of this and the other Perfections of God? As the *Jewiſh Sabbath* was appointed to celebrate the Perfections of God, diſcovered in Creation; ſo is the *Chriſtian Sabbath* appointed to meditate on, and bleſs God for the diſcovery of his Perfections in *Redemption*. Let us therefore receive it according to its worth; let it be our only Rule to walk by. 'Tis worthy to be valued above all other Counſels; and we ſhould never think of it without the *Doxology* of the *Apoſtle*, *to the only wiſe God be glory through Jeſus Chriſt, for ever*; that our Speculations may end in affectionate Admirations, and Thankſgivings, for that which is ſo full of Wonders! What a little proſpect ſhould we have had of God, and the Happineſs of Man had not his Wiſdom and Goodneſs revealed things to us? The *Goſpel* is a marvellous Light, and ſhould not be regarded with a ſtupid Ignorance, and purſued with a duller Practice.

* Pet. 1. 10.

III. Exhortation, *Let none of us be proud of, or truſt in our own wiſdom.* Man by affecting Wiſdom out of the way of God, got a crack in his Head, which hath continued *Five thouſand years* and upwards; and ever ſince our own Wiſdom and *knowledge hath perverted* us, *Iſai.* 47. 10. To be guided by this, is to be under the conduct of a blind Leader, and follow a Traytor and Enemy to God and our Selves. Mans Prudence often proves hurtful to him: He often accompliſheth his ruine, while he deſigns his eſtabliſhment; and finds his Fall, where he thought to ſettle his Fortune: Such bad Eyes hath human Wiſdom often in its own Affairs. Thoſe that have been heightned with a conceit of their own Cunning, have at laſt proved the greateſt Fools. God delights to make *fooliſh the Wiſdom of this World*, 1 *Cor.* 1. 20.

Thus God writ Folly upon the crafty Brains of *Achitophel*, and Simplicity upon the ſubtil Projects of *Herod* againſt our Saviour; and the *Devil*, the Prince of Carnal Wiſdom, was beſool'd into a furthering our Redemption by his own Projects to hinder it. Carnal Policy, againſt the Preſcripts of *Divine Wiſdom*, never proſpers: 'Tis like an *Ignis fatuus*, which leads Men out of the way of Duty, and out of the way of Security, and perverts them into the Mire, and dangerous *Precipices*.

When *Jeroboam* would coyn a religion to ſerve his intereſt of State, he tore up the Foundations both of his Kingdom and Family. The way the *Jews* took to prevent a freſh Invaſion of the *Romans*, by the Crucifying Chriſt, brought the Judgment more ſwift upon them*. There is no Man ruin'd here, or damn'd hereafter, but by his own wiſdom and will. *Prov.* 3. 5, 7. *The fear of the Lord* and *departure from evil*, are inconſiſtent with an overweening Conceit of our own Wiſdom; and *leaning to our own underſtanding*, is inconſiſtent with a *truſting in the Lord with all our hearts*. 'Tis as much a Deifying our ſelves, to truſt to our own wit, as it is a Deifying the Creature to affect or confide in it, ſuperior to God, or equally with him.

* Joh. 11. 48.

The true way to *Wiſdom* is to be ſenſible of our own folly, 1 *Cor.* 3. 18. *If any man be wiſe, let him become a fool.* He that diſtruſts his own guidance, will more ſecurely and ſucceſsfully follow the Counſel of another in whom he confides. The more water, or any other Liquor, is poured out of a Veſſel, the more Air enters. The more we diſtruſt our own Wiſdom, the more capable we are of the conduct of Gods.

Had *Jehoſophat* relied upon his own policy, he might have found a Defeat when he met with a Deliverance; but he diſowned his own skill and ſtrength, in telling God, *We know not what to do, but our eyes are towards thee*, 2 *Chron.* 20. 12. Let us therefore with *Agur*, diſeſteem our own Underſtanding to eſteem Divine. Human Prudence is like a *Spiders* web, eaſily blown away, and ſwept down by the Beſom of ſome unexpected Revolution. God by

his infinite wiſdom can croſs the wiſdom of Man, and make a Mans own prudence hang in his own light. *Iſaiah* 29 14. *The underſtanding of their Prudent Men ſhall be hid.*

IV. Exhortation. *Seek to God for Wiſdom.* The Wiſdom we have by Nature is like the weeds the Earth brings forth without Tillage. Our Wiſdom ſince the Fall, is the Wiſdom of the *Serpent*, without the Innocency of the *Dove*: It flows from ſelf-love, runs into Self-intereſt. 'Tis the wiſdom of the Fleſh, and a prudence to manage means for the contenting our Luſts. Our beſt Wiſdom is imperfect, a meer nothing and Vanity, in compariſon of the Divine, as our Beings are in compariſon of his Eſſence. We muſt go to God for a Holy and Innocent Wiſdom, and fill our Ciſterns from a pure Fountain. The Wiſdom that was the glory of *Solomon*, was the *Donation of the moſt High*. *James* 1 5. *If any man want Wiſdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it ſhall be given him.* The faculty of Underſtanding is from God by Nature; but a heavenly light to direct the Underſtanding is from God *by Grace*. Children have an Underſtanding, but ſtand in need of wiſe Maſters to rectifie it, and form Judicious Notions in it.

There is a Spirit in man, but the inſpiration of the Almighty gives him underſtanding, *Job* 32. 8. We muſt beg of God, *Wiſdom*. The *Goſpel* is *the Wiſdom of God*; the concerns of it great and Myſterious, not to be known without a *New underſtanding*, 1 *John* 5. 20. A new Underſtanding is not to be had but from the Creator of the firſt. The Spirit of God is the *Searcher of the deep things of God*; the Revealer of them to us, and the enlightner of our Minds to apprehend them; and therefore called, a *Spirit of Wiſdom and revelation*, *Eph.* 1. 17. Chriſt is made *Wiſdom* to us, as well as *Righteouſneſs*; not only by *Imputation*, but *Effuſion* *. Seek to God therefore for that wiſdom which is like the *Sun*, and not that worldly wiſdom which is like a *Shadow*: For that wiſdom whoſe effects are not ſo outwardly glorious, but inwardly ſweet, ſeek it from him, and ſeek it in his Word, that is the Tranſcript of *Divine Wiſdom*; through his *Precepts underſtanding is to be had* *. As the wiſdom of Men appears in their Laws; ſo doth the Wiſdom of God in his Statutes.

* Seamans *Sermon before the Parliament.*

*Pſal. 119. 104.

By this means we arrive to a heavenly ſagacity If theſe be rejected, what wiſdom can be in us? A dream and conceit only; *Jer.* 8. *They have rejected the word of the Lord, and what Wiſdom is in them?* Who knows how to order any concerns as he ought, or any one faculty of his Soul? Therefore deſire Gods direction in outward concerns, in *perſonal, family, in Private and Publick*: He hath not only a wiſdom for our Salvation, but for our outward Direction. He doth not only guide us in the one, and leave *Satan* to manage us in the other. Thoſe that go with *Saul* to a Witch of *Endor*, go to Hell for craft, and prefer the Wiſdom of the hoſtile Serpent, before the holy Counſel of a Faithful Creator. If you want health in your Body, you adviſe with a *Phyſician*; if directions for your Eſtate, you reſort to a *Lawyer*; If paſſage for a voyage, you addreſs to a *Pilot*; why not much more your *ſelves*, your *all*, to a wiſe God. As *Pliny* ſaid concerning a wiſe man, *Oh, ſir, how many* Cato's *are there in that wiſe perſon?* how much more Wiſdom than men or Angels poſſeſs, is infinitely centred in the Wiſe God?

V. *Submit to the Wiſdom of God in all Caſes.* What elſe was inculcated in the firſt Precept forbiding man to eat of the Fruit of the *tree of Knowledge of good and evil*; but that he ſhould take heed of the ſwelling of his mind againſt the Wiſdom of God? Tis a Wiſdom Incomprehenſible to fleſh and blood: We ſhould adore it in our minds, and reſign up our ſelves to it in our practice: How unreaſonable are repinings againſt God, whereby a Creatures Ignorance endites and judges a Creators Prudence? Were God weak in Wiſdom, and only mighty in Power, we might ſuſpect his Conduct. Power without Wiſdom and Goodneſs is an unruly and ruinous thing in the World. But God being infinite in one, as well as the other, we have no reaſon to be jealous of him, and repine againſt his methods; why ſhould we quarrel with him that we are not as high, or as wealthy as others; that we have not preſently the Mercy we want? If he be wiſe, we ought to ſtay his time, and wait his leiſure, becauſe *he is a God of Judgment*, *Eſa.* 30. 18. Preſume not to ſhorten the time which his diſcretion hath fixed, 'tis a folly to think to do it. By impatience we cannot haſten relief; we alienate him from us, by debaſing him to ſtand at our bar, diſturb our ſelves, loſe the comfort of our lives, and the ſweetneſs of his mercy. Submiſſion to God we are in no caſe exempted from, becauſe there is no caſe wherein God doth not direct all the acts of his Will by Counſel. Whatſoever is drawn by a *ſtrait rule* muſt be right and ſtrait; the rule that is right in it ſelf, is the meaſure of the ſtraitneſs of every thing elſe: Whatſoever is wrought in the World by God, muſt be Wiſe, Good, Righteous; becauſe God is eſſentially Wiſdom, Goodneſs, and Righteouſneſs.

Submit to God, (1.) *in his Revelations.*

1. *Meaſure them not by Reaſon:* The truths of the Goſpel muſt be received with a ſelf emptineſs and annihilation of the Creature. If our Reaſon ſeems to lift up it ſelf againſt Revelation, becauſe it finds no teſtimony for it in its own light: Conſider how crazy it is in natural and obvious things, and therefore ſure it is not ſtrong enough to enter into the depths of Divine Wiſdom: The Wiſdom of God in the Goſpel is too great an Ocean to be contained or laved out by a Cockleſhell. It were not infinite, if it were not beyond our finite reach; our Reaſon muſt as well ſtoop to his Wiſdom, as our Wills to his Sovereignty. How great a vanity is it for a Glow-worm to boaſt, that it is as full of light as the Sun in the firmament? For reaſon to leave its proper ſphere, is to fall into confuſion, and thicken its own darkneſs. We ſhould ſettle our ſelves in the belief of the Scripture, and confirm our ſelves by a meditation on thoſe many undeniable arguments, for its divine Authority. The fulfilling of its Predictions, the antiquity of the writing, the holineſs of the precepts, the heavenlineſs of the Doctrine, the glorious effects it hath produced, and doth yet produce, different from human methods of ſucceſs; and ſubmit our reaſon to the voice of ſo high a Majeſty.

2. *Not to be too curiouſly inquiſitive into what is not Revealed.* There is ſomething hid in whatſoever is revealed. We know the Son of God was begotten from Eternity, but how he was begotten, we are ignorant. We know there is a Union of the Divine Nature with the Human, and that the *Fulneſs of the Godhead dwells in him bodily*; but the manner of its inhabitation we are in a great part ignorant of. We know God hath choſen ſome, and refuſed others, and that he did it with Counſel; but the reaſon why he choſe this man and not that, we know not; we can refer it to nothing but God's Sovereign Pleaſure. 'Tis revealed, that there will be *a day wherein God ſhall Judge the World*; but the particular time is not revealed. We know that God created the World in Time; but why he did not create the World millions of years before, we are ignorant

ignorant of, and our Reaſons would be bewildred in their too much Curioſity. If we ask why he did not create it before, we may as well ask why he did create it then? And may not the ſame Queſtion be ask'd, if the World had been created Millions of Years before it was. That he created it in *ſix days*, and not in an inſtant, is revealed; but why he did not do it in a moment, ſince we are ſure he was able to do it, is not revealed. Are the Reaſons of a wiſe Man's Proceedings hid from us, and ſhall we preſume to dive into the Reaſon of the Proceedings of an *only wiſe God*, which he hath judged not expedient to diſcover to us? Some Sparks of his Wiſdom he hath cauſed to iſſue out, to exerciſe and delight our Minds; others he keeps within the Centre of his own Breaſt: We muſt not go about to unlock his Cabinet. As we cannot reach to the utmoſt Lines of his Power; ſo we cannot graſp the intimate Reaſons of his Wiſdom. We muſt ſtill remember, that which is finite can never be able to comprehend the Reaſons, Motives, and Methods of that which is infinite. It doth not become us to be reſty, becauſe God hath not admitted us into the Debates of Eternity. We are as little to be curious at what God hath hid, as to be careleſs of what God hath manifeſted. Too great an Inquiſitiveneſs beyond our Line, is as much a provoking Arrogance, as a blockiſh Negligence of what is revealed, is a ſlighting Ingratitude.

2. *Submit to God in his Precepts and Methods.* Since they are the Reſults of infinite Wiſdom, diſputes againſt them are not tolerable: What Orders are given out by infallible Wiſdom, are to be entertained with Reſpect and Reverence, though the Reaſon of them be not viſible to our pur blind Minds. Shall God have leſs Reſpect from us than earthly Princes, whoſe Laws we obſerve, without being able to pierce into the exact Reaſon of them all? Since we know he hath not a Will without an Underſtanding, our Obſervance of him muſt be without Repining; we muſt not think to mend our Creator's Laws, and preſume to judge and condemn his Righteous Statutes: If the Fleſh riſe up in Oppoſition, we muſt croſs its Motions, and ſilence its Murmurings; his Will ſhould be an acceptable Will to us, becauſe it is a wiſe Will in itſelf. God hath no need to impoſe upon us and deceive us; he hath juſt and righteous Ways to attain his Glory, and his Creatures Good. To deceive us, would be to diſhonour himſelf, and contradict his own Nature. He cannot impoſe falſe injurious Precepts or unavailable to his Subjects Happineſs; not falſe, becauſe of his Truth; not injurious, becauſe of his Goodneſs; not vain, becauſe of his Wiſdom. Submit therefore to him in his Precepts, and in his Methods too. The Honour of his Wiſdom, and the Intereſt of our Happineſs calls for it. Had *Noah* diſputed with God about building an Ark, and liſtened to the Scoffs of the ſenſeleſs World, he had periſhed under the ſame Fate, and loſt the Honour of a *Preacher and worker of Righteouſneſs.* Had not the Iſraelites been their own Enemies, if they had been permitted to be their own Guides, and returned to the Egyptian Bondage and Furnaces, inſtead of a Liberty and earthly Felicity in *Canaan*? Had our Saviour gratified the Jews by deſcending from the Croſs, and freeing himſelf from the Power of his Adverſaries, he might have had that Faith from them which they promiſed him, but it had been a Faith to no purpoſe, becauſe without ground; they might have believed him to be the *Son of God*, but he could not have been the Saviour of the World: His Death, the great ground and object of Faith had been unaccompliſhed, they had believed a God pardoning without a content to his Juſtice, and ſuch a Faith could not have reſcued them from falling into eternal Miſery. The Precepts and Methods of divine Wiſdom muſt be ſubmitted to.

3. *Submit to God in all Croſſes and Revolutions.* Infinite Wiſdom cannot err in any of his Paths, or ſtep the leaſt Hairs breadth from the way of Righteouſneſs: There is the Underſtanding of God in every Motion; an Eye in every Wheel, the Wheel that goes over us and cruſheth us. We are led by Fancy more than Reaſon: We know no more what we ask, or what is fit for us, than the Mother of *Zebedee*'s Children did, when ſhe petitioned Chriſt for her Sons Advancement, when he came into his temporal Kingdom *: The things we deſire might pleaſure our Fancy or Appetite, but impair our Health: One Man complains for want of Children, but knows not whether they may prove Comforts or Croſſes: Another for want of Health, but knows not whether the Health of his Body may not prove the Diſeaſe of his Soul. We might loſe in heavenly things, if we poſſeſs in earthly things what we long for. God, in regard of his infinite Wiſdom, is fitter to carve out a Condition than we our ſelves; our ſhallow Reaſon, and Self-love, would wiſh for thoſe things, that are injurious to God, to our ſelves, to the World; but God always chooſes what is beſt for his Glory, and what is beſt for his Creatures, either in regard of themſelves, or as they ſtand in relation to him, or to others, as parts of the World. * Matt. 20. 22.

We are in danger from our Self-love, in no danger in complying with God's Wiſdom: When *Rachel* would die, if ſhe had no Children, ſhe had Children, but Death with one of them *. Good Men may conclude, that whatſoever is done by God in them or with them, is beſt and fitteſt for them; becauſe by the Covenant which makes over God to them, as their God, the conduct of his Wiſdom is aſſured to them as well as any other Attribute: And therefore, as God in every Tranſaction appears as their God, ſo he appears as their wiſe Director, and by this Wiſdom he extracts Good out of Evil, makes the Affliction which deſtroys our outward Comforts, conſume our inward Defilements: And the Waves which threatned to ſwallow up the Veſſel, to caſt it upon the Shoar: And when he hath occaſion to manifeſt his Anger againſt his People, his Wiſdom directs his Wrath. In Judgment he hath *a Work to do upon Zion*, and when that Work is done, he puniſhes the fruit of the *ſtout Heart of the King of Aſſyria* *: As in the Anſwers of Prayer he doth give oftentimes *above what we ask, or think, Eph.* 3. 20. ſo in outward Concerns he doth above what we can expect, or by our ſhort-ſightedneſs conclude will be done: Let us therefore in all things frame our Minds to the divine Wiſdom, and ſay with the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 47. 4. *The Lord ſhall chuſe our Inheritance* and condition *for us.* * Gen. 30. 1. * Iſai. 10. 12.

VI. Exhortation. *Cenſure not God in any of his Ways.* Can we underſtand the full ſcope of divine Wiſdom in Creation, which is perfected before our Eyes? Can we, by a rational Knowledge, walk over the whole Surface of the Earth, and wade through the Sea? Can we underſtand the Nature of the Heavens? Are all, or moſt, or the thouſandth part of the Particles of Divine Skill known by us, yea or any of them throughly known? How can we then underſtand his deeper Methods in things, that are but of Yeſterday, that we have not had a time to View? We ſhould not be too quick or too raſh in our Judgments of him: The beſt that we attain to, is but feeble Conjectures at the Deſigns of God.

As there is ſomething hid in whatſoever is revealed in his Word, ſo there is ſomething inacceſſible to us in his Works, as well as in his Nature and Majeſty.

jeſty. In our Saviour's act in waſhing his Diſciples feet, he checkt *Peter*'s contradiction, *John* 13. 7. *What I do, thou knoweſt not now, but thou ſhalt know hereafter.* God were not infinitely wiſe if the reaſon of all his acts were obvious to our Shallowneſs. He is no profound States-man, whoſe inward intention can be founded by vulgar Heads at the firſt act he ſtarts in his deſigned method. The wiſe God is in this like wiſe men, that have not breaſts like glaſſes of Chryſtal, to diſcover all that they intend. There are *ſecrets of Wiſdom above our reach* *; nay when we ſee all his acts, we cannot ſee all the draughts of his skill in them. An unskillful hearer of a muſical leſſon may receive the melody with his Ear, and underſtand not the rarities of the compoſition as it was wrought by the Muſician's mind. Under the old Teſtament there was more of Divine Power, and leſs of his wiſdom apparent in his acts: As his Laws, ſo his acts were more fitted to their Senſe. Under the *new Teſtament* there is more of wiſdom and leſs of power; as his Laws ſo his acts are more fitted to a ſpiritual mind; wiſdom is leſs diſcernable than power. Our wiſdom therefore in this caſe, as it doth in other things, conſiſts in ſilence and expectation of the end and event of a work. We owe that honour to God that we do to men wiſer than our ſelves, to imagin he hath reaſon to do what he doth, though our ſhallowneſs cannot comprehend it. We muſt ſuffer God to be wiſer than our ſelves, and acknowledge that there is ſomething ſoveraign in his ways not to be meaſured by the feeble reed of our weak underſtandings; and therefore we ſhould acquieſce in his proceedings; take heed we be not found ſlanderers of God, but be adorers inſtead of Cenſurers; and lift up our hands in admiration of him and his ways, inſtead of citing him to anſwer it at our Bar. Many things in the *firſt* appearance may ſeem to be raſh and unjuſt, which in the *iſſue* appear comely and regular. If it had been plainly ſpoke before that the Son of God ſhould die, that a moſt holy perſon ſhould be crucified; it would have ſeemed cruel to expoſe a Son to miſery; unjuſt to inflict puniſhment upon one that that was no Criminal; to joyn together exact goodneſs and *Phyſical evil*; that the Soveraign ſhould die for the Malefactor, and the Obſerver of the Law for the Violaters of it. But when the *whole deſign* is unravelled, what an admirable conjunction is there of Juſtice and Mercy, Love and Wiſdom, which before would have appeared abſurd to the muddied reaſon of man?

* Job 11. 6.

We ſee the Gardiner pulling up ſome delightful Flowers by the roots, digging up the Earth, overwhelming it with Dung; an ignorant perſon would imagine him wild, out of his wits, and charge him with ſpoiling his Garden: But when the Spring is arrived, the ſpectator will acknowledge his skill in his former Operations.

The truth is, the whole deſign and methods of God are not to be judged by us in this world; the full declaration of the whole contexture is reſerved for the other world, to make up a part of good mens happineſs in the amazing views of divine Wiſdom, as well as the other perfections of his nature. We can no more perfectly underſtand his Wiſdom, than we can his Mercy and Juſtice, till we ſee the laſt lines of all drawn, and the full expreſſions of them: We ſhould therefore be ſober and modeſt in the conſideration of God's ways; *his Judgments are unſearchable, and his ways paſt finding out.* The riches of his wiſdom are paſt our counting, his depths not to be fathomed, yet they are depths of righteouſneſs and equity: Though the full manifeſtation of that equity, the grounds and methods of his proceedings are unknown to us. As we are too ſhort, fully to know God, ſo we are too ignorant fully to comprehend the acts of God: Since he is a *God of Judgment*, we ſhould *wait* till we ſee the iſſue of his works, *Eſa.* 30. 18. And in the mean time, with the *Apoſtle* in the *Text*, give him the Glory of all, in the ſame expreſſions; *To the only wiſe God be glory, through Jeſus Chriſt for ever.* Amen.

A DISCOURSE UPON THE Power of GOD.

Job XXVI. xiv.

Loe, these are parts of his ways, but how little a portion is heard of him? [but the thunder of his power who can understand?]

BILDAD had in the foregoing Chapter entertain'd *Job* with a Discourse of the *Dominion* and *Power* of God, and the Purity of his Righteousness, whence he argues an impossibility of the justification of man in his presence, who is no better than a worm. *Job* in this *Chapter* acknowledges the greatness of God's power, and descants more largely upon it than *Bildad* had done; but doth Preface it with a kind of Ironical Speech, as if he had not acted a friendly part, or spake little to the purpose, or the matter in hand. The subject of *Job*'s Discourse was the Worldly Happiness of the Wicked, and the Calamities of the Godly: And *Bildad* reads him a Lecture of the Extent of God's Dominion, the Number of his Armies, and the unspotted Rectitude of his Nature, in comparison of which the purest Creatures are foul and crooked. *Job* therefore from *verse* 1. to *verse* 4. taxeth him, in a kind of scoffing manner, that he had not touched the point, but rambled from the subject in hand, and had not applied a Salve proper to his Sore: *Verse* 2. *How hast thou helped him that is without power? How savest thou the arm of him that hath no strength?* &c. your Discourse is so impertinent, that it will neither strengthen a weak person, nor instruct a simple one*. But since *Bildad* would take up an Argument of God's Power, and discourse so short of it, *Job* would shew that he wanted not his Instructions in that kind, and that he had more distinct Conceptions of it than his Antagonist had uttered: And therefore, from *verse* 5. to the end of the *Chapter*, he doth magnificently treat of the Power of God, in several Branches. And *verse* 5. he begins with the lowest.

*Munster.

Dead things are formed from under the waters, and the inhabitants thereof. You read me a Lecture of the Power of God in the Heavenly Host: Indeed it is visible there, yet of a larger extent; and Monuments of it are found in the lower parts. What do you think of those dead things under the Earth and Waters; of the Corn that dies, and by the moistning Influences of the Clouds springs up again with a numerous progeny and increase for the nourishment of man? What do you think of those varieties of Metals and Minerals conceived in the bowels of the Earth; those Pearls and Riches in the Depths of the Waters, midwifed by this Power of God? Add to these those more prodigious Creatures in the Sea, the Inhabitants of the Waters, with their vastness and variety, which are all the Births of God's Power; both in their first Creation by his mighty Voice, and their Propagation by his cherishing Providence.

Stop not here, but consider also that his Power extends to Hell; either the Graves, the Repositories of all the crumbled dust that hath yet been in the World; (for so Hell is sometimes taken in Scripture: *Verse* 6. *Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering.*) The several lodgings of deceased men are known to him: No skreen can obscure them from his sight, nor their dissolution be any bar to his power, when the time is come to compact those mouldred Bodies to entertain again their departed Souls, either for weal or woe. The Grave, or *Hell*, the place of punishment, *is naked before him*; as distinctly discern'd by him, as a naked body in all its lineaments by us, or a dissected Body is in all its parts by a skilful eye. *Destruction hath no covering*; none can free himself from the power of his hand. Every person in the bowels of Hell, every person punished there, is known to him, and feels the power of his wrath.

From the lower parts of the World he ascends to the consideration of the power of God in the creation of Heaven and Earth: *He stretches out the North over the empty places**. The North or the North-pole over the Air, which by the *Greeks* was called *void* or *empty*, because of the tenuity and thinness of that Element; and he mentions here the North, or North-pole, for the whole Heaven, because it is more known and apparent than the Southern-pole. *And hangs the Earth upon nothing*: The massie and weighty Earth hangs like a thick Globe in the midst of a thin Air, that there is as much Air on the one side of it, as on the other. The Heavens have no prop to sustain them in their height, and the Earth hath no basis to support it in its place. The Heavens are as if you saw a curtain stretched smooth in the Air without any hand

*Verse 7.

to hold it; and the Earth is as if you ſaw a ball hanging in the Air without any ſolid Body to underprop it, or any Line to hinder it from falling; both ſtanding Monuments of the Omnipotence of God.

He then takes notice of his daily Power in the Clouds. *He binds up the waters in his thick Clouds,* * Verſe 8. *and the Cloud is not rent under them**. He compacts the Waters together in Clouds, and keeps them by his Power in the Air againſt the force of their natural gravity and heavineſs, till they are fit to flow down upon the Earth, and perform his pleaſure in the places for which he deſigns them. *The Clouds is not rent under them*; the thin Air is not ſplit aſunder by the weight of the Waters contain'd in the Cloud above it. He cauſes them to diſtil by drops, and ſtrains them as it were through a thin Lawn, for the refreſhment of the Earth; and ſuffers them not to fall in the whole lump, with a violent torrent, to waſte the induſtry of man, and bring famine upon the World, by deſtroying the Fruits of the Earth. What a wonder would it be to ſee but one intire drop of water hang it ſelf but one inch above the ground, unleſs it be a bubble which is preſerved by the air incloſ'd within it? What a wonder would it be to ſee a gallon of water contain'd in a thin cobweb as ſtrongly as in a veſſel of braſs? Greater is the wonder of Divine Power in thoſe thin Bottles of Heaven, as they are called*; and therefore called *his* Clouds here, as being daily In- * Job 38. 37. ſtances of his Omnipotence: That the air ſhould ſuſtain thoſe rouling veſſels, as it ſhould ſeem, weighter than it ſelf! That the force of this maſs of waters ſhould not break ſo thin a priſon, and haſten to its proper place which is below the air! That they ſhould be daily confin'd againſt their natural inclination, and held by ſo ſlight a chain! That there ſhould be ſuch a gradual and ſucceſſive falling of them, as if the air were pierced with holes like a Gardiner's watering-pot, and not fall in one intire body to drown or drench ſome parts of the Earth! Theſe are hourly miracles of Divine Power, as little regarded as clearly viſible.

He proceeds, *Verſe* 9. *He holds back the face of his Throne, and ſpreads the Cloud upon it.* The Clouds are deſign'd as Curtains to cover the Heavens, * Pſal. 147. 8. as well as Veſſels to *water the Earth**. As a Tapeſtry Curtain between the Heavens, the *Throne* of God; *Iſa.* 66. 1. and the Earth *his Footſtool*: The Heavens are called his Throne, becauſe his Power doth moſt ſhine forth there, and magnificently declare the Glory of God; and the Clouds are as a skreen between the ſcorching heat of the Sun, and the tender plants of the Earth, and the weak bodies of Men.

From hence he deſcends to the Sea, and conſiders the Divine Power apparent in the bounding of it: *Verſe* 10. *He hath compaſſed the Waters with bounds, till the day and night come to an end.* This is ſeveral times mention'd in Scripture, as a ſignal mark of * Job 38. 8. Prov. 8. 27. Divine *ſtrength**. He hath meaſured a place for the Sea, and ſtruck the Limits of it as with a Compaſs, that it might not mount above the ſurface of the Land, and ruine the ends of the Earths Creation; and this while day and night have their mutual turns, till he ſhall make an end of Time by removing the meaſures of it. The bounds of the tumultuous Sea are in many places as weak as the bottles of the upper Waters; the one is contain'd in thin Air, and the other reſtrain'd by weak Sands in many places, as well as by ſtubborn Rocks in others; that though it ſwells, foams, roars, and the Waves, encourag'd and egg'd on by ſtrong Winds, come like Mountains againſt the Shoar, they overflow it not, but humble themſelves when they come near to thoſe Sands which are ſet as their liſts and limits, and retire back to the womb that brought them forth, as if they were aſhamed, and repented of their proud Invaſion: Or elſe it may be meant of the Tides of the Sea, and the ſtated Time God hath ſet it for its ebbing and flowing, till night and day come to an end*; both that the fluid Waters ſhould * Coccei *in loc.* contain themſelves within due bounds, and keep their perpetual orderly motion, are amazing Arguments of Divine Power.

He paſſes on to the Conſideration of the Commotions in the Air and Earth, raiſed and ſtill'd by the Power of God; *The Pillars of Heaven tremble, and are aſtoniſhed at his reproof.* By Pillars of Heaven are not meant Angels, as ſome think; but either the Air, called the Pillars of Heaven in regard of place, as it continues and knits together the parts of the World, as Pillars do the upper and nether parts of a Building. As the loweſt parts of the Earth are called the Foundations of the Earth; ſo the loweſt parts of the Heaven may be called the Pillars of Heaven *. Or elſe by that Phraſe may * Coccei. be meant Mountains, which ſeem at a diſtance to touch the Sky, as Pillars do the top of a Structure; and ſo it may be ſpoken according to vulgar Capacity, which imagines the Heavens to be ſuſtained by the two extream Parts of the Earth, as a Convex Body, or to be arch'd by Pillars; whence the Scripture, according to common apprehenſions, mentions *the Ends of the Earth*, and the *utmoſt parts of the Heavens*, tho' they have properly no end, as being round. The Power of God is ſeen in thoſe Commotions in the Air and Earth, by Thunders, Lightnings, Storms, Earthquakes, which rack the Air, and make the Mountains and Hills tremble as Servants before a frowning and rebuking Maſter.

And as he makes motions in the Earth and Air, ſo is his Power ſeen in their Influences upon the Sea; *He judges the Sea with his power, and by his underſtanding he ſmites through the proud**. At the * Verſe 12. Creation he put the waters into ſeveral Channels, and cauſed the dry Land to appear bare-fac'd for a Habitation for Man and Beaſts; or rather he ſplits the Sea by Storms, as though he would make the bottom of the deep viſible, and rakes up the Sands to the Surface of the waters, and marſhals the waves into Mountains and Valleys. After that, he *ſmites through the proud*, that is, humbles the proud waves, and by allaying the Storm, reduceth them to their former Level: The Power of God is viſible, as well in *rebuking*, as in *awakening the winds*; he makes them ſenſible of his Voice, and according to his Pleaſure exaſperates or calms them. The *ſtriking through the proud* here, is not probably meant of the deſtruction of the Egyptian Army; for ſome gueſs that *Job* died that Year *, or about * Druſius the time of the *Iſraelites* coming out of *Egypt*: So *in loc.* that this Diſcourſe here being in the time of his Affliction, could not point at that which was done after his Reſtoration to his Temporal Proſperity.

And now at laſt he ſums up the Power of God in the chiefeſt of his works above, and the greateſt wonder of his works below: *Verſe* 13. *By his Spirit he hath garniſh'd the Heavens; his hand hath formed the crooked Serpent*, &c. The greater and leſſer Lights, Sun, Moon, and Stars, the Ornaments and Furniture of Heaven; and the Whale, a Prodigious Monument of God's Power, often mentioned in Scripture to this purpoſe, and in particular in this Book of *Job* *, and called by the ſame name of Crooked * Job 41. Serpent, *Iſa.* 27. 1. where it is applied by way of *Metaphor* to the King of *Aſſyria* or *Egypt*, or all Oppreſſors of the Church. Various Interpretations there are of this *crooked Serpent*: Some underſtanding that Conſtellation in Heaven, which *Aſtronomers* call

call the *Dragon*; ſome that Combination of weaker Stars, which they call the *Galaxia*, which winds about the Heavens: But it is moſt probable that *Job*, drawing near to a Concluſion of his Diſcourſe, joyns the two greateſt Teſtimonies of God's Power in the world, the higheſt Heavens, and the loweſt *Leviathan*, which is here called a *bar* Serpent * in regard of his ſtrength and hardneſs, as mighty Men are called bars in Scripture, *Jer.* 51. 30. *Her bars are broken things.* And in regard of this Power of God in the Creation of this Creature, 'tis particularly mention'd in the Catalogue of God's works, *Gen.* 1. 21. *And God created great Whales*; all the other Creatures being put into one ſumm, and not particularly expreſt.

* *As the word ſignifies in the* Hebrew.

And now he makes the uſe of this Lecture in the Text, *Loe, theſe are parts of his ways, but how little a portion is heard of him? but the thunder of his power who can underſtand?* This is but a ſmall Landskip of ſome of his works of Power, the outſides and extremities of it; more glorious things are within his Palaces. Though thoſe things argue a ſtupendous Power of the Creator in his works of Creation and Providence, yet they are nothing to what may be declared of his Power. And what may be declared, is nothing to what may be conceived; and what may be conceived, is nothing to what is above the conceptions of any Creature. Theſe are but little crumbs and fragments of that infinite Power which is in his Nature, like a drop in compariſon of the mighty Ocean; a hiſs or whiſper, in compariſon of a mighty voice of Thunder *. This which I have ſpoken is but like a ſpark to the fiery Region, a few lines by the by, a drop of ſpeech.

* Oecolamp.

The thunder of his Power: Some underſtand it of Thunder literally, for material Thunder in the Air: *The thunder of his Power*, that is, according to the *Hebrew* Dialect, *his powerful Thunder.* This is not the ſenſe; the nature of Thunder in the Air doth not ſo much exceed the capacity of human underſtanding; 'tis therefore rather to be underſtood metaphorically, *The thunder of his Power*, that is, the greatneſs and immenſity of his Power manifeſted in the magnificent miracles of Nature, in the conſideration whereof Men are aſtoniſhed, as if they had heard an unuſual clap of Thunder. So Thunder is uſed, *Job* 39. 25. *The Thunder of the Captains*; that is, ſtrength and force of the Captains of an Army. And, *verſe* 1. 9. God ſpeaking to *Job* of a Horſe, ſaith, *Haſt thou cloathed his neck with Thunder?* that is, ſtrength. And Thunder being a mark of the Power of God, ſome of the Heathen have called God by the name of a Thunderer *. As Thunder pierceth the loweſt places, and alters the ſtate of things; ſo doth the Power of God penetrate into all things whatſoever; *the Thunder of his Power*; that is, the Greatneſs of his Power: As *the ſtrength of Salvation*, Pſal. 20. 6. that is, a mighty Salvation.

* *The ancient* Gauls *worſhiped him under the name of* Turanis. *The* Greeks *called* Jupiter Βρον-τᾶν & Thor; *whence our* Thurſday *is derived, ſignifieth* Thunderer, *a Title the* Germans *gave their god. And* Toran *in the* Britiſh *Language ſignifies Thunder.* Voſſ. *Idolo. lib.* 2. *cap.* 33. Camb. *Britan. p.* 17.

Who can underſtand? Who is able to count all the Monuments of his Power? How doth this little, which I have ſpoken of, exceed the capacity of our underſtanding, and is rather the matter of our aſtoniſhment, than the object of our comprehenſive knowledge? The Power of the greateſt Potentate, or the mightieſt Creature, is but of ſmall extent: None but have their limits; it may be underſtood how far they can act, in what ſphere their activity is bounded: But when I have ſpoken all of Divine Power that I can; when you have thought all that you can think of it, your Souls will prompt you to conceive ſomething more beyond what I have ſpoken, and what you have thought. His Power ſhines in every thing, and is beyond every thing. There is infinitely more Power lodged in his Nature, not expreſt to the World. The underſtanding of Men and Angels centred in one Creature, would fall ſhort of the perception of the Infiniteneſs of it. All that can be comprehended of it, are but little Fringes of it, a ſmall portion. No Man ever diſcours'd, or can, of God's Power, according to the magnificence of it. No Creature can conceive it; God himſelf only comprehends it; God himſelf is only able to expreſs it. Man's Power being limited, his Line is too ſhort to meaſure the incomprehenſible Omnipotence of God. *The Thunder of his Power who can underſtand?* that is, none can.

The Text is a lofty Declaration of the Divine Power, with a particular note of Attention, *Loe.*

1. *In the Expreſſions of it, in the Works of Creation and Providence*; [*Loe, theſe are his ways*; Ways and Works excelling any created ſtrength, referring to the little ſummary of them he had made before. 1.
2. *In the Inſufficiency of theſe Ways to meaſure his Power*; [*But how little a portion is heard of him?* 2.
3. *In the Incomprehenſibleneſs of it*; [*The Thunder of his Power who can underſtand?* 3.

Infinite and Incomprehenſible Power pertains to the Nature of God, and is expreſt in part in his Works: Or, *Though there be a mighty Expreſſion of Divine Power in his Works, yet an Incomprehenſible Power pertains to his Nature.* Doct.

The Thunder of his Power, who can underſtand?

His Power glitters in all his Works, as well as his Wiſdom: *Pſal.* 62. 11. *Twice have I heard this, that Power belongs unto God.* In the Law and in the Prophets, ſay ſome: But why *Power* twice, and not *Mercy*, which he ſpeaks of in the following Verſe? He had heard of Power twice, from the voice of Creation, and from the voice of Government. *Mercy* was heard in Government after Man's Fall, not in Creation; Innocent Man was an object of God's Goodneſs, not of his Mercy till he made himſelf miſerable: *Power* was expreſt in both; or *Twice have I heard that Power belongs to God*, that is, it is a certain and undoubted Truth, that Power is eſſential to the Divine Nature. 'Tis true, Mercy is eſſential, Juſtice is eſſential; but Power more apparently eſſential, becauſe no acts of Mercy, or Juſtice, or Wiſdom, can be exerciſed by him without Power. The Repetition of a thing confirms the Certainty of it. Some obſerve that God is called *Almighty* Seventy times in Scripture *. Tho' his Power be evident in all his Works, yet he hath a Power beyond the expreſſion of it in his Works, which, as it is the glory of his Nature, ſo it is the comfort of a Believer. To which purpoſe the Apoſtle expreſſeth it by an excellent *Periphraſis* for the honour of the Divine Nature, *Eph.* 3. 20. *Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, unto him be glory in the Churches.* We have reaſon to acknowledge him Almighty, who hath a Power of acting above our power of underſtanding. Who could have imagin'd ſuch a powerful operation in the propagation of the *Goſpel*, and the Converſion of the *Gentiles*, which the Apoſtle ſeems to hint at in that place? His Power is expreſs'd by *Horns in his hands*, Hab. 3. 4. becauſe all the Works of his hands are wrought with Almighty ſtrength. Power is alſo uſed as a Name of God, *Mark* 14. 62. *The Son of Man ſitting on the right hand of Power*, that is, at the right hand of God: *God* and *Power* are ſo inſeparable, that they are reciprocated. As his Eſſence is Immenſe not to be confin'd in place; as it is Eternal, not to be meaſured by time; ſo it is Almighty, not to be limited in regard of action.

* Leſſius *de perfect Divin. lib.* 5. *cap.* 1.

1. 1. 'Tis Ingeniouſly illuſtrated by ſome by an *Unit*†; all Numbers depend upon it, it makes Numbers by Addition, Multiplies them unexpreſſibly, when one *Unit* is removed from a Number, how vaſtly doth it diminiſh it? It gives perfection to all other Numbers, it receives perfection from none. If you add a *Unit* before 100, how doth it multiply it to 1100? If you ſet a *Unite* before Twenty *Millions*, it preſently makes the Number ſwell up to an hundred and twenty *Millions*: and ſo powerful is a Unit by adding it to Numbers, that it will infinitely inlarge them to ſuch a vaſtneſs, that ſhall tranſcend the capacity of the beſt *Arithmetician* to count them. By ſuch a Meditation as this, you may have ſome proſpect of the Power of that God who is only Unity; the Beginning of all things, as a Unit is the beginning of all Numbers; and can perform as many things really, as a Unit can numerically, that is, can do as much in the making of Creatures, as a Unit can do in the multiplying of Numbers. The Omnipotence of God was ſcarce denied by any Heathen, that did not deny the Being of a God, and that was *Pliny*, and that upon weak Arguments.

* Fotherby. *Atheomaſtix.* p. 305, 307.

2. 2. Indeed we *cannot have a conception of God*, if we conceive him not moſt *Powerful*, as well as moſt Wiſe: He is not a God, that cannot do what he will, and perform all his pleaſure. If we imagine him reſtrain'd in his Power, we imagine him limited in his Eſſence. As he hath an infinite Knowledge to know what is poſſible, he cannot be without an infinite Power to do what is poſſible. As he hath a Will to reſolve what he ſees good, ſo he cannot want a Power to effect what he ſees good to decree. As the Eſſence of a Creature cannot be conceiv'd without that activity that belongs to his nature; as when you conceive Fire, you cannot conceive it without a power of burning and warming; and when you conceive Water, you cannot conceive it without a power of moiſtning and cleanſing: So you cannot conceive an infinite Eſſence without an Infinite Power of activity. And therefore a Heathen could ſay, *If you know God, you know he can do all things*; and therefore ſaith *Auſtin*, *Give me not only a Chriſtian but a Jew, not only a Jew but a Heathen, that will deny God to be Almighty.* A Jew, a Heathen may deny Chriſt to be Omnipotent, but no Heathen will deny God to be Omnipotent, and no Devil will deny either to be ſo: God cannot be conceiv'd without ſome Power, for then he muſt be conceiv'd without Action: Whoſe then are thoſe Products and effects of Power which are viſible to us in the world? to whom do they belong? who is the Father of them? God cannot be conceiv'd without a Power ſuitable to his Nature and Eſſence; if we imagine him to be of an Infinite Eſſence, we muſt imagine him to be of an Infinite Power and Strength.

In *particular*, I ſhall ſhew,

1. *The Nature of God's Power.*
2. *Reaſons to prove that God muſt needs be Powerful.*
3. *How his Power appears; in Creation, in Government, in Redemption.*
4. *The Uſe.*

1. *What this Power is; or the Nature of it.*

1. 1. *Power ſome times ſignifies Authority:* And a Man is ſaid to be Mighty and Powerful in regard of his Dominion, and the right he hath to Command multitudes of other perſons to take his part; but Power taken for *Strength*, and Power taken for *Authority*, are diſtinct things, and may be ſeparated from one another: Power may be without Authority, as in ſucceſsful Invaſions that have no juſt foundation: Authority may be without Power; as in a juſt Prince, expell'd by an unjuſt Rebellion, the Authority reſides in him, though he be over-power'd, and is deſtitute of Strength to ſupport and exerciſe that Authority. The Power of God is not to be underſtood of his Authority and Dominion, but *his Strength to act*, and the word in the *Text* properly ſignifies *Strength.* גבורתי *Sept.* δύναμις. *vulg.* I.

2. *This Power is divided ordinarily into Abſolute and Ordinate. Abſolute*, is that Power whereby God is able to do that which he will not do, but is poſſible to be done: *Ordinate*, is that Power whereby God doth that which he hath decreed to do, that is, which he hath ordained or appointed to be exerciſed *. Which are not diſtinct Powers, but one and the ſame Power; his Ordinate Power is a part of his Abſolute; for if he had not a Power to do every thing that he could will, he might not have a Power to do every thing that he doth will.

* *Scaliger.* Publ. exercit. 365. §. 8.

The Object of his *Abſolute* Power is all things poſſible; ſuch things that imply not a contradiction, ſuch that are not repugnant in their own nature to be done: And ſuch as are not contrary to the Nature and Perfections of God to be done: Thoſe things that are repugnant in their own nature to be done: are ſeveral, as to make a thing which is paſt not to be paſt. As for example, The World is created; God could have choſe whether he would create the World, and after it is created he hath Power to diſſolve it; but after it was created, and when it is diſſolved, it will be eternally true, that the World was created, and that it was diſſolved; for it is impoſſible, that that which was once true, ſhould ever be falſe: If it be true that the World was created, it will for ever be true that it was created, and cannot be otherwiſe. And alſo, if it be once true that God hath decreed, 'tis impoſſible in its own nature to be true that God hath not decreed. Some things are repugnant to the Nature and Perfections of God: As it is impoſſible for his Nature to die and periſh; impoſſible for him in regard of Truth to lye and deceive. But of this hereafter; only at preſent to underſtand the Object of God's Abſolute Power to be things poſſible, that is, poſſible in Nature; not by any ſtrength in themſelves, or of themſelves; for nothing hath no ſtrength, and every thing is nothing before it comes into being†: So God by his Abſolute Power might have prevented the Sin of the fallen Angels, and ſo have preſerved them in their firſt habitation. He might by his Abſolute Power have reſtrained the Devil from tempting of *Eve*, or reſtrained Her and *Adam* from ſwallowing the Bait, and joyning hands with the Temptation. By his Abſolute Power, God might have given the reins to *Peter* to betray his Maſter, as well as to deny him; and employed *Judas* in the ſame glorious and ſucceſsful Service, wherein he employed *Paul*. By his Abſolute Power he might have created the World Millions of years before he did create it, and can reduce it into its empty Nothing this moment. This the *Baptiſt* affirms, when he tells us, *That God is able of theſe Stones* (meaning the Stones in the Wilderneſs, and not the People which came out to him out of *Judea*, which were Children of *Abraham*) *to raiſe up Children to Abraham*, *Mat.* 3. 9. that is, there is a Poſſibility of ſuch a thing, there is no Contradiction in it, but that God is able to do it if he pleaſe.

† *Eſtius*, in Sent. lib. 1. diſt. 43. §. 2.

But now the Object of his Ordinate Power, is all things ordained by him to be done, all things decreed by him; and becauſe of the Divine Ordination of things this Power is called Ordinate; and what is thus ordained by him he cannot but do, becauſe of his Unchangeableneſs. Both thoſe Powers are expreſt, *Mat.* 26. 53, 54. *My Father can ſend twelve legions of Angels*, there is his Abſolute Power; *but*

but how then ſhall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it muſt be? There is his Ordinate Power. As his Power is free from any Act of his Will, 'tis called Abſolute; as it is joined with an Act of his Will, it is called Ordinate. His Abſolute Power is neceſſary, and belongs to his Nature; his Ordinate Power is free, and belongs to his Will; a Power guided by his Will; not, as I ſaid before, that they are two diſtinct Powers, both belonging to his Nature, but the latter is the ſame with the former, only it is guided by his Will and Wiſdom.

3. 3. It follows then, *That the Power of God is that Ability and Strength, whereby he can bring to paſs whatſoever he pleaſe.* Whatſoever his infinite Wiſdom can direct, and whatſoever the infinite Purity of his Will can reſolve. Power, in the primary Notion of it, doth not ſignifie an Act, but an Ability to bring a thing into Act; 'tis Power, as able to act before it doth actually produce a thing: As God had an Ability to create before he did create, he had Power before he acted that Power without. Power notes the principle of the Action, and therefore is greater than the Act it ſelf. Power exercis'd and diffus'd, in bringing forth and nurſing up its particular Objects without, is unconceivably leſs than that Strength which is infinite in himſelf, the ſame with his Eſſence, and is indeed himſelf: By his Power exercis'd he doth whatſoever he actually Wills; but by the Power in his Nature, he is able to do whatſoever he is able to Will. The Will of Creatures may be, and is more extenſive than their Power; and their Power more contracted and ſhortned, than their Will: But, as the Prophet ſaith, *His Counſel ſhall ſtand, and he will do all his Pleaſure, Iſai.* 46. 10. His Power is as great as his Will, that is, whatſoever can fall within the verge of his Will, falls within the compaſs of his Power. Though he will never actually Will this or that, yet ſuppoſing he ſhould Will it, he is able to perform it: So that you muſt in your Notion of divine Power, enlarge it further than to think, God can only do what he hath reſolved to do; but that he hath as infinite a Capacity of Power to act, as he hath an infinite Capacity of Will to reſolve.

Beſides, this Power is of that nature, that he can do whatſoever he pleaſes without Difficulty, without Reſiſtance; it cannot be checked, reſtrained, fruſtrated *. As he can do all things poſſible in regard of the Object, he can do all things eaſily in regard of the manner of acting: What in human Artificers is Knowledge, Labour, Induſtry, that in God is his will; his will works without Labour, his works ſtand forth as he wills them. Hands and Arms are aſcribed to him for our Conceptions, becauſe our power of acting is diſtinct from our will; but God's Power of acting is not really diſtinct from his will; 'tis ſufficient to the Exiſtence of a thing, that God wills it to exiſt; he can act what he will only by his will, without any Inſtruments. He needs no Matter to work upon, becauſe he can make ſomething from nothing; all Matter owes it ſelf to his Creative Power: He needs no time to work in, for he can make time, when he pleaſes to begin to work: He needs no Copy to work by, himſelf is his own Pattern and Copy in his Works. All created Agents want Matter to work upon, Inſtruments to work with, Copies to work by; Time to bring either the Births of their Minds, or the Works of their Hands to Perfection: But the Power of God needs none of theſe things, but is of a vaſt and incomprehenſible Nature, beyond all theſe. As nothing can be done without the compaſs of it, ſo it ſelf is without the compaſs of every created Underſtanding.

* *Cra.* Syn. tag. 1. 3. cap. 17. p. 611.

4. 4. *This Power is of a diſtinct Conception from the Wiſdom and Will of God.* They are not really diſtinct, but according to our Conceptions. We cannot diſcourſe of divine Things, without obſerving ſome Proportion of them with human, aſcribing unto God the Perfections, ſifted from the Imperfections of our Nature. In us there are three Orders, of *Underſtanding, Will, Power*; and accordingly three Acts, *Counſel, Reſolution, Execution*; which though they are diſtinct in us, are not really diſtinct in God. In our Conceptions, the Apprehenſion of a thing belongs to the Underſtanding of God; Determination to the Will of God; Direction, to the Wiſdom of God; Execution, to the Power of God. The Knowledge of God regards a thing as poſſible, and as it may be done; the Wiſdom of God regards a thing as fit and convenient to be done; the Will of God reſolves that it ſhall be done; the Power of God is the Application of his Will, to effect what it hath reſolved. Wiſdom is a fixing the Being of things, the Meaſures and Perfections of their ſeveral Beings; Power is a conferring thoſe Perfections and Beings upon them. His Power is his Ability to act, and his Wiſdom is the Director of his Action: His Will orders, his Wiſdom guides, and his Power effects. His Will as the ſpring, and his Power as the worker, are expreſt, *Pſal.* 115. 3. *He hath done whatſoever he pleaſed. He commanded, and they were created,* Pſal. 140. 5. and all three expreſt, *Eph.* 1. 11. *Who works all things according to the counſel of his own will*: So that the Power of God is a Perfection (as it were) ſubordinate to his Underſtanding and Will, to execute the Reſults of his Wiſdom, and the Orders of his Will; to his Wiſdom, as directing, becauſe he works skilfully, to his Will as moving and applying, becauſe he works voluntarily and freely. The exerciſe of his Power depends upon his Will: His Will is the ſupream cauſe of every thing that ſtands up in Time, and all things receive a Being as he wills them. His Power is but Will perpetually working, and diffuſing it ſelf in the ſeaſon his will hath fixed from Eternity; 'tis his eternal will in perpetual and ſucceſſive ſprings and ſtreams in the Creatures; 'tis nothing elſe but the conſtant efficacy of his omnipotent will. This muſt be underſtood of his ordinate power; But his abſolute power is larger than his reſolving will: for though the Scripture tells us, *He hath done whatſoever he will*; yet it tells us not, that he hath done whatſoever he could: He can do things that he will never do.

Again, his Power is diſtinguiſht from his will, in regard of the exerciſe of it, which is after the act of his will: His will was converſant about Objects, when his Power was not exercis'd about them. Creatures were the Objects of his will from Eternity, but they were not from Eternity the Effects of his Power. His purpoſe to create was from Eternity, but the execution of his purpoſe was in Time. Now this execution of his will we call his ordinate power: His wiſdom and his will are ſuppoſed antecedent to his Power, as the Counſel and Reſolve, as the Cauſe precedes the Performance of the Purpoſe, as the Effect. * Some diſtinguiſh his power from his underſtanding and will, in regard that his underſtanding and will are larger than his abſolute power; for God underſtands Sins, and wills to permit them, but he cannot himſelf do any evil or unjuſt action, nor have a power of doing it. But this is not to diſtinguiſh that divine Power, but Impotence; for to be unable to do Evil is the Perfection of Power; and to be able to do things unjuſt and evil, is a Weakneſs, Imperfection, and Inability. Man indeed wills many things that he is not able to perform, and underſtands many things that he is not able to effect; he underſtands much of the Creatures, ſomething of

* *Gamache ut.*

Sun,

Sun, Moon, and Stars; he can conceive many Suns, many Moons, yet is not able to create the leaſt Atom: But there is nothing that belongs to power but God underſtands, and is able to effect. To ſum this up, the will of God is the root of all, the wiſdom of God is the copy of all, and the power of God is the framer of all.

5. 5. *The Power of God gives activity to all the other perfections of his Nature, and is of a larger extent and efficacy, in regard of its Objects, than ſome Perfections of his Nature.* I put them both together.

1. 1. *It contributes Life and Activity to all the other perfections of his Nature.* How vain would be his Eternal Counſels, if Power did not ſtep in to execute them? His Mercy would be a feeble pity, if he were deſtitute of Power to relieve; and his Juſtice a ſlighted Scarecrow, without Power to puniſh; his promiſes an empty ſound, without Power to accompliſh them. As Holineſs is the Beauty, ſo Power is the Life of all his Attributes in their exerciſe: and as Holineſs, ſo Power is an Adjunct belonging to All, a Term that may be given to All. God hath a powerful Wiſdom to attain his Ends, without interruption: He hath a powerful Mercy to remove our Miſery; a powerful Juſtice to lay all Miſery upon Offenders: He hath a powerful Truth to perform his Promiſes; an Infinite Power to beſtow Rewards and inflict Penalties. 'Tis to this purpoſe *Power* is firſt put in the *two things* which the *Pſalmiſt* had heard, *Pſal.* 62. 11, 12. *Twice have I heard*, or *Two things have I heard*; firſt *Power*, then *Mercy* and *Juſtice* included in that expreſſion, *Thou rendreſt to every man according to his work*: In every perfection of God he heard of Power. This is the Arm, the Hand of the Deity, which all his other Attributes lay hold on, when they would appear in their Glory; this hands them to the world; by this they act, in this they triumph. Power framed every ſtage for their appearance in Creation, Providence, Redemption.

2. 2. *'Tis of a larger extent in regard of its Objects, than ſome other Attributes.* Power doth not alway ſuppoſe an Object, but conſtitutes an Object. It ſuppoſeth an Object in the act of Preſervation, but it makes an Object in the act of Creation; but Mercy ſuppoſeth an Object miſerable, yet doth not make it ſo. Juſtice ſuppoſeth an Object Criminal, but doth not conſtitute it ſo: Mercy ſuppoſeth him Miſerable, to relieve him; Juſtice ſuppoſeth him Criminal, to puniſh him: but Power ſuppoſeth not a thing in real exiſtence, but as poſſible; or rather, it is from Power that any thing hath a poſſibility, if there be no repugnancy in the nature of the thing.

Again, *Power* extends further than either *Mercy* or *Juſtice*. Mercy hath particular Objects, which Juſtice ſhall not at laſt be willing to puniſh; and Juſtice hath particular Objects, which Mercy at laſt ſhall not be willing to refreſh: But Power doth, and alway will extend to the Objects of both Mercy and Juſtice. A Creature, as a Creature, is neither the Object of Mercy nor Juſtice, nor of Rewarding Goodneſs: A Creature, as Innocent, is the Object of Rewarding Goodneſs; a Creature, as Miſerable, is the Object of Compaſſionate Mercy; a Creature, as Criminal, is the Object of Revenging Juſtice: But all of them the Objects of Power, in conjunction with thoſe Attributes of Goodneſs, Mercy, and Juſtice, to which they belong. All the Objects that Mercy, and Juſtice, and Truth, and Wiſdom, exerciſe themſelves about, have a poſſibility and an actual Being from this perfection of Divine Power. 'Tis Power firſt frames a Creature in a Capacity of Nature for Mercy or Juſtice, though it doth not give an immediate qualification for the exerciſe of either. Power makes Man a rational Creature, and ſo confers upon him a Nature mutable, which may be Miſerable by its own fault, and puniſhable by God's Juſtice; or pityable by God's Compaſſion, and relievable by God's Mercy: But it doth not make him Sinful, whereby he becomes miſerable and puniſhable.

Again, *Power* runs through all the degrees of the ſtates of a Creature. As a thing is poſſible, or may be made, 'tis the Object of Abſolute Power; as it is *factible*, or ordered to be made, 'tis the Object of Ordinate Power; as a thing is actually made, and brought into Being, it is the Object of Preſerving Power. So that Power doth ſtretch out its Arms to all the Works of God, in all their circumſtances, and at all times. When Mercy ceaſeth to relieve a Creature, when Juſtice ceaſeth to puniſh a Creature, Power ceaſeth not to preſerve a Creature. The Bleſſed in Heaven, that are out of the reach of puniſhing Juſtice, are for ever maintained by Power in that Bleſſed Condition; the Damned in Hell, that are caſt out of the Boſom of Intreating Mercy, are for ever ſuſtain'd in thoſe remedileſs Torments by the Arm of Power.

6. 6. *This Power is Originally and Eſſentially in the Nature of God, and not diſtinct from his Eſſence.* 'Tis Originally and Eſſentially in God. The ſtrength and power of Great Kings is originally in their People, and managed and ordered by the Authority of the Prince for the common good. Though a Prince hath authority in his perſon to command, yet he hath not ſufficient ſtrength in his perſon, without the aſſiſtance of others, to make his commands to be obeyed. He hath not a ſingle ſtrength in his own perſon to conquer Countries and Kingdoms, and encreaſe the Number of his Subjects: He muſt make uſe of the Arms of his own Subjects to overrun other places, and yoke them under his dominion: But the power of all things that ever were, are, or ſhall be, is originally and eſſentially in God. 'Tis not deriv'd from any thing without him, as the Power of the greateſt Potentates in the World is. Therefore, *Pſal.* 62. 11. it is ſaid, *Power belongs unto God*, that is, ſolely, and to none elſe. He hath a power to make his Subjects, and as many as he pleaſes; to create Worlds, to enjoin Precepts, to execute Penalties, without calling in the ſtrength of his Creatures to his Aid. The ſtrength that the Subjects of a mortal Prince have, is not deriv'd to them from the Prince, though the exerciſe of it for this or that end, is ordered and directed by the Authority of the Prince: But what ſtrength ſoever any thing hath to act as a Means, it hath from the power of God as Creator, as well as whatſoever Authority it hath to act is from God, as a Rector and Governour of the World. God hath a ſtrength to act without means, and no means can act any thing without his power and ſtrength communicated to them. As the *Clouds* in the 8th. Verſe before the Text, are called God's Clouds, *his Clouds*: So all the ſtrength of Creatures may be called, and truly is, God's ſtrength and power in them; a drop of power ſhot down from Heaven, originally only in God. Creatures have but a little mite of power; ſomewhat communicated to them, ſomewhat kept and reſerved from them, of what they are capable to poſſeſs. They have limited Natures, and therefore a limited Sphere of Activity. Cloaths can warm us, but not feed us; Bread can nouriſh us, but not cloath us. One Plant hath a medicinal quality againſt one Diſeaſe, another againſt another; but God is the poſſeſſor of Univerſal Power, the common Exchequer of this Mighty Treaſure. He acts by Creatures, as not needing their power, but deriving power to them: What he acts by them, he could act

act himself without them: And what they act as from themselves, is derived to them from him through invisible Chanels. And hence it will follow, that because power is essentially in God, more operations of God are possible than are exerted.

And as *Power* is essentially in God, so it is not distinct from his Essence. It belongs to God in regard of the unconceivable excellency and activity of his Essence*. And *Omnipotence* is nothing but the Divine Essence efficacious *ad extra*. 'Tis his Essence as operative, and the immediate principle of Operation: As the power of Enlightning in the Sun, and the power of Heating in the Fire, are not things distinct from the nature of them; but the nature of the Sun bringing forth *Light*, and the nature of the Fire bringing forth *Heat*. The power of acting is the same with the Substance of God, though the action from that power be terminated in the Creature. If the power of God were distinct from his Essence, he were then compounded of Substance and Power, and would not be the most Simple Being. As when the Understanding is inform'd in several parts of Knowledge, it is skill'd in the Government of Cities and Countries; it knows this or that Art: It learns *Mathematicks*, *Philosophy*; this or that Science. The Understanding hath a power to do this; but this power, whereby it learns those excellent things, and brings forth excellent Births, is not a thing distinct from the Understanding it self; we may rather call it *Understanding powerful*, than the *Power of the Understanding*; and so we may rather say, *God powerful*, than say *the Power of God*, because his Power is not distinct from his Essence.

* *Ratione summæ actualitatis essentiæ.* Suarez, *vol.* 1. *p.* 150, & 151.

From both these it will follow, That this Omnipotence is incommunicable to any Creature; no Creature can inherit it, because it is a Contradiction for any Creature to have the Essence of God. This *Omnipotence* is a peculiar Right of God, wherein no Creature can share with him. To be Omnipotent is to be Essentially God: And for a Creature to be Omnipotent, is for a Creature to be its own Creator. It being therefore the same with the Essence of the Godhead, it cannot be communicated to the Humanity of Christ, as the *Lutherans* say it is, without the Communication of the Essence of the Godhead; for then the Humanity of Christ would not be Humanity, but Deity. If Omnipotence were communicated to the Humanity of Christ, the Essence of God were also communicated to his Humanity, and then Eternity would be communicated. His Humanity then was not given him in Time, his Humanity would be uncompounded, that is, his Body would be no Body, his Soul no Soul. Omnipotence is essentially in God; 'tis not distinct from the Essence of God, 'tis his Essence, *Omnipotent*, able to do all things.

7. Hence it follows, *That this Power is Infinite*; Eph. 1. 19. *What is the exceeding Greatness of his Power*, &c. *According to the working of his mighty Power.* God were not Omnipotent, unless his Power were Infinite; for a Finite Power is a limited Power, and a limited Power cannot effect every thing that is possible. Nothing can be too difficult for the Divine Power to effect: He hath a fulness of Power, an exceeding Strength, above all Humane Capacities; 'tis a *Mighty Power*†, able to do above all that we can *ask* or *think**: That which he acts, is above the power of any Creature to act. Infinite Power consists in the bringing things forth from nothing. No Creature can imitate God in this Prerogative of *Power*. Man indeed can carve various forms, and erect various pieces of Art; but from pre-existent Matter. Every Artificer hath the Matter brought to his hand, he only brings it forth in a new Figure. *Chymists* separate one thing from another, but create nothing, but sever those things which were before compacted and crudled together: But when God speaks a powerful Word, Nothing begins to be Something; things stand forth from the Womb of Nothing, and obey his mighty Command, and take what Forms he is pleased to give them. The creating one thing, though never so small and minute, as the least Fly, cannot be but by an infinite Power; much less can the producing of such Variety we see in the World. His power is infinite, in regard it cannot be resisted by any thing that he hath made; nor can it be confin'd by any thing he can will to make. *His Greatness is unsearchable.** 'Tis a Greatness, not of quantity but quality. The Greatness of his power hath no end: 'Tis a vanity to imagine any limits can be affixed to it, or that any Creature can say, *Hitherto it can go, and no further.* 'Tis above all Conception, all Inquisition of any Created Understanding. No Creature ever had, nor ever can have that strength of wit and understanding to conceive the extent of his power, and how magnificently he can work

† Eph. 1. 19.
* Eph. 3. 20.

* Psal. 145. 3.

1. *His Essence is Infinite.* As in a finite Subject there is a finite Vertue; so in an infinite Subject there must be an infinite Virtue. Where the essence is limited, the power is so†; where the essence is unlimited, the power knows no bounds*. Among Creatures, the more excellency of being and form any thing hath, the more activity, vigour, and power it hath, to work according to its nature. The Sun hath a mighty power to warm, enlighten, and fructifie, above what the Stars have, because it hath a vaster body, more intense degrees of light, heat, and vigour. Now, if you conceive the Sun made much greater than it is, it would proportionably have greater degrees of power to heat and enlighten than it hath now; and were it possible to have an infinite heat and light, it would infinitely heat and enlighten other things; for every thing is able to act according to the measures of its being. Therefore, since the essence of God is unquestionably infinite, his power of acting must be so also His power (as was said before) is one and the same with his essence: And though the knowledge of God extends to more objects than his power, because he knows all Evils of Sin, which because of his Holiness he cannot commit; yet it is as infinite as his Knowledge, because it is as much one with his essence as his knowledge and wisdom is: For as the wisdom or knowledge of God is nothing but the essence of God, Knowing; so the power of God is nothing but the essence of God, Able.

† *Operationes sequuntur essentiam.* * Aquin. *par.* 1. *Qu.* 25. *Artic.* 2.

2. *The Objects of Divine Power are innumerable.* The objects of Divine power are not essentially infinite; and therefore we must not measure the Infiniteness of Divine power by an ability to make an infinite Being, because there is an incapacity in any created thing to be infinite; for to be a Creature and to be infinite, to be infinite and yet made, is a contradiction. To be Infinite, and to be God, is one and the same thing. Nothing can be Infinite, but God; nothing but God is Infinite. But the power of God is infinite, because it can produce infinite effects, or innumerable things, such as surpass the *Arithmetick* of a Creature; nor yet doth the Infiniteness consist simply in producing innumerable effects, for that a finite cause can produce. Fire can, by its finite and limited heat, burn numberless combustible things and parcels; and the Understanding of Man hath an infinite number of thoughts and acts of intellection, and thoughts different from one another. Who can number the imaginations of his fancy, and thoughts of his mind, the space

of

of one month or year? much leſs of forty or an hundred years; yet all theſe thoughts are about things that are in being, or have a foundation in things that are in being. But the Infiniteneſs of God's power conſiſts in an ability to produce infinite effects, formally diſtinct, and diverſe from one another; ſuch as never had Being, ſuch as the Mind of Man cannot conceive: *Able to do above what we* Eph. 3. 20. *can think*, Eph. 3. 20. And whatſoever God hath made, or is able to make, he is able to make in an infinite manner, by calling them to ſtand forth from nothing. To produce innumerable Effects of diſtinct Natures, and from ſo diſtant a term as *Nothing*, is an argument of Infinite Power.

Now that the *Objects* of Divine Power are *Innumerable*, appears, becauſe God can do infinitely more than he hath done, or will do. Nothing that God hath done can enfeeble or dull his power; there ſtill reſides in him an Ability beyond all the ſetled Contrivances of his Underſtanding, and Reſolves of his Will, which no Effects which he hath wrought can drein, and put to a ſtand. As he can raiſe * Mat. 3. 9. *Stones* to be Children to *Abraham**; ſo with the ſame mighty Word whereby he made one World, he can make infinite numbers of Worlds to be the Monuments of his Glory. After the Prophet *Jeremy* 32. 17. had ſpoke of God's power in Creation, he adds, *And nothing is too hard for thee.* For one World that he hath made, he can create millions; for one Star which he hath beautified the Heavens with, he could have garniſh'd it with a thouſand, and multiplied, if he had pleaſed, every one of Rom. 4. 17. thoſe into Millions; for *he can call things that are not*; not ſome things, but all things poſſible. The barren womb of *Nothing* can no more reſiſt his power now to educe a World from it than it could at firſt: No doubt, but for one Angel which he hath made, he could make many worlds of Angels. He that made one with ſo much eaſe, as by a word, cannot want power to make many more, till he wants a word. The word that was not too weak to make one, cannot be too weak to make multitudes. If from one man he hath, in a way of nature, multiplied ſo many in all Ages of the World, and covered with them the whole face of the Earth; he could in a ſupernatural way, by one word, multiply as many more. 'Tis *the breath of the Almighty that gives life*, Job 33. 4. He can create infinite Species and kinds of Creatures more than he hath created, more variety of forms: For ſince there is no ſearching of his Greatneſs, there is no conceiving the numberleſs poſſible effects of his power. The underſtanding of man can conceive numberleſs things poſſible to be, more than have been or ſhall be: And ſhall we imagine that a finite underſtanding of a Creature hath a greater omnipotency to conceive things poſſible, than God hath to produce things poſſible? When the underſtanding of man is tir'd in its conceptions, it muſt ſtill be concluded, that the power of God extends not only to what can be conceiv'd, but infinitely beyond the meaſures of a finite faculty; *Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out; he is excellent in power and in judgment*, Job 36. 22. For the underſtanding of Man, in its conceptions of more kind of Creatures, is limited to thoſe Creatures which are: It cannot in its own imagination conceive any thing but what hath ſome foundation in and from ſomething already in Being: It may frame a new kind of Creature, made up of a Lion, a Horſe, an Ox; but all thoſe parts whereof its conception is made, have diſtinct Beings in the World, though not in that compoſition as his mind mixes and joins them. But no queſtion but God can create Creatures that have no reſemblance with any kind of Creatures yet in Being. 'Tis certain, that if God only knows thoſe things which he hath done, and will do, and not all things poſſible to be done by him, his knowledge were finite; ſo if he could do no more than what he hath done, his power would be finite.

1. *Creatures have a power to act about more Objects than they do.* The Underſtanding of man can frame from one principle of Truth many Concluſions and Inferences more than it doth. Why cannot then the power of God frame from one firſt Matter, an infinite number of Creatures more than have been created? The Almightineſs of God in producing real Effects, is not inferior to the Underſtanding of Man in drawing out real Truths. An Artificer that makes a Watch, ſuppoſing his Life and Health, can make many more of a different form and motion: And a Limner can draw many Draughts, and frame many Pictures with a new variety of Colours, according to the richneſs of his Fancy. If theſe can do ſo, that require a preexiſtent Matter fram'd to their hands, God can much more, who can raiſe beautiful Structures from nothing. As long as men have matter, they can diverſifie the matter, and make new Figures from it: So long as there is nothing, God can produce out of that nothing whatſoever he pleaſes.

We ſee the ſame in Inanimate Creatures. A ſpark of Fire hath a vaſt Power in it; it will kindle other things, increaſe and enlarge it ſelf: Nothing can be exempted from the active force of it. It will alter by conſuming or refining whatſoever you offer to it. It will reach all, and refuſe none; and by the efficacious power of it, all thoſe *new Figures* which we ſee in Metals, are brought forth: When you have expoſed to it a multitude of things, ſtill add more, it will exert the ſame ſtrength; yea, the vigour is increaſed rather than diminiſht. The more it catcheth, the more fiercely and irreſiſtibly it will act; you cannot ſuppoſe an end of its operation, or a decreaſe of its ſtrength, as long as you can conceive its duration and continuance: This muſt be but a weak ſhadow of that infinite Power which is in God. Take another Inſtance in the *Sun*: It hath power every year to produce Flowers and Plants from the Earth; and is as able to produce them now, as it was at the firſt lighting it and rearing it in the Sphere wherein it moves. And if there were no kind of Flowers and Plants now created, the Sun hath a power reſiding in it, ever ſince its firſt Creation, to afford the ſame warmth to them for the nouriſhing and bringing them forth. Whatſoever you can conceive the Sun to be able to do in regard of Plants, that can God do in regard of Worlds; produce more Worlds than the Sun doth Plants every year, without wearineſs, without languſhment. The Sun is able to influence more things than it doth, and produce numberleſs effects; but it doth not do ſo much as it is able to do, becauſe it wants matter to work upon: God therefore who wants no matter, can do much more than he doth; He can either act by ſecond Cauſes if there were more, or make more ſecond Cauſes if he pleas'd.

2. *God is the moſt free Agent.* Every free Agent can do more than he will do. Man being a free Creature, can do more than ordinarily he doth will to do. God is moſt free, as being the Spring of Liberty in other Creatures: He acts not by a neceſſity of Nature; as the waves of the Sea, or the motions of the Wind; and therefore is not determin'd to thoſe things which he hath already called forth into the World. If God be infinitely wiſe in contrivance, he could contrive more than he hath, and therefore can effect more than he hath effected. He doth not act to the extent of his Power upon all occaſions. 'Tis according to his Will

that

that he works, *Eph.* 1. 'Tis not according to his work that he wills; his work is an evidence of his Will, but not the Rule of his Will. His Power is not the Rule of his Will, but his Will is the diſpoſer of his Power, according to the light of his infinite Wiſdom, and other Attributes that direct his Will; and therefore his Power is not to be meaſured by his actual Will. No doubt but he could in a *moment* have produced that World which he took *ſix days* time to frame: He could have drown'd the old World at once, without prolonging the time till the revolution of *forty days*: He was not limited to ſuch a term of time by any Weakneſs, but by the Determination of his own Will. God doth not do the hundred thouſandth part of what he is able to do, but what is convenient to do, according to the end which he hath propoſed to himſelf. *Jeſus Chriſt*, as Man, could have ask'd *Legions of Angels*; and God, as a Sovereign, could have ſent them *. God could raiſe the dead every day if he pleaſed, but he doth not: He could heal every diſeaſed Perſon in a moment, but he doth not: As God can Will more than he doth actually Will; ſo he can do more than he hath actually done: He can do whatſoever he can Will, he can Will more Worlds, and therefore can create more Worlds. If God hath not Ability to do more than he will do, he then can do no more than what he actually hath done; and then it will follow, that he is not a free, but a natural and neceſſary Agent, which cannot be ſuppoſed of God.

* Matth. 26. 53.

3. *This Power is infinite in regard of Action.* As he can produce numberleſs Objects above what he hath produced, ſo he could produce them more magnificently than he hath made them. As he never works to the extent of his Power in regard of things, ſo neither in regard of the manner of acting; for he never acts ſo, but he could act in a higher and perfecter manner.

1. *His Power is infinite in regard of the Independency of Action*: He wants no Inſtrument to act. When there was nothing but God, there was no cauſe of Action but God: When there was nothing in being but God, there could be no inſtrumental Cauſe of the Being of any thing. God can perfect his Action without Dependance on any thing *: And to be ſimply independent, is to be ſimply infinite. In this reſpect it is a Power incommunicable to any Creature, though you conceive a Creature in higher Degrees of Perfection than it is. A Creature cannot ceaſe to be dependent, but it muſt ceaſe to be a Creature: To be a Creature, and independent, are terms repugnant to one another.

* Suarez. *vol.* 1. *de Deo.* p. 151.

2. *But the infiniteneſs of Divine Power, conſiſts in an Ability to give higher Degrees of Perfection to every thing which he hath made.* * As his Power is infinite *extenſivè*, in regard of the multitude of Objects he can bring into being; ſo it is infinite *intenſivè*, in regard of the manner of Operation, and the Endowments he can beſtow upon them. Some things indeed God doth ſo perfect, that higher Degrees of Perfection cannot be imagined to be added to them * As the Humanity of Chriſt cannot be united more gloriouſly than to the Perſon of the Son of God; a greater degree of Perfection cannot be conferred upon it. Nor can the Souls of the Bleſſed have a nobler Object of Viſion and Fruition than God himſelf, the infinite Being: No higher than the Enjoyment of himſelf can be conferred upon a Creature, *Reſpectu termini.* This is not want of Power: He cannot be greater becauſe he is greateſt, nor better becauſe he is beſt; nothing can be more than infinite. But as to the things which God hath made in the World, he could have given them other manner of Beings than they have. A human Underſtanding may improve a Thought or Concluſion; ſtrengthen it with more and more Force of Reaſon, and adorn it with richer and richer Elegancy of Language: Why then may not the Divine Power produce a world more perfect and excellent than this? He that makes a plain Veſſel, can embelliſh it more, engrave more Figures upon it, according to the Capacity of the Subject: And cannot God do ſo much more with his Works? Could not God have made this World of a larger Quantity, and the Sun of a greater Bulk, and proportionable Strength to influence a bigger World? So that this World would have been to another that God might have made, as a Ball or a Mount, this Sun as a Star to another Sun that he might have kindled. He could have made every Star a Sun, every ſpire of Graſs a Star, every grain of Duſt a Flower, every Soul an Angel. And though the Angels be perfect Creatures, and unexpreſſibly more glorious than a viſible Creature; yet who can imagine God ſo confin'd, that he cannot create a more excellent kind, and endow thoſe which he hath made with Excellency of a higher Rank than he inveſted them with at the firſt moment of their Creation? Without queſtion God might have given the meaner Creatures more excellent Endowments, put them into another Order of Nature for their own Good, and more diffuſive uſefulneſs in the World. What is made uſe of by the *Prophet** in another caſe, may be uſed in this, *Yet had he a reſidue of Spirit.* The Capacity of every Creature might have been enlarged by God: for no Work of his in the World doth equal his Power, as nothing that he hath framed doth equal his Wiſdom. The ſame matter which is the matter of the body of a Beaſt, is the matter of a Plant and Flower; is the matter of the Body of a Man; and ſo was capable of a higher Form, and higher Perfections, than God hath been pleas'd to beſtow upon it. And he had Power to beſtow that Perfection on one part of matter which he denied to it, and beſtowed on another part. If God cannot make things in a greater Perfection, there muſt be ſome Limitation of him: He cannot be limited by another, becauſe nothing is ſuperiour to God. If limited by himſelf, that Limitation is not from a want of Power, but a want of Will. He can by his own Power *raiſe Stones* to be Children to *Abraham* *: He could alter the Nature of the Stones, form them into human Bodies, dignifie them with rational Souls, inſpire thoſe Souls with ſuch Graces, that may render them the Children of *Abraham*. But for the more fully underſtanding the Nature of this Power, we may obſerve,

* Mal. 2. 15.

* Matth. 3. 9.

(1.) *That though God can make every thing with a higher degree of Perfection, yet ſtill within the limits of a finite Being.* No Creature can be made infinite, becauſe no Creature can be made God. No Creature can be ſo improved, as to equal the Goodneſs and Perfection of God †; yet there is no Creature, but we may conceive a poſſibility of its being made more perfect in that Rank of a Creature than it is: As we may imagine a Flower or Plant to have greater Beauty, and richer Qualities imparted to it by Divine Power, without rearing it ſo high as to the Dignity of a rational or ſenſitive Creature. Whatſoever Perfections may be added by God to a Creature, are ſtill finite Perfections; and a multitude of finite Excellencies can never amount to the Value and Honour of infinite: As if you add one number to another as high as you can, as much as a large piece of Paper can contain, you can never make the numbers really infinite, though they may be infinite *in*

* Becan. *Sum. Theol.* p. 82.

* Becan. *Sum. Theol.* p. 84.

* Gamach *in Aquin. Tom.* 1. *qu.* 25.

regard of the Inability of any human Underſtanding to count them. The finite Condition of the Creature ſuffers it not to be capable of an infinite Perfection. God is ſo great, ſo excellent, that it is his Perfection not to have any Equal; the defect is in the Creature, which cannot be elevated to ſuch a pitch; as you can never make a Gallon Meaſure hold the quantity of a Butt, or a Butt the quantity of a River, or a River the fulneſs of the Sea.

(2.) *Though God hath a Power to furniſh every Creature with greater and nobler Perfections than he hath beſtowed upon it, yet he hath framed all things in the perfecteſt manner, and moſt convenient to that end for which he intended them.* Every thing is endowed with the beſt Nature and Quality ſutable to God's end in Creation, though not in the beſt manner for it ſelf *. In regard of the univerſal End, there cannot be a better; for God himſelf is the End of all things, who is the ſupream Goodneſs. Nothing can be better than God, who could not be God if he were not Superlatively beſt, or *Optimus*; and he hath ordered all things for the Declaration of his Goodneſs or Juſtice, according to the Behaviours of his Creatures. Man doth not conſider what Strength or Power he can put forth in the means he uſeth to attain ſuch an end, but the ſutableneſs of them to his main Deſign, and ſo fits and marſhals them to his grand Purpoſe. Had God only created things that are moſt excellent, he had created only Angels and Men; how then would his Wiſdom have been conſpicuous in other Works in the Subordination and Subſerviency of them to one another? God therefore determin'd his Power by his Wiſdom: * And though his abſolute Power could have made every Creature better, yet his ordinate Power, which in every ſtep was regulated by his Wiſdom, made every thing beſt for his deſign'd Intention. A Muſician hath a power to wind up a String on a Lute to a higher and more perfect Note in it ſelf, but in Wiſdom he will not do it, becauſe the intended Melody ſhould be diſturb'd thereby, if it were not ſuted to the other Strings on the Inſtrument; a Diſcord would mar and taint the Harmony which the Luteniſt deſign'd. God in Creation obſerved the Proportions of Nature: He can make a Spider as ſtrong as a Lion; but according to the order of Nature which he hath ſettled, 'tis not convenient that a Creature of ſo ſmall a compaſs, ſhould be as ſtrong as one of a greater bulk. The abſolute Power of God could have prepared a Body for Chriſt, as Glorious as that he had after his Reſurrection; but that had not been agreeable to the end deſign'd in his Humiliation: And therefore God acted moſt perfectly by his ordinate Power, in giving him a Body that wore the Livery of our Infirmities. God's Power is alway regulated by his Wiſdom and Will; and though it produceth not what is moſt perfect in it ſelf, yet what is moſt perfect and decent in relation to the end he fixed. And ſo in his Providence, though he could rack the whole frame of Nature to bring about his ends in a more miraculous way and Aſtoniſhment to Mortals; yet his Power is uſually and ordinarily confin'd by his Will to act in concurrence with the Nature of the Creatures, and direct them according to the Laws of their being, to ſuch ends which he aims at in their Conduct, without violencing their Nature.

3. *Though God hath an abſolute Power to make more Worlds, and infinite Numbers of other Creatures, and to render every Creature a higher mark of his Power, yet in regard of his Decree to the contrary, he cannot do it.* He hath a Phyſical Power, but after his reſolve to the contrary, not a Moral Power: The exerciſe of his Power is ſubordinate to his Decree, but not the Eſſence of his Power. † The Decree of God takes not away any Power from God, becauſe the Power of God is his own Eſſence, and uncapable of change; and is as great phyſically and eſſentially after his Decree as it was before; only his Will hath put in a bar to the demonſtration of all that Power which he is able to exerciſe. As a Prince that can raiſe 100000 Men for an Invaſion, raiſes only 20 or 30000; he here, by his order limits his power, but doth not deveſt himſelf of his Authority and power to raiſe the whole number of the Forces of his Dominions if he pleaſes: The power of God hath more Objects than his Decree hath; but ſince it is his perfection to be immutable, and not to change his Decree, he cannot morally put forth his power upon all thoſe Objects, which as it is eſſentially in him, he hath Ability to do. * God hath Decreed to ſave thoſe that believe in Chriſt, and to judge Unbelievers to everlaſting perdition: He cannot morally damn the firſt, or ſave the latter; yet he hath not deveſted himſelf of his Abſolute power to ſave all, or damn all. Or ſuppoſe God hath Decreed not to create more Worlds than this we are now in, doth his Decree weaken his ſtrength to create more if he pleaſed: His not creating more is not a want of Strength, but a want of Will: 'Tis an act of Liberty, not an act of Impotency. As when a man ſolemnly reſolves not to walk in ſuch a way, or come at ſuch a place, his Reſolution deprives him not of his natural ſtrength to walk thither; but fortifies his Will againſt uſing his ſtrength in any ſuch motion to that place. The Will of God hath ſet bounds to the exerciſe of his power, but doth not infringe that Abſolute power which ſtill reſides in his Nature: He is *girded with more Power* than he puts forth *.

4. As the *Power of God is infinite*, in regard of his *Eſſence*, in regard of the *Objects*, in regard of *Action*, ſo Fourthly, *in regard of Duration.* The *Apoſtle* calls it an *Eternal Power* †. His Eternal Power is collected and concluded from the things that are made: They muſt needs be the product of ſome Being which contains truly in it ſelf all Power, who wrought them without Engins, without Inſtruments; and therefore this Power muſt be infinite, and poſſeſſed of an unalterable virtue of acting. If it be Eternal, it muſt be infinite, and hath neither beginning nor end; what is Eternal hath no bounds. If it be Eternal and not limited by time, it muſt be infinite, and not to be reſtrain'd by any finite Object: His Power never begun to be, nor ever ceaſeth to be, it cannot languiſh; men are fain to unbend themſelves, and muſt have ſome time to recruit their tired ſpirits: But the Power of God is perpetually vigorous, without any interrupting qualm. *Iſai.* 40. 28. *Haſt thou not known, haſt thou not heard that the everlaſting God the Creator of the ends of the Earth fainteth not, neither is weary?* That Might which ſuffered no diminution from Eternity, but hatcht ſo great a World by brooding upon nothing, will not ſuffer any dimneſs or decreaſe to Eternity. This Power being the ſame with his Eſſence, is as durable as his Eſſence, and reſides for ever in his Nature.

8. The Eighth Conſideration, for the right underſtanding of this Attribute; *The impoſſibility of God's doing ſome things, is no infringing of his Almightineſs, but rather a ſtrengthning of it.* 'Tis granted that ſome things God cannot do; or rather, as *Aquinas* and others, 'tis better to ſay, ſuch things cannot be done, than to ſay that God cannot do them; to remove all kind of imputation or reflection of weakneſs on God *, and becauſe

* *Beſt* ex parte facientis & modi, *but not* ex parte rei. *Eſti. in Senten. lib.* 1. *diſtin.* 44. S. 2.

* Aquin. *part.* 1. *qu.* 25. *artic.*

* Gamach *in* Aquin. *tom.* 1. *queſt.* 25.

* Crell. *de Deo, cap.* 22.

* Pſal. 65 6.

4.

† Rom. 1. 20.

3.

* Robinſ. *ob error. p.* 14.

becauſe the reaſon of the impoſſibility of thoſe things is in the nature of the things themſelves.

1. Firſt, *Some things are impoſſible in their own nature.* Such are all thoſe things which imply a Contradiction; as for a thing to be, and not to be at the ſame time; for the Sun to ſhine, and not to ſhine at the ſame moment of time; for a Creature to act, and not to act at the ſame inſtant: One of thoſe parts muſt be falſe; for if it be that the Sun ſhines this moment, it muſt be falſe to ſay it doth not ſhine. So it is impoſſible that a rational Creature can be without reaſon: 'Tis a contradiction to be a rational Creature, and yet want that which is eſſential to a rational Creature. So it is impoſſible that the Will of Man can be compelled, becauſe Liberty is the Eſſence of the Will; while it is Will it cannot be conſtrain'd; and if it be conſtrain'd it ceaſeth to be Will. * God cannot at one time act as the Author of the Will, and the Deſtroyer of the Will. 'Tis impoſſible that Vice and Virtue, Light and Darkneſs, Life and Death ſhould be the ſame thing. Thoſe things admit not of a Conception in any Underſtanding. Some things are impoſſible to be done, becauſe of the incapability of the ſubject; as for a Creature to be made infinite, independent, to preſerve it ſelf without the Divine concourſe and aſſiſtance. So a brute cannot be taken into communion with God, and to everlaſting ſpiritual Bleſſedneſs, becauſe the Nature of a Brute, is uncapable of ſuch an Elevation: A rational Creature only can underſtand and reliſh ſpiritual delights, and is capable to enjoy God and have communion with him. Indeed God may change the nature of a Brute, and beſtow ſuch Faculties of Underſtanding and Will upon it, as to render it capable of ſuch a Bleſſedneſs; but then 'tis no more a Brute, but a rational Creature; but while it remains a Brute, the Excellency of the Nature of God doth not admit of communion with ſuch a Subject: So that this is not for want of Power in God, but becauſe of a Deficiency in the Creature: To ſuppoſe that God could make a Contradiction true, is to make himſelf falſe, and to do juſt nothing.

* Magalano *de ſcientiâ Dei, part* 2. *c.* 6. *ſect.* 3.

2. *Some things are impoſſible to the Nature and Being of God.* As to die, implies a flat repugnance to the Nature of God: To be able to die, is to be able to be caſhier'd out of Being. If God were able to deprive himſelf of Life, he might then ceaſe to be; he were not then a neceſſary, but an uncertain contingent Being, and could not be ſaid *only to have Immortality*, as he is *. He cannot die, who is Life it ſelf, and neceſſarily exiſtent: He cannot grow old or decay, becauſe he cannot be meaſur'd by Time. And this is no part of weakneſs, but the perfection of power. His Power is that whereby he remains for ever fixed in his own everlaſting Being; that cannot be reckoned as neceſſary to the Omnipotence of God, which all Mankind count a part of weakneſs in themſelves. God is Omnipotent becauſe he is not Impotent; and if he could die, he would be Impotent, not Omnipotent: Death is the feebleneſs of Nature. 'Tis undoubtedly the greateſt Impotence to ceaſe to be: Who would count it a part of Omnipotency to diſenable himſelf, and ſink into nothing and not being? The Impoſſibility for God to die, is not a fit Article to impeach his Omnipotence: This would be a ſtrange way of arguing, a thing is not powerful, becauſe it is not feeble, and cannot ceaſe to be powerful; for Death is a ceſſation of all Power. * God is Almighty in doing what he will, not in ſuffering what he will not. To die is not an active, but a paſſive Power: a defect of a Power: God is of too noble a Nature to periſh.

* 1 Tim. 6. 16.

* Auguſt.

Some things are impoſſible to that eminency of Nature which he hath above all Creatures; as to walk, ſleep, feed: Theſe are Imperfections belonging to Bodies and compounded Natures. If he could walk, he were not every where preſent: Motion ſpeaks Succeſſion. If he could encreaſe, he would not have been perfect before.

3. *Some things are impoſſible to the glorious Perfections of God.* God cannot do any thing unbecoming his Holineſs and Goodneſs; any thing unworthy of himſelf, and againſt the perfections of his Nature. God can do whatſoever he can will. As he doth actually do whatſoever he doth actually will; ſo it is poſſible for him to do whatſoever it is poſſible for him to will. He doth whatſoever he will, and can do whatſoever he can will; but he cannot do what he cannot will: He cannot will any unrighteous thing, and therefore cannot do any unrighteous thing. God cannot love Sin, this is contrary to his Holineſs; he cannot violate his Word, this is a denial of his Truth; he cannot puniſh an Innocent, this is contrary to his Goodneſs; he cannot cheriſh an impenitent Sinner, this is an Injury to his Juſtice; he cannot forget what is done in the World, this is a Diſgrace to his Omniſcience; he cannot deceive his Creature, this is contrary to his Faithfulneſs: None of theſe things can be done by him, becauſe of the perfection of his Nature. Would it not be an Imperfection in God to abſolve the Guilty, and condemn the Innocent? Is it congruous to the righteous and holy Nature of God to command Murder and Adultery; to command Men not to worſhip him, but to be baſe and unthankful? Theſe things would be againſt the Rules of Righteouſneſs. As when we ſay of a good Man, he cannot rob, or fight a Duel, we do not mean that he wants a courage for ſuch an Act, or that he hath not a natural ſtrength and knowledge to manage his Weapon as well as another; but he hath a righteous Principle ſtrong in him which will not ſuffer him to do it; his Will is ſetled againſt it: No Power can paſs into Act unleſs applied by the Will. But the Will of God cannot will any thing but what is worthy of him, and decent for his Goodneſs.

1. *The Scripture ſaith, 'tis impoſſible for God to lye* *; and God *cannot deny himſelf* becauſe of his Faithfulneſs †. As he cannot die, becauſe he is Life it ſelf; as he cannot deceive, becauſe he is Goodneſs it ſelf; as he cannot do an unwiſe Action, becauſe he is Wiſdom it ſelf; ſo he cannot ſpeak a falſe Word, becauſe he is Truth it ſelf. If he ſhould ſpeak any thing as true, and not know it, where is his infinite Knowledge and Comprehenſiveneſs of Underſtanding? If he ſhould ſpeak any thing as true, which he knows to be falſe, where is his infinite Righteouſneſs? If he ſhould deceive any Creature, there is an end of his Perfection and Fidelity and Veracity. If he ſhould be deceiv'd himſelf, there is an end of his Omniſcience; we muſt then fancy him to be a deceitful God, an ignorant God, that is, no God at all. * If he ſhould lye, he would be God and no God; God upon Suppoſition, and no God, becauſe not the firſt Truth. All Unrighteouſneſs is Weakneſs, not Power; 'tis a Defection from Right Reaſon, a Deviation from Moral Principles, and the Rule of perfect Action, and ariſeth from a Defect of Goodneſs and Power: 'Tis a Weakneſs, and not Omnipotence, to loſe Goodneſs. * God is Light; 'tis pure,

* Heb. 6. 18. † 2 Tim. 2. 13.

* *Becan.* ſum. *Theolog. p.* 83.

* *Maximus Tyrius,*

'tis the perfection of Light not to become Darkneſs, and a want of Power in Light if it ſhould become Darkneſs: His Power is infinitely ſtrong, ſo is his Wiſdom infinitely clear, and his Will infinitely pure. Would it not be a part of Weakneſs to have a Diſorder in himſelf, and thoſe Perfections ſhock one againſt another? Since all Perfections are in God, in the moſt ſovereign height of Perfection, nothing can be done by the Infiniteneſs of one againſt the Infiniteneſs of the other. He would then be unſtable in his own Perfections, and depart from the infinite Rectitude of his own Will, if he ſhould do an evil Action. Again,

*Ambroſe. * What is an Argument of greater Strength, than to be utterly ignorant of Infirmity? God is Omnipotent, becauſe he cannot do Evil, and would not be Omnipotent if he could: Thoſe things would be Marks of Weakneſs, and not Characters of Majeſty. Would you count a ſweet Fountain impotent, becauſe it cannot ſend forth bitter Streams? Or the Sun weak, becauſe it cannot diffuſe Darkneſs as well as Light in the Air? There is an Inability ariſing from Weakneſs, and an Ability ariſing from Perfection: 'Tis the Perfection of Angels and bleſſed Spirits, that they cannot ſin; and it would be the Imperfection of God, if he could do Evil.

2. *Hence it follows, that 'tis impoſſible that a thing paſt ſhould not be paſt.* If we aſcribe a Power to God, to make a thing that is paſt not to be paſt, we do not truly aſcribe Power to him, but a Weakneſs; for it is to make God to lye: As tho' God might not have created Man, yet after he had created *Adam*, though he ſhould preſently have reduced *Adam* to his firſt nothing, yet it would be for ever true that *Adam* was created, and it would for ever be falſe that *Adam* never was created: So though God may prevent Sin, yet when Sin hath been committed, it will alway be true that Sin was committed; it will never be true to ſay ſuch a Creature that did ſin, did not ſin; his ſin cannot be recalled. Though God by Pardon take off the Guilt of *Peter*'s denying our Saviour, yet it will be eternally true, that *Peter* did deny him. It is repugnant to the Righteouſneſs and Truth of God, to make that which was once true to become falſe, and not true; that is, to make a Truth to become a Lye, and a Lye to become a Truth.

This is well argued from *Heb.* 6. 18. *'Tis impoſſible for God to lye.* * The *Apoſtle* argues, that what God had promiſed and ſworn will come to paſs, and cannot but come to paſs. Now if God could make a thing paſt not to be paſt, this conſequence would not be good, for then he might make himſelf not to have promiſed, not to have ſworn, after he hath promiſed and ſworn: And ſo, if there were a power to undo that which is paſt, there would be no foundation for Faith, no certainty of Revelation. It cannot be aſſerted, that God hath created the World, that God hath ſent his Son to die, that God hath accepted his Death for Man: Theſe might not be true, if it were poſſible that that which hath been done might be ſaid never to have been done. So that what any may imagine to be a want of Power in God, is the higheſt perfection of God; and the greateſt ſecurity to a believing Creature that hath to do with God.

* *Becan. ſum. Theol. p.* 84. *Crel. de Deo, c.* 22.

Fourthly, *Some things are impoſſible to be done, becauſe of God's Ordination.* Some things are impoſſible, not in their own nature, but in regard of the determin'd Will of God: So God might have deſtroy'd the World after *Adam*'s fall, but it was impoſſible; not that God wanted Power to do it, but becauſe he did not only decree from Eternity to create the World, but did alſo decree to redeem the World by *Jeſus Chriſt*, and erected the World in order to the manifeſtation of his *Glory in Chriſt*, Eph. 1. 4, 5. The choice of ſome in Chriſt was *before the foundation of the World*: Suppoſing that there was no hindrance in the Juſtice of God to pardon the Sin of *Adam* after his fall, and to execute no puniſhment on him; yet in regard of God's threatning, that in the Day he eat of the forbidden Fruit he ſhould die, it was impoſſible. So though it was poſſible that the Cup ſhould paſs from our bleſſed Saviour, that is, poſſible in its own nature; yet it was not poſſible, in regard of the determination of God's Will; ſince he had both decreed and publiſh'd his Will to redeem Man by the Paſſion and Blood of his Son. Theſe things God by his abſolute Power might have done, but upon the account of his Decree, they were impoſſible, becauſe it is repugnant to the Nature of God to be mutable: 'Tis to deny his own Wiſdom which contriv'd them, and his own Will which reſolv'd them, not to do that which he had decreed to do. This would be a diffidence in his Wiſdom, and a change of his Will. The impoſſibility of them is no reſult of a want of Power, no mark of an Imperfection, of Feebleneſs and Impotence; but the Perfection of Immutability and Unchangeableneſs.

Thus have I endeavoured to give you a right Notion of this excellent Attribute of the Power of God, in as plain terms as I could; which may ſerve us for a matter of Meditation, Admiration, Fear of him, Truſt in him, which are the proper Uſes we ſhould make of this Doctrine of Divine Power. The want of a right underſtanding of this Doctrine of the Divine Power hath cauſed many to run into mighty Abſurdities; I have therefore taken the more pains to explain it.

II. The *Second* thing I propoſed, is the *Reaſons to prove God to be Omnipotent.* The Scripture deſcribes God by this Attribute of Power, *Pſal.* 115. 3. *He hath done whatſoever he pleaſed.* It ſometimes ſets forth his Power in a way of deriſion of thoſe that ſeem to doubt of it. When *Sarah* doubted of his Ability to give her a Child in her Old Age, *Gen.* 18. 14. *Is any thing too hard for the Lord?* They deſerve to be ſcoff'd that will deſpoil God of his ſtrength, and meaſure him by their ſhallow Models. And when *Moſes* uttered ſomething of unbelief of this Attribute, as if God were not able to feed 600000 *Iſraelites*, beſides Women and Children, which he aggravates by a kind of imperious Scoff: *Shall the flocks and the herds be ſlain for them to ſuffice them? Or ſhall all the fiſh of the Sea be gathered together for them?* &c. *Numb.* 11. 23. God takes him up ſhort, *ver.* 23. *Is the Lord's hand waxed ſhort?* What, can any Weakneſs ſeize upon my hand? Can I not draw out of my own Treaſures what is needful for a Supply? The Hand of God is not at one time ſtrong, and another time feeble. Hence it is that we read of the Hand and Arm of God, an out-ſtretched Arm; becauſe the Strength of a Man is exerted by his Hand and Arm: The Power of God is called the Arm of his Power, and the right Hand of his Strength. Sometimes, according to the different manifeſtation of it, it is expreſt by Finger, when a leſs Power is evidenc'd; by Hand, when ſomething greater; by Arm, when more mighty than the former. Since God is Eternal, without limits of Time; he is alſo Almighty, without limits of Strength. As he

cannot

cannot be ſaid to be more in Being now than he was before; ſo he is neither more nor leſs in ſtrength than he was before: As he cannot ceaſe to be, ſo he cannot ceaſe to be Powerful, becauſe he is Eternal. His *Eternity* and *Power* are link'd together as equally demonſtrable *; God is called the God of Gods? *El Elohim**, the Mighty of Mighties, whence all mighty perſons have their activity and vigor: He is called the Lord of Hoſts, as being the Creator and Conductor of the Heavenly Militia.

* Rom. 1. 20.
* Dan. 11. 36

Reaſon 1. *The Power that is in Creatures demonſtrates a greater and an unconceivable Power in God.* Nothing in the world is without a power of Activity according to its Nature: No Creature but can act ſomething: The Sun warms and enlightens every thing: It ſend its Influences upon the Earth, into the bowels of the Earth, into the depths of the Sea: All Generations owe themſelves to its inſtrumental Virtue: How powerful is a ſmall Seed to riſe into a mighty Tree with a lofty top, and extenſive branches, and ſend forth other Seeds, which can ſtill multiply into numberleſs Plants? How wonderful is the Power of the Creator, who hath endowed ſo ſmall a Creature as a Seed with ſo fruitful an Activity? Yet this is but the virtue of a limited nature: God is both the producing and preſerving cauſe of all the virtue in any Creature, in every Creature: The power of every Creature belongs to him as the Fountain, and is truly his Power in the Creature. As he is the firſt Being, he is the original of all Being; as he is the firſt Good, he is the Spring of all Goodneſs; as he is the firſt Truth, he is the ſource of all Truth; ſo as he is the firſt Power, he is the Fountain of all Power.

1. *He* therefore *that communicates to the Creature what power it hath, contains eminently much more power in himſelf.* Pſal. 94. 10. *He that teaches man knowledge, ſhall not he know?* So he that gives created Beings power, ſhall not he be Powerful? The firſt Being muſt have as much Power as he hath given to others: He could not transfer that upon another, which he did not tranſcendently poſſeſs himſelf. The ſole cauſe of created Power cannot be deſtitute of any Power in himſelf. We ſee that the Power of one Creature tranſcends the power of another. Beaſts can do the things that Plants cannot do; beſides the power of growth they have a power of Senſe and progreſſive Motion: Men can do more than Beaſts; they have rational Souls to meaſure the Earth and Heavens, and to be repoſitories of multitudes of things, Notions and Concluſions. We may well imagine Angels to be far ſuperior to Man: The power of the Creator muſt far ſurmount the power of the Creature, and muſt needs be Infinite; for if it be limited, it is limited by himſelf or by ſome other; if by ſome other, he is no longer a Creator, but a Creature; for that which limits him in his Nature, did communicate that Nature to him; not by himſelf, for he would not deny himſelf any neceſſary Perfection: We muſt ſtill conclude a reſerve of Power in him, that he that made theſe can make many more of the ſame kind.

2. *All the Power which is diſtinct in the Creatures muſt be united in God.* One Creature hath a ſtrength to do this, another to do that; every Creature is as a Ciſtern filled with a particular and limited power, according to the capacity of its nature, from this Fountain; all are diſtinct Streams from God: But the ſtrength of every Creature, though diſtinct in the rank of Creatures, is united in God the Center, whence thoſe lines were drawn, the Fountain whence thoſe Streams were deriv'd: If the power of one Creature be admirable, as the power of an *Angel*, which the * *Pſalmiſt* ſaith, *excelleth in ſtrength*; how much greater muſt the power of a Legion of Angels be? How unconceivably ſuperior the power of all thoſe numbers of ſpiritual Natures, which are the excellent Works of God? Now if all this particular power which is in every Angel diſtinct, were compacted in one Angel, how would it exceed our Underſtanding, and be above our power to form a diſtinct Conception of it? What is thus divided in every Angel, muſt be thought united in the Creator of Angels, and far more excellent in him. Every thing is in a more noble manner in the Fountain, than in the Streams which diſtill and deſcend from it. He that is the Original of all thoſe diſtinct Powers, muſt be the Seat of all Power without diſtinction: In him is the union of all without diviſion; what is in them as a quality, is in him as his Eſſence. Again, if all the powers of ſeveral Creatures, with all their principal qualities and vigors, both of Beaſts, Plants, and rational Creatures, were united in one Subject; As if one Lion had the ſtrength of all the Lions that ever were; or if one Elephant had the ſtrength of all the Elephants that ever were; nay, if one Bee had all the power of motion and ſtinging that all Bees ever had, it would have a vaſt ſtrength; but if the ſtrength of all thoſe thus gathered into one of every kind ſhould be lodged in one ſole Creature, one Man, would it not be a ſtrength too big for our Conception? Or ſuppoſe one Canon had all the force of all the Cannons that ever were in the World, what a battery would it make, and, as it were, ſhake the whole frame of Heaven and Earth? All this Strength muſt be much more incomprehenſible in God, all is united in him. If it were in one individual created Nature, it would ſtill be but a finite Power in a finite Nature: But in God it is Infinite and Immenſe.

* Pſal. 103. 20.

Reaſ. 2. *If there were not an incomprehenſible Power in God, he would not be infinitely perfect.* God is the Firſt Being; It can only be ſaid of him, *Eſt*, he is. All other things are nothing to him, *Leſs than nothing and vanity*, Iſai. 40. 17. and *reputed as nothing*, Dan. 4. 35. All the Inhabitants of the Earth, with all their Wit and Strength, are counted as if they were not; juſt in compariſon with Him and his Being, as a little Mote in the Sunbeams: God therefore is a pure Being. Any kind of Weakneſs whatſoever is a defect, a degree of not Being; ſo far as any thing wants this or that Power it may be ſaid not to be. Were there any thing of weakneſs in God, any want of ſtrength which belong'd to the perfection of a Nature, it might be ſaid of God, He is not this or that, he wants this or that perfection of Being, and ſo he would not be a pure Being, there would be ſomething of not Being in him. But God being the Firſt Being the only Original Being, He is infinitely diſtant from not Being, and therefore infinitely diſtant from any thing of Weakneſs.

* Victorin. *in Petar. Tom. 1. p. 333.*

* Again, If God can know whatſoever is poſſible to be done by him, and cannot do it, there would be ſomething more in his Knowledge than in his Power. What would then follow? That the Eſſence of God would be in ſome regard greater than it ſelf, and leſs than it ſelf, becauſe his Knowledge and his Power are his Eſſence; his Power as much his Eſſence, as his Knowledge: And therefore, in regard of his Knowledge his Eſſence would be greater, in regard of his Power his Eſſence would be leſs, which is a thing impoſſible

poſſible to be conceived in a moſt perfect Being. We muſt underſtand this of thoſe things, which are properly, and in their own Nature ſubjected to the Divine Knowledge; for otherwiſe God knows more than he can do; for he knows Sin, but he cannot act it, becauſe Sin belongs not to Power, but Weakneſs; and Sin comes under the Knowledge of God, not in it ſelf and its own Nature, but as it is a defect from God, and contrary to Good, which is the proper Object of Divine Knowledge. He knows it alſo not as poſſible to be done by himſelf, but as poſſible to be done by the Creature. * Victorin. *in* Petar. *Tom.* 1. *p.* 233. * Again, If God were not Omnipotent, we might imagine ſomething more perfect than God: For if we bar God from any one thing which in its own Nature is poſſible, we may imagine a Being that can do that thing, one that is able to effect it; and ſo imagine an Agent greater than God, a Being able to do more than God is able to do, and conſequently a Being more perfect than God: But no Being more perfect than God can be imagin'd by any Creature. Nothing can be called moſt Perfect, if any thing of Activity be wanting to it. Active Power follows the Perfection of a thing, and all things are counted more noble, by how much more of Efficacy and Vertue they poſſeſs. We count thoſe the beſt and moſt perfect Plants, that have the greateſt Medicinal Virtue in them, and power of working upon the Body for the cure of Diſtempers. God is perfect of himſelf, and therefore moſt powerful of himſelf. If his Perfection in Wiſdom and Goodneſs be unſearchable, his Power, which belongs to Perfection, and without which all the other Excellencies of his Nature were inſignificant, and could not ſhew themſelves, (as was before evidenc'd) muſt be unſearchable alſo. 'Tis by the Title of *Almighty* he is denominated, when declared to be unſearchable to Perfection *Job* 11. 7. *Canſt thou by ſearching find out God, canſt thou find out the Almighty to Perfection?* This would be limited and ſearched out, if he were deſtitute of an active Ability to do whatſoever he pleaſed to do, whatſoever was poſſible to be done. As he hath not a perfect liberty of Will, if he could not Will what he pleaſed; ſo he would not have a perfect Activity, if he could not do what he willed.

Reaſ. 3. *The Simplicity of God manifeſts it.* Every Subſtance, the more Spiritual it is, the more Powerful it is. All Perfections are more united in a ſimple, than in a compounded Being. Angels being Spirits, are more powerful than Bodies. Where there is the greateſt Simplicity, there is the greateſt Unity; and were there is the greateſt Unity, there is the greateſt Power. Where there is a compoſition of a Faculty and a Member, the Member or Organ may be weaken'd and render'd unable to act, though the Power doth ſtill reſide in the Faculty. As a Man, when his Arm or Hand is cut off or broke, he hath the faculty of Motion ſtill; but he hath loſt that Inſtrument, that part whereby he did manifeſt and put forth that motion: But God being a pure Spiritual Nature, hath no Members, no Organs to be defac'd or impair'd. All impediments of Action ariſe either from the nature of the thing that acts, or from ſomething without it. There can be no hindrance to God to do whatſoever he pleaſes; not in himſelf, becauſe he is the moſt Simple Being, hath no contrariety in himſelf, is not compos'd of divers things: And it cannot be from any thing without himſelf, becauſe nothing is equal to him, much leſs Superiour. He is the Greateſt, the Supream: All things were made by him, depend upon him, nothing can diſappoint his Intentions.

Reaſ. 4 *The Miracles that have been in the World evidence that Power of God.* Extraordinary productions have awakened Men from their ſtupidity, to the acknowledgment of the Immenſity of Divine Power. Miracles are ſuch effects as have been wrought without the aſſiſtance and co-operation of Natural Cauſes, yea contrary, and beſides the ordinary courſe of Nature, above the reach of any Created Power. Miracles have been; and ſaith *Bradwardine* *, *To deny that ever ſuch things were, is uncivil: 'Tis inhuman to deny all the Hiſtories of Jews and Chriſtians*; Whoſoever denies Miracles muſt deny all poſſibility of Miracles, and ſo muſt imagine himſelf fully skill'd in the extent of Divine Power. How was the *Sun* ſuſpended from its Motion for ſome hours; The *Dead raiſed* from the Grave; Thoſe reduc'd from the brink of it, that had been brought near to it by prevailing Diſeaſes; and this by a word ſpeaking? How were the famiſht *Lions* bridled from exerciſing their rage upon *Daniel*, expos'd to them for a Prey? The activity of the *Fire* curb'd for the preſervation of the *Three Children*? Which proves a Deity more powerful than all Creatures. No power upon Earth can hinder the operation of the Fire upon combuſtible Matter, when they are united, unleſs by quenching the Fire, or removing the Matter: But no created Power can reſtrain the Fire, ſo long as it remains ſo, from acting according to its Nature. This was done by God in the caſe of the *Three Children*, and that of the *Burning Buſh*. It was as much miraculous that the Buſh ſhould not conſume, as it was natural that it ſhould burn by the efficacy of the Fire upon it. No Element is ſo obſtinate and deaf, but it hears and obeys his Voice, and performs his Orders, though contrary to its own Nature: All the violence of the Creature is ſuſpended as ſoon as it receives his Command. * He that gave the Original to Nature, can take away the neceſſity of Nature: He preſides over Creatures, but is not confin'd to thoſe Laws he hath preſcrib'd to Creatures. He framed Nature, and can turn the Channels of nature according to his own pleaſure. Men dig into the bowels of Nature, ſearch into all the Treaſures of it, to find Medicines to cure a diſeaſe, and after all their attempts it may prove Labour in vain: But God, by one Act of his Will, one Word of his Mouth, overturns the Victory of Death, and reſcues from the moſt deſperate Diſeaſes *. All the Miracles which were wrought by the Apoſtles, either ſpeaking ſome Words, or Touching with the Hand, were not effected by any virtue inherent in their Words, or in their Touches. For ſuch Virtue inherent in any created finite ſubject would be created and finite it ſelf and conſequently were incapable to produce effects, which required an infinite Virtue, as Miracles do which are above the power of Nature. So when our *Saviour* wrought Miracles, it was not by any quality reſident in his human nature, but by the ſole *Power* of his *Divinity*. The Fleſh could only do what was proper to the Fleſh; but the Deity did what was proper to the Deity. *God alone doth wonders.* Excluding every other cauſe from producing ſuch things. He only doth thoſe things which are above the power of nature, and cannot be wrought by any Natural cauſes whatſoever. He doth not hereby put his Omnipotence to any ſtreſs: 'Tis as eaſie with him to turn Nature out of its ſetled courſe, as it was to place it in that ſtation it holds, and appoint it that courſe it runs.

* Lib. 1. cap. 1. p. 38.

Joſh 10. 13.

Dan. 6. 22.

Dan. 3. 15.

Exod. 3. 2.

* Damianus *in* Petar.

* Fauch. *in* Acts, *Vol.* 2. *Sect.* 56.

Pſal. 136. 4.

All

All the Works of Nature are indeed Miracles and Teſtimonies of the Power of God producing them; and ſuſtaining them: But Works above the Power of Nature, being Novelties and unuſual, ſtrike Men with a greater admiration upon their appearance, becauſe they are not the products of Nature, but the convulſions of it.

I might alſo add as an Argument, The *Power of the Mind* of Man to conceive more than hath been wrought by God in the world. And God can work whatſoever Perfection the Mind of Man can conceive: Otherwiſe the reaches of a created Imagination and Fancy, would be more extenſive than the Power of God. His Power therefore is far greater than the conception of any Intellectual Creature; elſe the Creature would be of a greater capacity to conceive, than God is to effect. The Creature would have a power of Conception, above God's Power of Activity; and conſequently a Creature, in ſome reſpect greater than himſelf. Now whatſoever a Creature can conceive poſſible to be done, is but finite in its own nature; and if God could not produce what Being a created Underſtanding can conceive poſſible to be done, he would be leſs than Infinite in Power, nay, he could not go to the extent of what is Finite. But I have touched this before; That God can create more than he hath created, and in a more perfect way of Being, as conſidered ſimply in themſelves.

III. The third general thing, is to declare, *How the Power of God appears, in Creation, in Government, in Redemption.*

1. *In Creation.* With what Majeſtick Lines doth God ſet forth his *Power*, in the giving Being, and Endowments to all the Creatures in the World? All that is in *Heaven* and *Earth* is his, and ſhews the greatneſs of his *Power*, *Glory*, *Victory*, and *Majeſty*. The Heaven being ſo magnificent a piece of Work, is called emphatically, *The Firmament of his Power* *. His Power being more conſpicuous and unveil'd in that glorious Arch of the World. Indeed, *God exalts by his Power* *, that is exalts himſelf by his Power in all the Works of his hands; in the ſmalleſt Shrub, as well the moſt glorious Sun. All his Works of Nature are truly Miracles, though we conſider them not, being blinded with too frequent and cuſtomary a ſight of them; yet in the neglect of all the reſt, the view of the Heavens doth more affect us with aſtoniſhment at the Might of God's Arm: Theſe *declare* his *Glory*, and *the Firmament ſhews his handy-work*. And the *Pſalmiſt* peculiarly calls them *His Heavens*, and the work of *his Fingers*, Theſe were immediately created by God, whereas many other things in the World were brought into Being by the Power of God, yet by the means of the influence of the Heavens.

Job 38. 1 Chr. 29. 11.

*Pſal. 150. 1.

*Job 36. 22.

Pſal. 19. 1. Heb. 8. 3.

1. *His Power is the firſt thing evident in the ſtory of the Creation. In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth*, Gen. 1. 1. There's no appearance of any thing in this declaratory Preface, but of Power: The Characters of Wiſdom march after in the diſtinct formation of things, and animating them with ſuitable qualities for an Univerſal good. By *Heaven*, and *Earth* is meant the whole maſs of the Creatures: By *Heaven*, all the Aery Region, with all the Holt of it; by the *Earth* is meant, all that which makes the intire inferiour Globe. The *Jews* obſerve, that in the *firſt of Geneſis*, in the whole Chapter unto the finiſhing the Work in ſix Days, God is called אלהים, which is a *Name of Power*, and that *Thirty two times* in that Chapter; but after the finiſhing the ſix days Work, he is called יהוה אלהים, which according to their notion is a Name of *Goodneſs* and *Kindneſs*. His Power is firſt viſible in framing the world, before his Goodneſs is viſible in the ſuſtaining and preſerving it. It was by this Name of *Power* and *Almighty* that he was known in the firſt Ages of the world, not by his Name *Jehovah*; Exod. 6. 3. *And I appeared unto* Abraham, Iſaac, *and* Jacob, *by the Name of God Almighty; but by my Name Jehovah was I not known to them.* Not but that they were acquainted with the Name, but did not experience the intent of the Name, which ſignified his Truth in the performance of his Promiſes: They knew him by that name, as promiſing, but they knew him not by that name, as performing. He would be known by his Name *Jehovah*, True to his Word, when he was about to effect the Deliverance from *Egypt*; a Type of the *Eternal Redemption*, wherein the Truth of God, in performing of his firſt Promiſe, is glorioufly magnified. And hence it is that God is called *Almighty* more in the Book of *Job*, than in all the Scripture beſides, I think about *Thirty two times*, and *Jehovah* but once, which is *Job* 12. 9. unleſs in *Job* 38. when God is introduc'd ſpeaking himſelf; which is an Argument of *Job*'s living before the Deliverance from *Egypt*, when God was known more by his Works of Creation, than by the performance of his Promiſes, before the Name *Jehovah* was formally publiſh'd. Indeed, this Attribute of his *Eternal Power*, is the firſt thing viſible and intelligible upon the firſt glance of the Eye upon the Creatures *. Bring a man out of the Cave where he hath been Nurſt, without ſeeing any thing out of the confines of it, and let him lift up his Eyes to the Heavens and take a proſpect of that glorious Body the *Sun*, then caſt them down to the Earth, and behold the Surface of it with its Green cloathing; the firſt Notion which will ſtart up in his Mind from that ſpring of Wonders, is that of *Power*, which he will at firſt adore with a Religious aſtoniſhment. The Wiſdom of God in them is not ſo preſently apparent, till after a more exquiſite conſideration of his Works and Knowledge of the properties of their natures, the conveniency of their ſituations, and the uſefulneſs of their functions, and the order wherein they are linkt together for the good of the Univerſe.

* Rom. 1. 20.

2. *By this Creative Power God is often diſtinguiſht from all the Idols and Falſe gods! in the World.* And by this *Title* he ſets forth himſelf when he would act any great and wonderful Work in the World, *He is great above all gods, for he hath done whatſoever he pleaſed in Heaven and in Earth.* Upon this is founded all the Worſhip he challengeth in the World, as his peculiar Glory. *Revel.* 4. 11. *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive, glory, honour, and power, for thou haſt Created all things.* And *Rev.* 10. 6. *I have made the Earth, and created Man upon it. I, even my hands have ſtretched out the Heavens, and all their Hoſt have I commanded.* Iſai. 45. 12. What is the iſſue, *Verſe* 16. *They ſhall be aſhamed and confounded, all of them, that are makers of Idols.* And the weakneſs of Idols is expreſt by this Title, *The gods! that have not made the Heavens and the Earth*, Jer. 10. 11. *The portion of* Jacob *is not like them, for he is the former of all things*, Verſe 16.

Pſal. 135. 5, 6.

What is not that God able to do, that hath created ſo great a world? How doth the Power of God appear in Creation?

1. *In making the World of Nothing.* When we ſay

* Mercer. p. 7. col. 1, 2.

ſay, the World was made of Nothing, we mean, that there was no Matter exiſtent for God to work upon, but what he rais'd himſelf in the firſt act of Creation. In this regard, the Power of God in Creation ſurmounts his Power in Providence Creation ſuppoſeth nothing, Providence ſuppoſeth ſomething in Being. Creation intimates a Creature making, Providence ſpeaks a thing already made, and capable of Government, and in Government. God uſes ſecond Cauſes to bring about his Purpoſes.

Gen. 1. 1, 2. Suarez. *vol.* 3. *p.* 33.

1. *The World was made of nothing.* The Earth which is deſcrib'd as the firſt Matter, *without any form* or ornament, without any diſtinction or figures, was of God's forming in the Bulk, before he did adorn it with his Pencil. God *in the begining creating the Heaven and the Earth*, includes two things: Firſt, *That thoſe were created in the beginning of time, and before all other things.* Secondly, *That God begun the Creation of the World from thoſe things.* Therefore before the Heavens and the Earth there was nothing abſolutely created, and therefore no Matter in being before an act of Creation paſt upon it. It could not be Eternal, becauſe nothing can be Eternal but God; it muſt therefore have a beginning: If it had a beginning from it ſelf, then it was before it was. If it acted in the making it ſelf before it was made, then it had a Being before it had a Being; for that which is nothing, can act nothing: The action of any thing ſuppoſeth the exiſtence of the thing which acts. It being made, it was not before it was made; for to be made is to be brought into Being It was made then by another, and that Maker is God. 'Tis neceſſary that the *firſt Original* of things was from nothing: When we ſee one thing to ariſe from another, we muſt ſuppoſe an Original of the firſt of each kind: As when we ſee a Tree ſpring up from a Seed, we know that that Seed came out of the bowels of another Tree; it had a Parent, and it had a Matter; we muſt come to ſome Firſt, or elſe we run into an endleſs Maze: We muſt come to ſome firſt Tree, ſome firſt Seed that had no cauſe of the ſame kind, no matter of it, but was meer nothing. * Creation doth ſuppoſe a production from nothing; becauſe if you ſuppoſe a thing without any real or actual Exiſtence, 'tis not capable of any other production than from nothing: Nothing muſt be ſuppoſed before the World, or we muſt ſuppoſe it Eternal, and that is to deny it to be a Creature, and make it God. The Creation of Spiritual Subſtances, ſuch as Angels and Souls evince this; thoſe things that are purely ſpiritual, and conſiſt not of matter, cannot pretend to any Original from Matter, and therefore they roſe up from nothing. If ſpiritual things aroſe from nothing, much more may corporeal, becauſe they are of a lower nature than ſpiritual. And he that can create a higher Nature of nothing, can create an inferior nature of nothing. As bodily things are more imperfect than ſpiritual, ſo their Creation may be ſuppoſed eaſier than that of ſpiritual. There was as little need of any matter to be wrought to his hands, to contrive this viſible Fabrick, as there was to erect ſuch an excellent Order, as the glorious Cherubims.

* Suarez. *vol* 3. *p.* 6.

2. *This Creation of things from nothing, ſpeaks an infinite Power.* The diſtance between Nothing and Being, hath been alway counted ſo great, that nothing but an infinite Power can make ſuch diſtances meet together; either for Nothing to paſs into Being, or Being to return to nothing. To have a thing ariſe from nothing, was ſo difficult a Text to thoſe that were ignorant of the Scripture, that they knew not how to fathom it; and therefore laid it down as a certain Rule, That of nothing, nothing is made; which is true of a created Power, but not of an uncreated and Almighty Power. A greater diſtance cannot be imagin'd than that which is between Nothing and Something; that which hath no beng, and that which hath: And a greater Power cannot be imagin'd, then that which brings Something out of Nothing. * We know not how to conceive a Nothing, and afterwards a Being from that Nothing; but we muſt remain ſwallowed up in admiration of the Cauſe that gives it Being, and acknowledge it to be without any bounds and meaſures of Greatneſs and Power. The further any thing is from Being, the more immenſe muſt that Power be which brings it into Being: 'Tis not conceivable that the power of all the Angels in one, can give Being to the ſmalleſt ſpire of Graſs. To imagine therefore ſo ſmall a thing as a Bee, a Fly, a grain of Corn, or an Atome of Duſt to be made of nothing, would ſtupify any Creature in the conſideration of it: Much more to behold the Heavens with all the Troop of Stars, the Earth with all its Embroidery, and the Sea with all her Inhabitants of Fiſh; and Man, the nobleſt Creature of all, to ariſe out of the Womb of meer Emptineſs. Indeed God had not acted as an Almighty Creator if he had ſtood in need of any Materials, but of his own framing: It had been as much as his Deity was worth, if he had not had all within the compaſs of his own Power, that was neceſſary to Operation; if he muſt have been beholden to ſomthing without himſelf; and above himſelf, for matter to work upon; Had there been ſuch a neceſſity, we could not have imagin'd him to be Omnipotent, and conſequently not God.

* Amyrald *Morale, tom.* 1. *p.* 252.

3. *In this the power of God exceeds the power of all natural and rational Agents.* Nature, or the Order of ſecond Cauſes, hath a vaſt Power: The Sun generates Flies and other Inſects, but of ſome Matter, the Slime of the Earth or a Dunghill: The Sun and the Earth bring forth Harveſts of Corn, but from Seed firſt ſown in the Earth: Fruits are brought forth, but from the Sap of the Plant. Were there no Seed or Plants in the Earth, the power of the Earth would be idle, and the influence of the Sun inſignificant; whatſoever ſtrength either of them had in their Nature, muſt be uſeleſs without matter to work upon. All the united ſtrength of Nature cannot produce the leaſt thing out of nothing: It may multiply and increaſe things, by the powerful bleſſing God gave it at the firſt erecting of the World, but it cannot create. The *Word* which ſignifies *Creation*, uſed in *Gen.* 1. 1. is not aſcrib'd to any *ſecond Cauſe*, but only to God; a word in that ſenſe as incommunicable to any thing elſe, as the action it ſignifies.

Rational Creatures can produce admirable Pieces of Art from ſmall things, yet ſtill out of Matter created to their hands. Excellent Garments may be woven, but from the Entrails of a ſmall Silkworm. Delightful and Medicinal Spirits and Eſſences may be extracted by ingenious Chymiſts; but out of the Bodies of Plants and Minerals. No Picture can be drawn without Colours; no Statue engraven without Stone, no Building erected without Timber, Stones, and other Materials. Nor can any man raiſe a thought, without ſome Matter framed to his hands, or caſt into him. Matter is by Nature formed to the hands of all Artificers; they beſtow a new Figure upon it, by the help of

of Inſtruments, and the product of their own Wit and Skill, but they create not the leaſt particle of Matter; when they want it, they muſt be ſupplied, or elſe ſtand ſtill, as well as Nature; for none of them, or all together, can make the leaſt Mite or Atome. And when they have wrought all that they can, they will not want ſome to find a flaw and defect in their work. God as a Creator hath the only Prerogative to draw what he pleaſes from nothing, without any defect, without any imperfection: He can raiſe what Matter he pleaſes; ennoble it with what form he pleaſes. Of nothing, nothing can be made by any created Agent: But the Omnipotent Architect of the World, is not under the ſame neceſſity, nor is limited to the ſame Rule, and tied by ſo ſhort a Tedder as created Nature, or an ingenious, yet feeble Artificer.

2. It appears, *In raiſing ſuch variety of Creatures from this barren Womb of Nothing*, or *from the Matter which he firſt commanded to appear out of Nothing.* Had there been any pre-exiſtent Matter, yet the bringing forth ſuch varieties and diverſities of excellent Creatures; ſome with Life, ſome with Senſe, and others with Reaſon ſuperadded to the reſt; and thoſe out of indiſpoſed and undigeſted Matter, would argue an infinite Power reſident in the firſt Author of this variegated Fabrick. From this Matter he formed that glorious *Sun*, which every day diſplays its Glory, ſcatters its Beams, clears the Air, ripens our Fruits, and maintains the propagation of Creatures in the World. From this Matter he lighted thoſe Torches which he ſet in the Heaven to qualifie the darkneſs of the Night: From this he compacted thoſe Bodies of Light, which though they ſeem to us as little ſparks, as if they were the Gloe-worms of Heaven, yet ſome of them exceed in greatneſs this Globe of the Earth on which we live. And the higheſt of them hath ſo quick a motion, that ſome tell us, they run in the ſpace of every hour 42 *millions* of Leagues. From the ſame matter he drew the Earth, on which we walk; from thence he extracted the Flowers to adorn it, the Hills to ſecure the Valleys, and the Rocks to fortifie it againſt the Inundations of the Sea. And on this dull and ſluggiſh Element, he beſtowed ſo great a fruitfulneſs, to maintain, feed, and multiply ſo many Seeds of different kinds and conferred upon thoſe little Bodies of Seeds a power to multiply their kinds in conjunction with the fruitfulneſs of the Earth to many thouſands. From this rude Matter, the Slime, or Duſt of the Earth, he kneaded the Body of Man, and wrought ſo curious a Fabrick, fit to entertain a Soul of a Heavenly extraction, form'd by the *breath of God* *. He brought Light out of thick Darkneſs, and living Creatures, Fiſh and Foul, out of *inanimate waters* *, and gave a power of ſpontaneous motion to things ariſing from that Matter which had no living motion. To convert one thing into another, is an evidence of infinite Power, as well as creating things of nothing; for the diſtance between life and not life, is next to that which is between being and not being. God firſt forms Matter out of Nothing, and then draws upon and from this indiſpoſed *Chaos*, many excellent Pourtraitures. Neither Earth nor Sea were capable of producing living Creatures, without an infinite Power working upon it, and bringing into it ſuch variety and multitude of Forms; and this is called by ſome *mediate* Creation; as the producing the *Chaos*, which was without form and void, is called *immediate* Creation. Is not the power of the Potter admirable in forming out of temper'd Clay, ſuch varieties of neat and curious Veſſels, that after they are faſhion'd, and paſt the Furnace, look as if they were not of any kin to the Matter they are formed of? And is it not the ſame with the Glaſs-maker, that from a little melted gelly of Sand and Aſhes, or the Duſt of Flint, can blow up ſo pure a Body as Glaſs, and in ſuch varieties of ſhapes; and is not the Power of God more admirable, becauſe infinite in ſpeaking out ſo beautiful a World out of nothing; and ſuch varieties of living Creatures from Matter utterly indiſpos'd in its own nature for ſuch forms?

*Gen. 2. 7.

* Gen. 1. 20.

3. And this conducts to a *third thing*, wherein the power of God appears, in that *He did all this with the greateſt eaſe and facility.*

1. *Without Inſtruments.* As God made the World without the advice, ſo without the aſſiſtance of any other. *He ſtretched forth the Heavens alone, and ſpread abroad the Earth by himſelf, Iſai.* 44. 24. He had no Engin, but his Word; no pattern or model but himſelf. What need can he have of Inſtruments, that is able to create what Inſtruments he pleaſes? Where there is no reſiſtance in the Object, where no need of preparation or inſtrumental advantage in the Agent; there the actual determination of the Will is ſufficient to a production. What Inſtrument need we to the thinking of a Thought, or an act of our Will? Men indeed cannot act any thing without Tools; the beſt Artificer muſt be beholden to ſomething elſe for his nobleſt works of Art. The *Carpenter* cannot work without his Rule, and Ax, and Saw, and other Inſtruments. The *Watch-maker* cannot act without his File and Pliars: But in Creation, there is nothing neceſſary to God's bringing forth a World, but a ſimple act of his Will, which is both the principal cauſe, and inſtrumental. He had no Scaffolds to rear it, no Engines to poliſh it, no Hammers or Mattocks to clod and work it together. 'Tis a miſerable Error to meaſure the actions of an *Infinite* Cauſe by the imperfect model of a *Finite*, ſince by his own *Power and Out-ſtretched Arm, he made the Heaven and the Earth* *. † What excellency would God have in his work above others, if he needed Inſtruments, as feeble men do? Every Artificer is counted more admirable, that can frame curious Works with the leſs matter, fewer Tools and aſſiſtances: God uſes Inſtruments in his Works of Providence, not for neceſſity, but for the diſplay of his Wiſdom in the management of them; yet thoſe Inſtruments were originally framed by him without Inſtruments. Indeed ſome of the *Jews* thought the Angels were the Inſtruments of God in creating Man, and that thoſe words, *Let us make Man in our own image*, were ſpoken to Angels. But certainly the Scripture, which denies God any *Counſellor* in the model of Creation *, doth not joyn any Inſtrument with him in the operation which is every where aſcribed to himſelf *without created aſſiſtance, Iſai*, 45. 18. It was not to Angels God ſpake in that Affair; if ſo, Man was made after the image of Angels, if they were Companions with God in that Work: But it is every where ſaid, that *Man was made after the Image of God.* Again, the image wherein Man was created, was that of *dominion* over the lower Creatures, as appears *Verſe* 26. which we find not conferr'd upon

* Jer. 32. 17.

† Gaſſend.

* Gen. 1. 26.

* Iſai. 40. 12, 13, 14.

Gen. 1. 27.

Angels; and it is not likely that *Moſes* ſhould introduce the Angels, as God's Privy Counſel, of whoſe Creation he had not mention'd one ſyllable. *Let us make Man*, rather ſignifies the *Trinity*, and not ſpoken in a Royal ſtyle, as ſome think. Which of the *Jewiſh* Kings writ in the ſtyle, *We*? That was the cuſtom of later times; and we muſt not meaſure the language of Scripture by the ſtyle of *Europe*, of a far later date than the penning the Hiſtory of the Creation. If Angels were his Counſellors in the Creation of the material World, what Inſtrument had he in the Creation of Angels? If his own Wiſdom were the Director, and his own Will the producer of the one; why ſhould we not think, that he acted by his ſole Power in the other? 'Tis concluded by moſt, that the Power of Creation cannot be deriv'd to any Creature, it being a work of Omnipotency: The drawing Something out from Nothing, cannot be communicated without a communication of the Deity it ſelf. The educing things from Nothing exceeds the capacity of any Creature and the Creature is of too feeble a Nature to be elevated to ſo high a degree. 'Tis very unreaſonable to think, that God needed any ſuch aid. If an Inſtrument were neceſſary for God to create the World, then he could not do it without that Inſtrument: If he could not, he were not then All-ſufficient in himſelf, if he depended upon any thing without himſelf, for the production or conſummation of his Works. And it might be enquired, how that Inſtrument came into Being: If it begun to be, and there was a time when it was not, it muſt have its Being from the Power of God; and then, why could not God as well create all things without an Inſtrument, as create that Inſtrument without an Inſtrument? For there was no more Power neceſſary to a producing the whole without Inſtruments, than to produce one Creature without an Inſtrument.

No Creature can in its own nature be an Inſtrument of Creation. If any ſuch Inſtrument were uſed by God, it muſt be elevated in a miraculous and ſupernatural way; and what is ſo an Inſtrument, is in effect no Inſtrument; for it works nothing by its own nature, but from an elevation of a Superiour nature, and beyond its own nature. All the power in the Inſtrument is truly the Power of God, and not the power of the Inſtrument. And therefore what God doth by an Inſtrument, he could do as well without. If you ſhould ſee one apply a Straw to Iron, for the cutting of it, and effect it, you would not call the Straw an Inſtrument in that action, becauſe there was nothing in the nature of the Straw to do it. It was done wholly by ſome other force, which might have done it as well without the Straw as with it. The narrative of the Creation in *Geneſis* removes any Inſtrument from God. The Plants which are preſerved and propagated by the Influence of the *Sun*, were created the day before the *Sun*, *viz.* on the *Third day*, whereas the Light was collected into the body of the *Sun* on the *Fourth day* *; to ſhew, that though the *Plants* do inſtrumentally owe their yearly beauty and preſervation to the *Sun*, yet they did not in any manner owe their Creation to the Inſtrumental heat and vigor of it.

* Gen. 1. 11, 16.

Gen. 1. 3, 5, &c. throughout the whole Chapter.

2. *God created the World by a Word, by a ſimple Act of his Will.* The whole Creation is wrought by a Word; *God ſaid, Let there be Light*; and *God ſaid Let there be a Firmament.* Not that we ſhould underſtand it of a ſenſible Word, but to expreſs the eaſineſs of this operation to God, as eaſie as a word to Man. We muſt underſtand it of a Powerful order of his own Will, which is expreſt by the *Pſalmiſt* in the nature of a Command, *Pſal.* 33. 6. *He ſpake and it was done, he commanded and it ſtood faſt*; and *Pſal.* 148. 5. *He commanded and they were created.* At the ſame inſtant that he willed them to ſtand forth, they did ſtand forth. The efficacious Command of the Creator was the Original of All things; the inſenſibility of Nothing obeyed the act of his Will. Creation is therefore entituled a *Calling*, *Rom.* 4. 17. *He calls thoſe things which are not, as if they were.* To Create is no more with God, than to Call; and what he calls, preſents it ſelf before him in the ſame poſture that he calls it. He did with more eaſe make a World, than we can form a Thought. 'Tis the ſame eaſe to him to create Worlds, as to decree them: There needs no more than a Reſolve to have things wrought at ſuch a time, and they will be, according to his pleaſure. This Will is his Power: *Let there be light*, is the Precept of his Will; and *there was light*, is the effect of his Precept. By a Word was the Matter of the Heavens and the Earth framed: By a Word Things ſeparate themſelves from the rude Maſs into their proper Forms By a Word, Light aſſociates it ſelf into one body, and forms a *Sun*: By a Word are the Heavens, as it were, beſpangled with Stars, and the Earth dreſt with Flowers: By a Word, is the World both ceil'd and floor'd. One act of his Will formed the World, and perfected its beauty. All the variety and ſeveral exploits of his Power were not cauſed by diſtinct Words or Acts of Power. God utter'd not diſtinct Words for diſtinct Species; as let there be an *Elephant*, and let there be a *Lion*; but as he produced thoſe various Creatures out of one Matter, ſo by one Word. By one ſingle Command, thoſe varieties of Creatures, with their Clothing, Ornaments, diſtinct Notes, Qualities, Functions, were brought forth. By one word, all the *Seeds* of the Earth, with their various Virtues. By one Word, all the *Fiſh* of the Sea, and *Fowls* of the Air in their diſtinct Natures, Inſtincts, Colours. By one Word, all the *Beaſts* of the Field, with their varieties. * *Heaven* and *Earth*, *Spiritual* and *Corporeal* Creatures, *Mortal* and *Immortal*, the Greater and the leſs, Viſible and Inviſible, were formed with the ſame eaſe. A Word made the Leaſt, and a Word made the Greateſt. 'Tis as little difficulty to him to produce the higheſt Angel, as the lighteſt Atom. 'Tis enough for the exiſtence of the ſtatelieſt *Cherubim*, for God only to Will his Being. It was enough for the forming and fixing the *Sun*, to will the compacting of Light into one Body. The creation of the Soul of Man is expreſt by *Inſpiration*: To ſhew, that it is as eaſie with God, to create a Rational Soul, as for Man to breath *. Breathing is natural to Man, by a communication of God's goodneſs; and the creation of the Soul is as eaſie to God, by virtue of his Almighty Word. As there was no proportion between Nothing and Being; ſo there was as little proportion between a Word and ſuch glorious Effects. A meer Voice, coming, from an Omnipotent Will, was capable to produce ſuch varieties, which Angels and Men have ſeen in all Ages of the World; and this without wearineſs. What labour is there in Willing, what pain could there be in ſpeaking a word? *Iſai.* 40. 28. *The Creator of the ends of the Earth*

Gen. 1. 11.
Gen. 1. 20.
Gen. 1. 24.
* Auguſt.
Gen. 2. 7.
* Theodoret.

Earth is not weary. And though he be ſaid to *Reſt* after the Creation, 'tis to be meant a Reſt from work, not a Repoſe from wearineſs So great is the Power of God, that without any Matter, without any Inſtruments, he could create many Worlds, and with the ſame eaſe as he made this.

4. I might add alſo the appearance of this Power in the *Inſtantaneous production of things.* The ending of his Word was not only the beginning, but the perfection of every thing he ſpake into Being; not ſeveral Words to ſeveral parts and Members, but one Word, one breath of his Mouth, one act of his Will to the whole ſpecies of the Creatures, and to every Member of each individual. Heaven and Earth were created in a moment, *Six days* went to their diſpoſal; and that comely Order we obſerve in the World was the work of a Week: The Matter was formed as ſoon as God had ſpoken the Word; and in every part of the Creation, as ſoon as God ſpake the Word, *Let it be ſo*, the anſwer immediately is, *It was ſo*; which notes the preſent ſtanding up of the Creature according to the act of his Will: And therefore * *One* obſerves that *Let there be light*, and *there was light*, in the *Hebrew* are the ſame words, without any alteration of Letter or Point, only the conjunctive Particle added יְהִי אוֹר וַיְהִי אוֹר *Let there be light*, and *let there be light*, to ſhew, that the ſame inſtant of the ſpeaking the Divine word, was the appearance of the Creature: So great was the Authority of his Will.

Gen. 1.

* Pearſ. p. 111.

2. We are to ſhew *God's Power in the Government of the World.* As God decreed from Eternity the Creation of things in time, ſo he decreed from Eternity the particular ends of Creatures, and their operations reſpecting thoſe ends. Now as there was need of his Power to execute his Decree of Creation, there is alſo need of his Power to execute his Decree about the manner of Government. * All Government is an act of the Underſtanding, Will and Power. Prudence to deſign belongs to the Underſtanding, the election of the means belongs to the Will, and the accompliſhment of the whole is an act of Power. 'Tis a hard matter to determine which is moſt neceſſary: Wiſdom ſtands in as much need of Power to perfect, as Power doth of Wiſdom to model and draw out a Scheme; though Wiſdom directs, Power muſt effect. Wiſdom and Power are diſtinct things among Men: A poor man in a Cottage may have more Prudence to Adviſe, than a Privy Counſellor; and a Prince more Power to act, than Wiſdom to conduct. A Pilot may direct though he be lame, and cannot climb the Maſts and ſpread the Sails: But God is wanting in nothing; neither in Wiſdom to deſign, nor in Will to determine, nor in Power to accompliſh. His Wiſdom is not feeble, nor his Power fooliſh: A powerleſs Wiſdom could not act what it would, and a fooliſh power would act more than it ſhould. The Power expreſt in his Government, is ſhadow'd forth in the Living Creatures, which are God's Inſtruments in it. 'Tis ſaid, *Every one of them had four faces*; that of a *Man* to ſignify Wiſdom; of a *Lion* and *Eagle*, the ſtrongeſt among Birds, to ſignify their Courage and Strength to perform their Offices.

* Suarez. *Vol.* 1. *lib* 3. *cap.* 10.

Ezek. 1. 10.

This Power is evident in the *Natural*, *Moral*, *Gracious* Government.

There is a *Natural* Providence, which conſiſts in the preſervation of all things, propagation of them by Corruptions and Generations. and in a Co-operation with them in their motions to attain their ends.

Moral Government is of the Hearts and Actions of Men.

Gracious Government, as reſpecting the Church.

I. *His Power is evident in Natural Government.*

1. *In Preſervation.* God is the great *Father* of the World, to nouriſh it as well as create it*. Manand Beaſt would periſh if there were not Herbs for their food; and Herbs would wither and periſh, if the Earth were not watered with fruitful ſhowers. This ſome of the *Heathens* acknowledg'd, in their worſhiping God under the image of an *Ox*, a uſeful Creature, by reaſon of its ſtrength, to which we owe ſo much of our food in Corn. Hence God is ſtyled the *Preſerver of Man and Beaſt.* Hence the *Jews* called God * Place; becauſe he is the ſubſiſtence of all things. By the ſame Word whereby he gave Being to things, he gives to them continuance and duration in Being to ſuch a term of time. As they were *created by his word*, they are *ſupported* by his word, *Heb.* 1. 3. The ſame powerful *Fiat*, *Let the Earth bring forth Graſs*, when the Plants peep'd upon Man out of nothing, is expreſt every Spring, when they begin to lift up their heads from their naked Roots and Winter graves. The reſurrection of Light every Morning, the reviving the pleaſure of all things to the eye; the watering the Vallies from the Mountain Springs; the curbing the natural appetite of the Waters from covering the Earth; every draught that the Beaſts drink, every lodging the Fowls have, every bit of Food for the ſuſtenance of Man and Beaſt, is aſcrib'd to the *Opening of his hand*, the diffuſing of his Power. *Pſal.* 104. 27, *&c.* as much as the firſt Creation of things, and endowing them with their particular nature: Whence the Plants, which are ſo ſerviceable, are called the *Trees of the Lord*, of *Jehovah*, that hath only Being and Power in himſelf. The whole *Pſalm* is but the deſcription of his preſerving as the firſt of *Geneſis* is of his creating Power. 'Tis by this Power Angels have ſo many thouſand years remained in the power of underſtanding and willing. By this Power things diſtant in their natures have been joyned together, a Spiritual Soul and a Duſty Body knit in a Marriage knot. By this Power the Heavenly Bodies have for ſo many Ages roul'd in their Spheres, and the tumultuous Elements have perſiſted in their order: By this hath the Matter of the World been to this day continued, and, as capable of entertaining forms as it was at the firſt Creation. What an amazing ſight would it be to ſee a man hold a Pillar of the *Exchange* upon one of his Fingers? What is this to the Power of God, *who holds the waters in the hollow of his hands, metes out the Heaven with a ſpan, and weighs the Mountains in ſcales, and the Hills in a balance?*

* Daillé, *in* 1 Cor. 10. *p.* 162.

Pſal. 36. 6.

* מָקוֹם

Gen. 1. 11.

Verſe 16.

Iſai 40. 12.

* The preſerving the Earth from the violence of the Sea is a plain inſtance of this Power. How is that raging Element kept pent within thoſe liſts where he firſt lodged it; continuing its courſe in its Channel without overflowing the Earth, and daſhing in pieces the lower part of the Creation? The natural ſituation of the Water is to be above the Earth, becauſe it is lighter; and to be immediately under the Air, becauſe it is heavier than that thinner Element. Who reſtrains this natural quality of it, but that God that firſt formed it? The word of Command at firſt, *Hitherto ſhalt thou go, and no further*, keeps thoſe Waters linkt together in their Den, that they may not ravage the Earth, but be uſeful

* Daillé Melang. *Part* 2. *p.* 157, *&c.*

uſeful to the Inhabitants of it. And when once it finds a gap to enter, what power of Earth can hinder its paſſage? How fruitleſs ſometimes is all the Art of Man to ſend it to its proper Channel, when once it hath ſpread its mighty waves over ſome Countries, and trampled part of the inhabited Earth under its feet? It hath triumphed in its victory, and withſtood all the power of Man to conquer its force. 'Tis only the Power of God that doth bridle it from ſpreading it ſelf over the whole Earth. And that his Power might be more manifeſt, he hath ſet but a weak and ſmall bank againſt it. Though he hath bounded it in ſome places by mighty Rocks, which lift up their heads above it, yet in moſt places by feeble Sand. How often is it ſeen in every ſtormy motion, when the waves boil high, and rowl furiouſly, as if they would ſwallow up all the neighbouring Houſes upon the Shoar; when they come to touch thoſe Sandy limits, they bow their Heads, fall flat, and ſink into the Lap whence they were raiſed; and ſeem to foam with Anger that they can march no further, but muſt ſpit themſelves at ſo weak an obſtacle? Can the Sand be thought to be the cauſe of this? The weakneſs of it gives no footing to ſuch a thought. Who can apprehend that an enraged Army ſhould retire upon the oppoſition of a Straw in an Infants hand? Is it the nature of the Water? Its retirement is againſt the natural quality of it; pour but a little upon the ground, and you always ſee it ſpread it ſelf: No cauſe can be rendred in nature; 'tis a ſtanding Monument of the Power of God in the preſervation of the World, and ought to be more taken notice of by us in this Iſland, ſurrounded with it, than by ſome other Countreys in the World.

1. *We find nothing hath power to preſerve it ſelf.* Doth not every Creature upon Earth require the aſſiſtance of ſome other for its maintenance? *Can the Ruſh grow up without mire; can the Flag grow up without water? Job* 8. 11. Can Man or Beaſt maintain it ſelf without grain from the bowels of the Earth? Would not every Man tumble into the grave, without the aid of other Creatures to nouriſh him? Whence do theſe Creatures receive that virtue of ſupplying him nouriſhment, but from the Sun and Earth; and whence do they derive that virtue, but from the *Creator of all things?* And ſhould he but ſlack his hand, how ſoon would they and all their qualities periſh, and the links of the World fall in pieces and daſh one another into their firſt Chaos and confuſion? All Creatures indeed have an appetite to preſerve themſelves, they have ſome knowledge of the outward Means for their preſervation; ſo have irrational Animals a natural inſtinct, as well as Men have ſome skill to avoid things that are hurtful and apply things that are helpful: But what thing in the World can preſerve it ſelf by an inward influx into its own Being? All things want ſuch a power without God's, *Fiat, Let it be ſo:* Nothing but is deſtitute of ſuch a power for its own preſervation, as much as it is of a power for its own creation. Were there any true Power for ſuch a work, what need of ſo many External helps from things of an inferior Nature to that which is preſerved by them?

No created thing hath a Power to preſerve any decayed Being. Who can lay claim to ſuch a virtue, as to recall a withering Flower to its former beauty, to raiſe the head of a drooping Plant, or put life into a gaſping Worm when it is expiring; or put impair'd Vitals into their former poſture? Not a Man upon Earth, nor an Angel in Heaven, can pretend to ſuch a Virtue; they may be ſpectators, but not Aſſiſters, and are in this caſe *Phyſicians of no value.*

2. 'Tis therefore *the ſame Power preſerves things which at firſt created them.* The Creature doth as much depend upon God in the firſt inſtant of its Being, for its preſervation; as it did when it was nothing, for its production and creation into Being. *As the continuance of a Thought of our Mind depends upon the power of our Mind, as well as the firſt framing of that Thought. There is as little difference between Creating and Preſerving Power, as there is between the power of mine Eye to begin an act of Viſion and continue that act of Viſion; as to caſt my Eye upon an Object, and continue it upon that Object: As the firſt act is cauſed by the Eye, ſo the duration of that act is preſerved by the Eye; ſhut the Eye and the act of Viſion periſhes, divert the Eye from that Object, and that act of Viſion is exchanged for another. And therefore the preſervation of things is commonly called a Continual creation: And certainly it is no leſs, if we underſtand it of a Preſervation by an inward influence into the Being of things. † 'Tis one and the ſame action invariably continued, and obtaining its force every moment: The ſame action whereby he created them of Nothing, and which every moment hath a virtue to produce a thing out of nothing, if it were not yet extant in the World: It remains the ſame without any diminution throughout the whole time wherein any thing doth remain in the World. For all things would return to Nothing, if God did not keep them up in the elevation and ſtate to which he at firſt raiſed them by his Creative Power. *Acts* 17. 28. *In him we live and have our Being.* By him, or by the ſame Power whence we deriv'd our Being, are our lives maintained: As it was his Almighty Power whereby we were after we had been nothing; ſo it is the ſame Power whereby we now are after he hath made us ſomething.

* Leſſius *de Perfect. divin. p.* 69.

† Leſſius *de Sum. bon. p.* 580 581, 582.

Certainly all things have no leſs a dependance on God, than Light upon the Sun, which vaniſheth and hides its head upon the withdrawing of the Sun. And ſhould God ſuſpend that powerful Word whereby he erected the frame of the World, it would ſink down to what it was, before he commanded it to ſtand up. There needs no new act of Power to reduce things to Nothing, but the ceſſation of that Omnipotent influx: When the appointed time ſet them for their Being comes to a period, they faint and bend down their heads to their diſſolution, they return to their elements and periſh, *Pſal.* 104. 29. *Thou hideſt thy face, and they are troubled: thou takeſt away their breath, they die and return to their duſt.* That which was Nothing cannot remain on this ſide Nothing but by the ſame Power that firſt called it out of Nothing. As when God withdrew his concurring Power from the Fire its quality ceas'd to act upon the *Three Children*: ſo if he withdraws his ſuſtaining Power from the Creature, its Nature will ceaſe to be.

2. It appears in *Propagation.* That powerful word, *Increaſe and multiply*, pronounced at the firſt Creation, hath ſpread it ſelf over every part of the World; every Animal in the World, in the formation of every one of them. From *Two of a kind*, how great a number of individuals, and ſingle Gen. 1. 22, 23.

ſingle Creatures have been multiplied, to cover the face of the Earth in their continued ſucceſſions? What a world of Plants ſpring up from the womb of a dry Earth, moiſtned by the influence of a Cloud, and hatcht by the beams of the Sun? How admirable an inſtance of his propagating Power is it, that from a little Seed a maſſy Root ſhould ſtrike into the bowels of the Earth, a tall body and thick branches with Leaves and Flowers of various colours, ſhould break through the ſurface of the Earth, and mount up towards Heaven, when in the Seed you neither ſmell the ſcent, nor ſee any firmneſs of a tree, nor behold any of thoſe Colours which you view in the Flowers that the years produce? A Power not to be imitated by any Creature. How aſtoniſhing is it that a ſmall Seed, whereof many will not amount to the weight of a grain, ſhould ſpread it ſelf into Leaves, Bark, Fruit of a vaſt weight, and multiply it ſelf into Millions of Seeds? What Power is that, that from one Man and Woman hath multiplied Families, and from Families, ſtockt the World with People? Conſider the living Creatures, as formed in the womb of their ſeveral kinds; every one is a wonder of Power. The *Pſalmiſt* inſtanceth in the forming and propagating of Man, *Pſal.* 139. 14. *I am fearfully and wonderfully made, marvellous are thy works.* The forming of the parts diſtinctly in the Womb, the bringing forth into the World every particular Member, is a rowl of wonders, of Power. That ſo fine a ſtructure as the Body of Man ſhould be poliſht in *the lower parts of the Earth*, as he calls the *Womb*, Verſe 15. in ſo ſhort a time, with Members of a various form and uſefulneſs, each labouring in their ſeveral functions. Can any man give an exact account of the manner, *how the Bones do grow in the Womb*: 'Tis unknown to the Father, and no leſs hid from the Mother, and the wiſeſt Men cannot ſearch out the depths of it. 'Tis one of the Secret works of an Omnipotent Power, ſecret in the manner, though open in the effect. So that we muſt aſcribe it to God, as *Job* doth, *Thine hands have made me, and faſhioned me together round about.* Thy hands which formed Heaven, have formed every Part, every Member, and wrought me like a Mighty workman. The Heavens are ſaid to be the *work of God's hands*, and Man is here ſaid to be no leſs. The forming and propagation of Man from that Earthly Matter, is no leſs a wonder of Power, than the ſtructure of the World from a rude and indiſpos'd Matter. * A *Heathen Philoſopher* deſcants elegantly upon it: *Doſt thou underſtand* (my Son) *the forming of Man in the womb; who erected that noble Fabrick; who carv'd the Eyes, the Cryſtal-windows of light, and the conductors of the Body; who bor'd the Noſtrils and Ears, thoſe Loopholes of ſcents and ſounds; who ſtretched out and knit the Sinews and Ligaments for the faſtning of every Member; who caſt the hollow Veins, the Channels of Blood; ſet and ſtrengthned the Bones, the Pillars and Rafters of the Body; who digg'd the Pores, the ſinks to expel the filth; who made the Heart, the repoſitory of the Soul, and formed the Lungs like a Pipe? What Mother, what Father wrought theſe things? No, none but the Almighty God, who made all things according to his pleaſure; 'tis He who propagates this Noble piece from a pile of Duſt. Who is born by his own advice; who gives ſtature, features, ſence, wit, ſtrength, ſpeech, but God?*

Eccleſ. 11. 5.

Job 10. 8.

* Triſmegiſt. *in Serm. Greek in the Temple, p.* 57.

'Tis no leſs a wonder, that a little Infant can live ſo long in a dark Sink, in the midſt of filth without breathing: And the eduction of it out of the Womb is no leſs a wonder, than the forming, increaſe, nouriſhment of it in that Cell. A wonder that the life of the Infant is not the death of the Mother, or the Life of the Mother the death of the Infant. This little Creature, when it ſprings up from ſuch ſmall beginnings by the Power of God, grows up to be one of the Lords of the World, to have a Dominion over the Creatures, and propagates its kind in the ſame manner: All this is unaccountable without having recourſe to the Power of God in the government of the Creatures.

And to add to this wonder, Conſider alſo what multitudes of Formations and Births there are at one time all over the World, in every of which the Finger of God is at work; and it will ſpeak an unwearied Power. 'Tis admirable in one Man, more in a Town of Men, ſtill more in a greater and larger Kingdom, a vaſter world; there is a Birth for every hour in this City, were but 168 born in a week, though the *Weekly Bills* mention more: What is this City to Three Kingdoms; what Three Kingdoms to a populous World? *Ten thouſand and Eighty* will make one for every Minute in the Week; what is this to the weekly propagation in all the Nations of the Univerſe, beſides the generation of all the Living Creatures in that Space, which are the *works of God's fingers* as well as Man? What will be the reſult of this, but the notion of an unconceivable, unwearied Almightineſs, alway active, alway operating?

3. It appears *in the Motions of all Creatures.* All things *live and move in him*; by the ſame Power that Creatures have their Beings, they have their Motions: They have not only a Being by his powerful Command, but they have their minutely Motion by his Powerful concurrence. Nothing can act without the Almighty influx of God, no more than it can exiſt without the Creative Word of God. 'Tis true indeed, the ordering of all Motions to his Holy ends, is an act of Wiſdom; but the Motion it ſelf whereby thoſe Ends are attained, is a work of his Power. Acts 17. 28.

1. *God as the firſt Cauſe hath an influence into the motions of all ſecond Cauſes.* As all the wheels in a Clock are moved in their different motions, by the force and ſtrength of the principal and primary Wheel; if there be any defect in that, or if that ſtand ſtill, all the reſt languiſh and ſtand ſtill the ſame moment All Creatures are his Inſtruments, his Engines, and have no Spirit, but what he gives, and what he aſſiſts. Whatſoever Nature works, God works in Nature, Nature is the Inſtrument, God is the Supporter, Director, Mover of Nature; that what the *Prophet* ſaith in another caſe, may be the language of univerſal Nature, *Lord thou haſt wrought all our works in us,* Iſai 26. 12. They are *our* works ſubjectively, efficiently, as ſecond Cauſes; *God's* works originally, concurrently. The *Sun* moved not in the Valley of *Ajalon* for the ſpace of many hours, in the time of *Joſhua* *; nor did the *Fire* exerciſe its conſuming quality upon the *Three Children*, in *Nebuchadnezzar's* Furnace †: He withdrew not his ſupporting Power from their Being, for then they had vaniſhed, but his influencing Power from their qualities, whereby their motion ceas'd, till he return'd his influential concurrence to them; which evidenceth, that without a perpetual derivation of Divine Power, the *Sun* could not run one ſtride or inch of its race, nor the *Fire* devour one grain of light Chaff, or an inch of Straw.

* Joſh. 10. 13.
† Dan. 3. 25.

Straw. Nothing without his ſuſtaining Power can continue in Being; nothing without his co-working Power can exerciſe one mite of thoſe qualities it is poſſeſſed of. All Creatures are wound up by him, and his hand is conſtantly upon them, to keep them in perpetual motion.

2. Conſider the *variety of motions in a ſingle Creature*. How many motions are there in the vital parts of a Man, or in any other Animal, which a Man knows not, and is unable to number? The renewed motion of the Lungs, the *Syſtoles* and *Diaſtoles*, of the Heart; the Contractions and Dilatations of the Heart, whereby it ſpouts out and takes in Blood; the power of Concoction in the Stomach; the motion of the Blood in the Veins, *&c.* All which were not only ſetled by the Powerful hand of God, but are upheld by the ſame, preſerv'd and influenc'd in every diſtinct motion by that Power that ſtampt them with that Nature. To every one of thoſe there is not only the ſuſtaining Power of God holding up their Natures, but the motive Power of God concurring to every motion; for if we move in him as well as we live in him, then every particle of our motion is exerciſed by his concurring Power, as well as every moment of our Life ſupported by his preſerving Power. What an infinite variety of motions is there in the whole World in univerſal Nature, to all which God concurs, all which he conducts, even the motions of the meaneſt as well as the greateſt Creatures, which demonſtrate the indefatigable power of the Governour. 'Tis an infinite power which doth act in ſo many varieties, whereby the ſoul forms every Thought, the Tongue ſpeaks every Word, the Body exerts every action. What an Infinite power is that which preſides over the birth of all things, concurs with the motion of the Sap in the Tree, Rivers on the Earth, Clouds in the Air, every drop of Rain, fleece of Snow, crack of Thunder? Not the leaſt motion in the World, but is under an actual influence of this Almighty Mover.

And leſt any ſhould ſcruple the concurrence of God to ſo many Varieties of the Creatures motion, as a thing utterly unconceivable; let them conſider the *Sun*, a natural image and ſhadow of the perfections of God; doth not the power of that finite Creature extend it ſelf to various Objects at the ſame moment of time? How many *Inſects* doth it animate, as *Flies*, *&c.* at the ſame moment throughout the World? How many ſeveral *Plants* doth it erect at its appearance in the *Spring*, whoſe Roots lay mourning in the Earth all the foregoing Winter? What multitudes of Spires of *Graſs*, and nobler Flowers, doth it Midwife in the ſame hour? It warms the *Air*, melts the *Blood*, cheriſhes Living Creatures of various kinds in diſtinct places, without tiring: And ſhall the God of this Sun be leſs than his Creature?

3. And ſince I ſpeak of the *Sun*, conſider *the Power of God in the Motion of it*. * The vaſtneſs of the *Sun* is computed to be at the leaſt 166 *Times* bigger than the Earth, and its diſtance from the Earth, ſome tell us to be about *Four Millions of Miles*; whence it follows, that it is whirl'd about the World with that ſwiftneſs, that in the ſpace of an hour it runs a *Million* of Miles, which is as much as if it ſhould move round about the ſurface of the Earth *Fifty times* in one hour; which vaſtneſs exceeds the ſwiftneſs of a Bullet ſhot out of a Canon, which is computed to fly not above *Three mile* in a minute: So that the *Sun* runs further in one Hours ſpace, than a Bullet can in Five thouſand, if it were kept in motion; ſo that if it were near the Earth, the ſwiftneſs of its motion would ſhatter the whole frame of the World, and daſh it in pieces; ſo that the *Pſalmiſt* may well ſay, *It runs a race like a ſtrong Man, Pſal.* 19. 5. What an Incomprehenſible Power is that which hath communicated ſuch a ſtrength and ſwiftneſs to the *Sun*, and doth daily influence its Motion; eſpecially ſince after all thoſe years of its motion wherein one would think it ſhould have ſpent it ſelf, we behold it every day, as vigorous as *Adam* did in *Paradiſe*, without limping, without ſhattering it ſelf, or loſing any thing of its natural Spirits in its unwearied motion. How great muſt that Power be, which hath kept this great Body ſo intire, and thus ſwiftly moves it every day?

Is it not now an Argument of Omnipotence, to keep all the ſtrings of nature in tune; to wind them up to a due pitch for the harmony he intended by them; to keep things that are contrary from that Confuſion they will naturally fall into; to prevent thoſe jarrings which would naturally reſult from their various and ſnarling qualities to preſerve every Being in its true nature; to propagate every kind of Creature; order all the Operations, even the meaneſt of them, when there are ſuch innumerable Varieties?

But let us conſider, that this Power of preſerving things in their ſtation and motion, and the renewing of them is more ſtupendious, than that which we commonly call *Miraculous*.

We call thoſe *Miracles*, which are wrought out of the track of Nature, and contrary to the uſual ſtream and current of it; which Men wonder at, becauſe they ſeldom ſee them, and hear of them as things rarely brought forth in the World; when the truth is, there is more of Power expreſt in the ordinary ſtation and motion of natural cauſes, than in thoſe extraordinary exertings of Power. Is not more Power ſignaliz'd in that whirling motion of the *Sun* every hour for ſo many Ages, than in the ſuſpending of its motion one Day, as it was in the days of *Joſhua*? That Fire ſhould continually ravage and conſume, and greedily ſwallow up every thing that is offer'd to it, ſeems to be the effect of as admirable a Power, as the ſtopping of its appetite a few moments, as in the caſe of the *Three Children*? Is not the riſing of ſome ſmall Seeds from the ground, with a multiplication of their numerous poſterity, an effect of as great a Power, as our Saviours feeding many thouſands with a *few Loaves*, by a ſecret augmentation of them? Is not the Chymical producing ſo pleaſant and delicious a Fruit as the *Grape* from a dry Earth, inſipid Rain, and a ſower Vine, as admirable a token of Divine Power as our Saviours turning *Water* into *Wine*? Is not the cure of Diſeaſes by the application of a ſimple inconſiderable Weed, or a ſlight Infuſion, as wonderful in it ſelf, as the Cure of it by a powerful word? What if it be naturally deſign'd to heal, what is that Nature, who gave that Nature, who maintains that Nature, who conducts it, co-operates with it? Doth it work of it ſelf, and by its own ſtrength; why not then equally in all, in one as well as another? Miracles indeed affect more, becauſe they teſtifie the immediate operation of God without the concurrence of *ſecond Cauſes*; not that there is more of the Power of God ſhining in them, than in the other.

Fauchur, *ſur Act. Vol.* 2. *p.* 47.

*A Lapide, *in* 1 *cap.* Gen. 16. Leſſius, *de Perfect. divin. p.* 90, 91. * Leſſius *de Providen, p.* 633. Voſſ. *de Idol. lib.* 2. *cap.* 2.

II. This

II. This *Power is evident in moral Government.*

1. *In the reſtraint of the malicious Nature of the Devil.* Since *Satan* hath the Power of an Angel, and the Malice of a Devil, what ſafety would there be for our Perſons from deſtruction, what ſecurity for our Goods from rifling, by this inviſible, potent, and envious Spirit, if his Power were not reſtrain'd and his Malice curb'd, by one more Mighty than himſelf? How much doth he envy God the glory of his Creation; and Man the uſe and benefit of it? How deſirous would he be in regard of his paſſion, how able in regard of his ſtrength and ſubtilty, to overthrow or infect all Worſhip, but what was directed to himſelf; to manage all things according to his Luſts, turn all things topſie-turvy, plague the World, burn Cities, Houſes, plunder us of the ſupports of Nature, waſte Kingdoms, *&c.* if he were not held in a Chain, as a ravenous Lion, or a furious wild Horſe, by the Creator and Governour of the World? What remedy could be uſed by Man againſt the activity of this unſeen and ſwift Spirit? The World could not ſubſiſt under his Malice; he would practiſe the ſame things upon all, as he did upon *Job*, when he had got leave from his Governour; turn the Swords of Men into one-another's bowels; ſend Fire from Heaven upon the Fruits of the Earth and the Cattle, intended for the uſe of Man: Raiſe Winds, to ſhake and tear our Houſes upon our Heads; daub our Bodies with ſcabs and boils, and let all the humours in our Blood looſe upon us. He that envied *Adam* a *Paradiſe*, doth envy us the pleaſure of enjoying its Outworks: If we were not deſtroy'd by him, we ſhould live in a continued vexation by *Spectrums* and *Apparitions*, affrighting ſounds and noiſe; as ſome think the *Egyptians* did in that *three days* darkneſs: He would be alway *winnowing* us, as he deſir'd to winnow *Peter*. But God overmaſters his ſtrength, that he cannot move a hairs breadth beyond his Tedder; not only he is unable to touch an upright *Job*, but to lay his Fingers upon one of the Unbelieving *Gadarens* forbidden and filthy *Swine* without ſpecial licence. When he is caſt out of one place, he walks *through dry places ſeeking reſt*, new Objects for his malicious deſigns, *but finding none*, till God lets looſe the reins upon him for a new imployment. Though *Satan*'s power be great, yet God ſuffers him not to tempt as much as his Diabolical appetite would, but as much as Divine Wiſdom thinks fit: And the Divine Power tempers the other's active Malice, and gives the Creature victory, where the Enemy intended ſpoil and captivity. How much ſtronger is God than all the Legions of Hell; as he that holds a *ſtrong man* from effecting his purpoſe, reſtifies more ability than his Adverſary? How doth he lock him up for a *thouſand years* in a Pound, which he cannot leap over? And this reſtraint is wrought partly by blinding the *Devil* in his deſigns, partly by denying him concourſe to his motion: As he hinder'd the active quality of the Fire upon the *Three Children*, by withdrawing his Power, which was neceſſary to the motion of it; and his power is as neceſſary for the motion of the Devil, as for that of any other Creature. Sometimes he makes him to confeſs *him* againſt his own Intereſt, as *Apollo*'s Oracle confeſt †. And tho' when the *Devil* was caſt out of the poſſeſſed perſon, he publickly owned Chriſt to be the *Holy One of God*, *Mark* i. 24. to render him ſuſpected by the People of having commerce with the Unclean Spirits; yet this he could not do without the leave and permiſſion of God, that the power of Chriſt in ſtopping his mouth, and impoſing ſilence upon him, might be evidenced; and that it reaches to the Gates of Hell, as well as to the quieting of Winds and Waves. This is a part of the Strength, as well as the Wiſdom of God, that *the deceived and the deceiver are his.* Wiſdom to defeat, and Power to over-rule his moſt Malicious Deſigns to his own glory.

Luke 22. 31.

Mat 8.31 Luke 11. 24.

Luke 11. 22.

Rev. 20. 2.

† *Cæteros deos ereos eſſe*, &c. Grot. *Verit. rel.* lib. 4.

Job 12.16.

2. *In the reſtraint of the Natural Corruption of Men.* Since the *impetus* of Original Corruptions in the Blood, convey'd down from *Adam* to the Veins of all his Poſterity, and univerſally diffus'd in all Mankind, what wrack and havock would it make in the World, if it were not ſuppreſt by this Divine Power, which preſides over the Hearts of Men? Man is ſo wretched by Nature, that nothing but what is vile and pernicious can drop from him. Man *drinks Iniquity like Water*, being by Nature *abominable and filthy.* He greedily ſwallows all matter for Iniquity, every thing ſuitable to the mire and poyſon in his Nature, and would ſpout it out with all fierceneſs and inſolence. God himſelf gives us the deſcription of Man's Nature, *Gen.* vi. 5. that he hath *not one good imagination at any time.* And the *Apoſtle* from the *Pſalmiſt* dilates and comments upon it: *There is none righteous, no not one; their mouth is full of curſing and bitterneſs, their feet are ſwift to ſhed Blood*, &c. This Corruption is equal to all, natural to all; 'tis not more poyſonous or more fierce in one Man, than in another. The Root of all Men is the ſame; all the Branches therefore do equally poſſeſs the Villanous nature of the Root. No Child of *Adam* can by Natural deſcent be better than *Adam*, or have leſs of baſeneſs and vileneſs, and venom than *Adam*. How fruitful would this loathſom Lake be in all kind of ſteams? What unbridl'd Licentiouſneſs and head-ſtrong Fury would triumph in the World, if the Power of God did not interpoſe it ſelf to lock down the Flood-gates of it? What rooting up of Human Society would there be; how would the World be drench'd in Blood, the number of Malefactors greater than that of Apprehenders and Puniſhers? How would the prints of natural Laws be raz'd out of the Heart, if God ſhould leave Humane Nature to it ſelf? Who can read the *Firſt Chapter* to the *Romans*, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 *Verſes*, without acknowledging this Truth; where there is a *Catalogue* of thoſe Villanies which follow'd upon God's pulling up the Sluces, and letting the malignity of their inward Corruption have its natural courſe? If God did not hold back the fury of Man, his Garden would be over-run, his Vine rooted up; the Inclinations of Men would hurry them to the worſt of Wickedneſs. How great is that Power, that curbs, bridles, or changes, as many head-ſtrong Horſes, at once and every minute, as there are Sons of *Adam* upon the Earth? *The floods lift up their waves; the Lord on high is mightier than the noiſe of many Waters; yea, than the mighty waves of the Sea*; that doth huſh and pen in the turbulent paſſions of Men.

Rom. 3.10, *&c.*

Pſal. 93: 3, 4.

3. *In the ordering and framing the Hearts of men to his own ends.* That muſt be an Omnipotent hand that graſps and contains the Hearts of all Men; the Heart of the meaneſt perſon, as well as of the moſt towring Angel, and turns them as he pleaſes, and makes them ſometime ignorantly, ſometime knowingly, concur to the accompliſhment of his own purpoſes: When the Hearts of Men are ſo numerous, their Thoughts ſo various and different from one another, yet he hath a Key to thoſe Millions of Hearts, and with Infinite Power, guided by as Infinite Wiſdom, he draws them into what Chanels he pleaſes for the gaining his own ends. Though the *Jews* had imbrew'd their hands in the Blood of our *Saviour*, and their Rage was yet reeking hot againſt his Followers, God bridled their Fury in the Churches Infancy, till it had got ſome ſtrength, and caſt

a Terror upon them by the Wonders wrought by the *Apoſtles*, Acts ii. 43. *And fear came upon every Soul, and many wonders and ſigns were done by the Apoſtles.* Was there not the ſame reaſon in the nature of the Works our *Saviour* wrought, to point them to the *Finger of God*, and calm their Rage? Yet did not the Power of God work upon their Paſſions in thoſe Miracles, nor ſtop the impetuouſneſs of the Corruption reſident in their hearts. Yet now thoſe who had the boldneſs to attack the Son of God, and nail him to the Croſs, are frighted at the appearance of *Twelve unarmed Apoſtles*; as the Sea ſeems to be afraid when it approacheth the bounds of the feeble Sand. How did God bend the Hearts of the *Egyptians* to the *Iſraelites*, and turn them to that point, as to lend their moſt coſtly Veſſels, their precious Jewels, and rich Garments, to ſupply thoſe whom they had juſt before tyrannically loaded with * Exod. 3. 21, 22. 1 Chron. 18. 31. their Chains *? When a great part of an Army came upon *Jehoſaphat* to diſpatch him into another World, how doth God in a trice touch their hearts, and move them by a ſecret inſtinct at once to *depart from him?* As if you ſhould ſee a numerous flight of Birds in a moment turn wing another way, by a ſudden and joynt conſent. When he gave *Saul* a Kingdom, he gave him a Spirit fit for Govern- 1 Sam. 10. 9. ment, *and gave him another heart*; and brought the People to ſubmit to his yoke, who a little before wander'd about the Land upon no nobler employment than the *ſeeking of Aſſes*. 'Tis no ſmall remark of the Power of God, to make a number of ſtrong and diſcontented Perſons, and deſirous enough of liberty, to bend their Necks under the yoke of Government, and ſubmit to the Authority of One, and that of their own Nature, often weaker and unwiſer than the moſt of them; and many times an Oppreſſer and Invader of their Rights. Upon Pſal. 144. 2. this account *David* calls God *his Fortreſs, Tower, Shield*; all terms of *Strength*, in ſubduing the People under him. 'Tis the mighty hand of God, that links Princes and People together in the bands of Government. The ſame hand that aſſwageth the Waves of the Sea, ſuppreſſeth the Tumults of the People.

III. It appears *in his Gracious and Judicial Government.*

1. *In his Gracious Government.* In the Delive- 1 Sam. 15. 29. rance of his Church: He is the *ſtrength of Iſrael*, and hath protected his little Flock in the midſt of Wolves; and maintained their ſtanding, when the ſtrongeſt Kingdoms have ſunk, and the beſt joynted States have been broken in pieces. When Judgments have ravag'd Countries, and torn up the Mighty, as a tempeſtuous Wind hath often done the talleſt Trees, which ſeem'd to threaten Heaven with their Tops, and dare the Storm with the depth of their Roots, when the Vine and Roſe-buſhes have ſtood firm, and been ſeen in their beauty next morning. The ſtate of the *Church* hath out-liv'd the moſt flouriſhing Monarchies; when there hath been a mighty knot of Adverſaries againſt her; when the *Bulls of Baſhan* have puſh'd her, and the whole Tribe of the *Dragon* have ſharpen'd their weapons, and edg'd their Malice; when the voice was ſtrong, and the hopes high to raze her foundation even with the ground; when Hell hath roar'd; when the wit of the World hath contriv'd, and the ſtrength of the World hath attempted her ruine; when Decrees have been paſt againſt her, and the powers of the World arm'd for the execution of them; when her Friends have droop'd and skulk'd in corners; when there was no Eye to pity, and no Hand to aſſiſt, help hath come from Heaven; her Enemies have been defeated, Kings have brought Gifts to her, and rear'd her; Tears have been wip'd off her Cheeks, and her very Enemies, by an unſeen Power, have been forc'd to court her, whom before they would have devour'd quick. The Devil and his Armies have ſneak'd into their Den, and the Church hath triumph'd when ſhe hath been upon the brink of the Grave. Thus did God ſend a *mighty Angel* to be the Executioner of *Senacherib*'s Army, and the Protector of *Jeruſalem*, who run his Sword into the hearts of *Eighty thouſand*, when they were ready to ſwallow up his beloved City. 2 Kin. 19. 35.

When the Knife was at the Throats of the *Jews*, in *Shuſhan*, by a powerful hand it was turn'd into Eſth. 8. the Hearts of *their Enemies*. With what an *Outſtretched Arm* were the *Iſraelites* freed from the *Egyptian* Yoke? When *Pharaoh* had muſter'd a great Deut. 4. 34. Army to purſue them, aſſiſted with *Six hundred Chariots* of War, the *Red Sea* obſtructed their paſſage before, and an enraged Enemy trod on their rear; when the fearful *Iſraelites* deſpair'd of Deliverance, and the inſolent *Egyptian* aſſured himſelf of his Revenge; God ſtretches out his irreſiſtible Arm, to defeat the Enemy and aſſiſt his People; he ſtrikes down the Wolves, and preſerves the Flock. God reſtrain'd the *Egyptian* Enmity againſt the *Iſraelites* till they were at the brink of the *Red Sea*, and then lets them follow their humor and purſue the Fugitives, that his power might more glorioufly ſhine forth in the Deliverance of the one, and the Deſtruction of the other. God might have brought *Iſrael* out of *Egypt* in the time of thoſe Kings, that had remember'd the good Service of *Joſeph* to their Country; but he leaves them till the Reign of a cruel Tyrant, ſuffers them to be Slaves, that they might by his ſole Power be Conquerors; which had had no appearance, had there been a willing diſmiſſion of them at the firſt ſummons. *Exod. 9. 16. In very deed, for this cauſe have I raiſed thee up, for to ſhew my Power, and that my Name might be declared throughout all the Earth.* I have permitted thee to riſe up againſt my People, and keep them in Captivity, that thou might'ſt be an occaſion for the manifeſtation of my Power in their reſcue; and whilſt thou art obſtinate to enſlave them, I will ſtretch out my Arm to deliver them, and make my Name famous among the *Gentiles*, in the wrack of thee and thy Hoſt in the *Red Sea*. The Deliverance of the Church hath not been in one Age, or in one part of the World, but God hath ſignaliz'd his Power in all Kingdoms where ſhe hath had a footing: As he hath guided her in all places by one Rule, animated her by one Spirit, ſo he hath protected her by the ſame Arm of Power.

When the *Roman Emperors* bandied all their Force againſt Her, for about *Three hundred years*, they were further from effecting her ruine at the end, than when they firſt attempted it; The Church grew under their Sword, and was hatch'd under the Wings of the *Roman Eagle*, which were ſpread to deſtroy her. The *Ark* was elevated by the Deluge; and the Waters the Devil pour'd out to drown Her, did but ſlime the Earth for a new encreaſe of her. She hath ſometime been beaten down, and, like *Lazarus*, hath ſeem'd to lie in the Grave for ſome days, that the Power of God might be more viſible in her ſudden reſurrection, and lifting up her head above the Throne of her Perſecutors.

2. *In his Judicial Proceedings.* The Deluge was no ſmall Teſtimony of his Power, in opening the Ciſterns of Heaven, and pulling up the Sluces of the Sea. He doth but call for the *waters of the Sea*, and they *pour themſelves upon the face of the Earth*, Amos 9. 6. In *forty days* time, the Waters overtopt Gen. 7. 17, the higheſt Mountains *Fifteen Cubits*; and by the 19, 20.

ſame

ſame Power he afterwards reduc'd the Sea to its proper Channel, as a roaring Lion into his Den. A ſhower of Fire from Heaven upon *Sodom* and the Cities of the Plain, was a ſignal diſplay of his Power, either in creating it on the ſudden for the execution of his Righteous Sentence, or ſending down the Element of Fire, contrary to its Nature (which affects aſcent) for the puniſhment of Rebels againſt the Light of Nature.

How often hath he ruin'd the moſt flouriſhing Monarchies, led Princes away ſpoil'd, and overthrown the Mighty? Which *Job* makes an Argument of his Strength, *Job* 12.13,14. Troops of unknown People, the *Goths* and *Vandals*, broke the *Romans*, a warlike People, and hurl'd down all before them. They could not have had the thought to ſucceed in ſuch an Attempt, unleſs God had given them ſtrength and motion, for the executing his Judicial Vengeance upon the People of his Wrath.

Exod. 8.3. How did he evidence his Power by dawbing the Exod. 7.20 Throne of *Pharaoh*, and his *Chamber* of Preſence, as well as the Houſes of his Subjects, with the ſlime of *Frogs*; turning their *Waters* into *Blood*, and their *Duſt* into *biting Lice*; raiſing his Militia of *Locuſts* againſt them; cauſing a *Three days darkneſs* without ſtopping the motion of the *Sun*: Taking off their *Firſt-born*, the excellency of their ſtrength, in a Night by the ſtroke of the *Angel*'s Sword? He takes off the Chariot Wheels of *Pharaoh*, and preſents him with a Deſtruction, where he expected a Victory: brings thoſe Waves over the Heads of him and his Hoſt, which ſtood firm as Marble walls for the ſafety of his People: The Sea is made to ſwallow them up, that durſt not by the order of their Governour touch the *Iſraelites*. It only ſprinkled the one as a Type of Baptiſm, and drowned the other as an Image of Hell. Thus he made it both a Deliverer and a Revenger, the Inſtrument of an offenſive and Iai. 40, 23, 24. defenſive War. He *brings Princes to nothing, and makes the Judges of the Earth as Vanity*. Great *Monarchs* have by his power been hurl'd from their Thrones, and their Scepters (like *Venice*-Glaſſes) broken before their Faces, and They been advanced that have had the leaſt hopes of Grandure. He hath pluckt up *Cedars* by the Roots, lopt off the Branches, and ſet up a Shrub to grow up in the place; diſſolv'd Rocks, and eſtabliſht Bubbles. *Luke* 1.52. *He hath ſhewed ſtrength with his arm, he hath ſcattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts: he hath put down the mighty from their ſeat, and exalted them of low degree.*

And theſe things he doth magnifie his Power in.

1. *By ordering the Nature of Creatures as he pleaſes.* By reſtraining their force, or guiding their Motions. The reſtraint of the deſtructive qualities of the Creatures argues as great a Power, as the change of their Natures, yea and a greater. The qualities of Creatures may be chang'd by Art and Compoſition; as in the preparing of Medicines; but what but a Divine Power could reſtrain the Operation of the Fire from the *three Children*, while it retain'd its heat and burning quality in *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Furnace? The operation was curb'd while its Nature was preſerved. All Creatures are called his *Hoſt*, becauſe he Marſhals and Ranks them as an Army to ſerve his purpoſes: The whole Scheme of Nature is ready to favour Men when God orders it, and ready to puniſh Men when God commiſſions it. He gave the *Red Sea* but a check, and it obeyed his Voice; *Pſal.* 106.9. *He rebuked the Red Sea alſo, and it was dried up*; the motion of it ceaſed, and the Waters of it were rang'd as defenſive Walls, to ſecure the March of his People: And at the Motion of the Hand of *Moſes*, the Servant of the Lord, the Sea recovered its violence, and the Walls that were framed came tumbling down upon the *Egyptians* heads *. The Creator of Nature is not led by the Neceſſity of Nature: He that ſettled the order of Nature, can change or reſtrain the order of Nature according to his Sovereign pleaſure. The moſt neceſſary and uſeful Creatures he can uſe as Inſtruments of his Vengeance: *Water* is neceſſary to cleanſe, and by that he can deface a World; *Fire* is neceſſary to warn, and by that he can burn a *Sodom*: From the Water he form'd the *Fowl* †, and by that he diſſolves them in the Deluge; Fire or Heat is neceſſary to the Generation of Creatures, and by that he ruins the *Cities of the Plain*. He orders all as he pleaſes, to perform every tittle and *punctilio* of his purpoſe. The *Sea* obſerv'd him ſo exactly, that it drown'd not one *Iſraelite*, nor ſaved one *Egyptian*. Pſal. 106. 11. *There was not* One *of them left*. And to perfect the *Iſraelites* Deliverance, he followed them with Teſtimonies of his Power above the ſtrength of Nature. When they wanted Drink he orders *Moſes* to ſtrike a Rock, and the Rock ſpouts a River, and a Channel is formed for it to attend them in their Journey. When they wanted Bread, he dreaſt *Manna* for them in the Heavens, and ſent it to their Tables in the *Deſart*. When he would declare his Strength, he calls to the *Heavens* to pour down *Righteouſneſs*, and to the *Earth* to bring forth *Salvation*, *Iſa.* 45.8. Though God had created Righteouſneſs or Deliverance for the *Jews* in *Babylon*, yet he calls to the Heavens and the Earth to be aſſiſtant to the deſign of *Cyrus*, whom he had raiſed for that purpoſe, as he ſpeaks in the beginning of the Chapter, *Verſe* 1, 2, 3, 4. As God created Man for a ſupernatural end, and all Creatures for Man as their immediate end; ſo he makes them, according to opportunities, ſubſervient to that ſupernatural end of Man, for which he created him. He that ſpans the Heavens with his Fiſt, can ſhoot all Creatures like an Arrow, to hit what Mark he pleaſes. He that ſpread the Heavens and the Earth by a Word, and can by a Word *fold them* up more eaſily than a Man can a *garment* *, can order the ſtreams of Nature; Cannot he work without Nature as well as with it, beyond Nature, contrary to Nature, that can (as it were) *fillip* Nature with his Finger into that Nothing whence he drew it? Who can caſt down the *Sun* from his Throne †, clap the diſtinguiſht parts of the World together, and make them march in the ſame order to their Confuſion; as they did in their Creation: Who can jumble the whole Frame together, and by a Word diſſolve the Pillars of the World, and make the Fabrick lie in a ruinous heap.

* Exod. 14. 27.

† Gen. 1. 21.

* Heb. 1. 12.

† or Clap the diſtinguiſht parts upon it

2. *In effecting his Purpoſes by ſmall Means*: In making uſe of the meaneſt Creatures. As the Power of God is ſeen in the creation of the ſmalleſt Creatures, and aſſembling ſo many Perfections in the little Body of an Inſect, as an *Ant*, or *Spider*: So his Power is not leſs magnified in the uſe he makes of them. As he magnifies his Wiſdom, by uſing ignorant Inſtruments; ſo he exalts his Power, by employing weak Inſtruments in his Service: The Meanneſs and Imperfection of the Matter ſets off the Excellency of the Workman; ſo the weakneſs of the Inſtrument is a foyl to the Power of the principal Agent. When God hath effected things by Means in the Scripture, he hath uſually brought about his Purpoſes by weak Inſtruments.

Moſes, a Fugitive from *Egypt*, and *Aaron* a Captive in it, are the Inſtruments of the *Iſraelites* Deliverance. By the Motion of *Moſes* his Rod, he works Wonders in the Court of *Pharaoh*, and ſummons up his Judgments againſt him. He brought down *Pharaoh*'s ſtomach for a while by a ſquadron of *Lice* and *Locuſts*, wherein Divine Power was

more seen, than if *Moses* had brought him to his own Articles by a multitude of warlike Troops. The fall of the *Walls of Jericho* by the sound of *Rams-horns*, was a more glorious Character of God's Josh.6.20. Power, than if *Joshuah* had batter'd it down with an hundred of Warlike Engines. Thus the great Army of the *Midianites*, which lay as *Grashoppers* upon the ground, were routed by *Gideon* in the head of *Three hundred Men*; and *Goliah* a Giant, laid level with the ground by *David* a Stripling, by the force of a *Sling*: A *Thousand Philistines* dispatcht out of the World by the *Jaw Bone of an Ass* in the hand of *Sampson*. He can master a stout Nation by an Army of *Locusts*, and render the Teeth of those little Insects as destructive as the Teeth, yea the strongest Teeth, the *Cheek-Teeth* of a great *Li-* * Joel 1.6, *on* *. The *Thunderbolt* which produceth sometimes 7. dreadful effects, is compacted of little Atoms which fly in the Air, small Vapours drawn up by the *Sun*, and mixt with other Sulphurous Matter and petrifying Juice. Nothing is so weak, but his Strength can make victorious; nothing so small, but by his Power he can accomplish his great ends by it; nothing so vile, but his Might can conduct to his Glory; and no Nation so mighty, but he can waste and enfeeble by the meanest Creatures. God is great in Power in the greatest things, and not little in the smallest; his Power in the minutest Creatures which he uses for his Service, surmounts the force of our Understanding.

III. *The Power of God appears in Redemption.* As our *Saviour* is called *the Wisdom of God*, so he is 1 Cor. 1. called *the Power of God*. The Arm of Power was 24. lifted up as high, as the designs of Wisdom were laid deep: As this way of Redemption could not be contriv'd, but by an Infinite Wisdom; so it could not be accomplish'd but by an Infinite Power. None but God could shape such a design, and none but God could effect it. The Divine Power in Temporal Deliverances and Freedom from the Slavery of humane Oppressors, vails to that which glitters in Redemption; whereby the *Devil* is defeated in his designs, stript of his spoils, and yok'd in his strength. The Power of God in Creation requires not those degrees of Admiration, as in Redemption. In Creation the World was erected from Nothing; as there was Nothing to act, so there was Nothing to oppose; no victorious *Devil* was in that to be subdued, no thundring *Law* to be silenced, no *Death* to be conquer'd, no *Transgression* to be pardoned and rooted out, no *Hell* to be shut, no Ignominious Death upon the *Cross* to be suffered. It had been in the nature of the thing, an easier thing to Divine Power to have created a new World, than repair'd a broken, and purified a polluted one. This is the most admirable Work that ever God brought forth in the World, greater than all the Marks of his Power in the first Creation.

And this will appear,

1. *In the Person Redeeming.*
2. *In the publication and propagation of the Doctrine of Redemption.*
3. *In the application of Redemption.*

I. *In the Person Redeeming.*

First, *In his Conception.*

1. *He was conceived by the Holy Ghost in the Womb of the Virgin.* Luke 1.35. *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee.* Which act is expreſt to be the effect of the Infinite Power of God; and it expresses the supernatural manner of the forming the Humanity of our Saviour, and signifies not the Divine Nature of Christ infusing it self into the Womb of the Virgin; for the Angel refers it to the manner of the operation of the Holy Ghost in the producing the Humane Nature of Christ, and not to the Nature assuming that Humanity into union with it self. The *Holy Ghost*, or the Third Person in the Trinity overshadowed the Virgin, and by a Creative act fram'd the Humanity of Christ, and united it to the Divinity. It is therefore expreſt by a word of the same Import with that used *Gen.* 1. 2. *The Spirit moved upon the face of the Waters*, which signifies (as it were) a *Brooding* upon the *Chaos*, shadowing it with his Wings, as *Hens* sit upon their Eggs to form them and hatch them into Animals; or else it is an allusion to the *Cloud which covered the Tent of the Congregation*, when *the Glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle* *. It was not such a Creative * Exod. Act as we call *Immediate*, which is a production out 40. 34. of Nothing; but a Mediate Creation, such as Gods bringing things into form out of the first Matter, which had nothing but an Obediential or Passive dispoſition to whatsoever stamp the Powerful Wisdom of God should imprint upon it. So the Substance of the Virgin had no active, but only a passive disposition to this work: The Matter of the Body was *Earthy*, the Substance of the Virgin, the forming of it was *Heavenly*, the *Holy Ghost* working upon that Matter. And therefore when it is said, that *she was found with Child of the Holy* Mat.1.18. *Ghost*, 'tis to be understood of the efficacy of the *Holy Ghost*, not of the Substance of the Holy Ghost. The Matter was Natural, but the Manner of Conceiving was in a Supernatural way, above the methods of Nature. In reference to the Active Principle the *Redeemer* is called in the Prophecy †, *The* † Isai. 4. 2. *Branch of the Lord*, in regard of the Divine Hand that planted him: In respect to the Passive Principle, *The Fruit of the Earth*, in regard of the Womb that bare him; and therefore said to be *made of a Woman* ‖. That part of the Flesh of the *Virgin* ‖ Gal.4.4. whereof the *Humane Nature* of Christ was made, was refin'd and purifi'd from Corruption by the *overshadowing of the Holy Ghost*, as a skilful Workman separates the *Dross* from the *Gold*: Our Saviour is therefore called, *that Holy thing* *, though *Luk.1.35. born of the Virgin: He was necessarily some way to descend from *Adam*. God indeed might have created his Body out of Nothing, or have formed it (as he did *Adams*) out of the Dust of the Ground: But had he been thus extraordinarily formed, and not propagated from *Adam*; though he had been a Man like one of us, yet he would not have been of *kin* to us, because it would not have been a Nature deriv'd from *Adam*, the common Parent of us all. † It was therefore necessary to an *affinity* with †Amyrald. us, not only that he should have the same *Humane* in Symbol. *Nature*, but that it should flow from the same Prin- p.103,&c. ciple, and be propagated to him. But now, by this way of producing the *Humanity* of Christ of the Substance of the *Virgin*, He was in *Adam* (say some) Corporally, but not Seminally; of the Substance of *Adam* or a Daughter of *Adam*, but not of the Seed of *Adam*: And so he is of the same Nature that had sinned, and so what he did and suffered may be imputed to us; which, had he been created as *Adam*, could not be claim'd in a Legal and Judicial way,

2. *It was not convenient he should be born in the common order of Nature, of Father and Mother*: For whosoever is so born is polluted: *A clean thing cannot be brought out of an unclean* ‖. And ‖ Job 14.4. our Saviour had been uncapable of being a *Redeemer*, had he been tainted with the least Spot of our Nature, but would have stood in need of Redemption himself. Besides, it had been inconsistent with the Holiness of the *Divine Nature*, to have assumed a tainted and defiled Body. He that was the Fountain of *Blessedness* to all Nations, was not

not to be ſubject to the *Curſe of the Law* for himſelf; which he would have been, had he been conceiv'd in an ordinary way. He that was to overturn the *Devil*'s Empire, was not to be any way captive under the Devil's power, as a Creature under the Curſe; nor could he be able to *break the Serpent's head*, had he been tainted with the Serpent's breath.

Again, ſuppoſing that Almighty God, by his Divine Power, had ſo order'd the matter, and ſo perfectly ſanctified an *Earthly* Father and Mother from all Original Spot, that the Humane Nature might have been tranſmitted Immaculate to him, as well as the *Holy Ghoſt* did purge that part of the Fleſh of the *Virgin* of which the Body of Chriſt was made; yet it was not convenient that that Perſon, that was *God bleſſed for ever* as well as Man, partaking of our Nature, ſhould have a Conception in the ſame manner as ours, but different, and in ſome meaſure conformable to the Infinite Dignity of his Perſon; which could not have been, had not a Supernatural Power and a Divine Perſon been concern'd as an active Principle in it. Beſides, ſuch a Birth had not been agreeable to the firſt Promiſe, Gen. 1. 15. which calls him *The Seed of the Woman*, not of the Man; and ſo the Veracity of God had ſuffer'd ſome detriment: The *ſeed of the woman* only, is ſet in oppoſition to the *ſeed of the Serpent*.

3. *By this manner of Conception, the Holineſs of his Nature is ſecur'd, and his fitneſs for his Office is aſſur'd to us.* 'Tis now a pure and unpolluted Humanity that is the Temple and Tabernacle of the Divinity: The *Fulneſs of the Godhead dwells in him bodily*, and dwells in him Holily. His Humanity is ſupernaturaliz'd, and elevated by the activity of the *Holy Ghoſt*, hatching the Fleſh of the *Virgin* into Man, as the *Chaos* into a World. Though we read of ſome *ſanctified from the Womb*, it was not a pure and perfect Holineſs; it was like the Light of Fire mixed with Smoak, an infus'd Holineſs accompanied with a Natural taint: But the Holineſs of the Redeemer by this Conception, is like the Light of the *Sun*, pure and without ſpot. The Spirit of *Holineſs* ſupplying the place of a Father in a way of Creation.

His Fitneſs for his Office is alſo aſſur'd to us; for being born of the *Virgin*, one of our Nature, but conceived by the *Spirit*, a Divine Perſon, the guilt of our Sins may be imputed to him becauſe of our Nature, without the Stain of Sin inherent in him; becauſe of his Supernatural Conception he is capable, as one of Kin to us, to bear our *Curſe* without being toucht by our Taint. By this means our ſinful Nature is aſſum'd without Sin in that Nature which was aſſum'd by him: Fleſh he hath, but not *Sinful fleſh*, Rom. 8. 3. Real Fleſh, but not really Sinful, only by way of Imputation.

Nothing but the Power of God is evident in this whole Work: By the ordinary Laws and courſe of Nature a Virgin could not bear a Son; nothing but a Supernatural and Almighty Grace could intervene to make ſo holy and perfect a Conjunction. * The generation of others, in an ordinary way, is by Male and Female: But the *Virgin* is *overſhadow'd by the Spirit*, and *Power of the Higheſt*. Man only is the product of Natural generation; this which is born of the *Virgin* is the *Holy thing*, the *Son of God*. In other generations a Rational Soul is only united to a Material Body: But in *this*, the Divine Nature is united with the Humane in one Perſon by an indiſſoluble Union.

*Amyraut. ſur Timote, p. 292.

II. The Second Act of Power in the Perſon Redeeming, is *the Union of the two Natures, the Divine and Humane*. The deſigning indeed of this was an act of Wiſdom; but the accompliſhing it was an act of Power.

1. *There is in this Redeeming Perſon a Union of two Natures.* He is God and Man in one Perſon. *Heb.* 1. 8, 9. *Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever: God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the Oil of Gladneſs*, &c. The Son is called *God*, having a *Throne for ever and ever*, and the Unction ſpeaks him *Man*: The Godhead cannot be Anointed, nor hath any Fellows. Humanity and Divinity are aſcrib'd to him, *Rom.* 1. 3, 4. *He was of the Seed of* David *according to the Fleſh, and declared to be the Son of God by his Reſurrection from the dead.* The Divinity and Humanity are both Prophetically joyn'd, *Zach.* 12. 10. *I will pour out my Spirit*; the pouring forth the Spirit is an Act only of Divine Grace and Power. *And they ſhall look upon me whom they have pierced*; the ſame Perſon pours forth the Spirit as God, and is pierced as Man. *The Word was made Fleſh*, John 1. 14. Word from Eternity was made Fleſh in time, Word and Fleſh in one Perſon; a great God, and a little Infant.

2. *The Terms of this Union were infinitely diſtant.* What greater diſtance can there be than between the Deity and Humanity, between the Creator and a Creature? Can you imagine the diſtance between Eternity and Time, Infinite Power and Miſerable Infirmity, an Immortal Spirit and Dying Fleſh, the Higheſt Being and Nothing? yet theſe are eſpous'd. A God of unmixt Bleſſedneſs is linkt perſonally with a Man of perpetual Sorrows: Life uncapable to Die, joyn'd to a Body in that Oeconomy uncapable to live without dying firſt; Infinite Purity, and a reputed Sinner; Eternal Bleſſedneſs with a *Curſed Nature*; Almightineſs and Weakneſs, Omniſcience and Ignorance, Immutability and Changeableneſs, Incomprehenſibleneſs and Comprehenſibility; that which cannot be comprehended, and that which can be comprehended; that which is entirely Independent, and that which is totally Dependant; the Creator forming all things, and the Creature made to meet together in a Perſonal Union, *the Word made Fleſh* †, the Eternal Son, the *Seed of Abraham* ‖. What more miraculous than for God to become Man, and Man to become God? That a Perſon poſſeſſed of all the Perfections of the Godhead, ſhould inherit all the Imperfections of the Manhood in one Perſon, Sin only excepted: A Holineſs incapable of ſinning to be made Sin; *God bleſſed for ever*, taking the properties of Humane Nature, and Humane Nature admitted to a *Union* with the properties of the *Creator*: The *Fulneſs* of the Deity and the Emptineſs of Man united together *; not by a ſhining of the Deity upon the Humanity, as the Light of the *Sun* upon the *Earth*, but by an inhabitation or indwelling of the Deity in the Humanity. Was there not need of an Infinite Power to bring together Terms ſo far aſunder, to elevate the Humanity to be capable of, and diſpoſed for a conjunction with the Deity? If a clod of *Earth* ſhould be advanced to, and united with the Body of the *Sun*, ſuch an advance would evidence it ſelf to be a work of Almighty Power: The Clod hath nothing in its own nature to render it ſo glorious, no power to climb up to ſo high a dignity: How little would ſuch a Union be, to that we are ſpeaking of? Nothing leſs than an incomprehenſible Power could effect, what an Incomprehenſible Wiſdom did project in this Affair.

† John 1. 14.
‖ Heb. 2. 16.
*Coloſ. 2. 9

3. Eſpecially *ſince the Union is ſo ſtrait.* 'Tis not ſuch a *Union* as is between a Man and his Houſe he dwells in, whence he goes out and to which he returns, without any alteration of himſelf or his Houſe; nor ſuch a *Union* as is between a Man and his Garment, which both communicate and receive warmth from one another; nor ſuch as is between an Artificer and his Inſtrument wherewith he works; nor ſuch a *Union* as one Friend hath with another: All theſe are diſtant things, not one in Nature,

Nature, but have diſtinct ſubſiſtences. Two Friends, tho' united by love, are diſtinct Perſons; a Man and his Cloaths, an Artificer and his Inſtruments, have diſtinct ſubſiſtences: But the Humanity of Chriſt hath no ſubſiſtence, but in the Perſon of Chriſt.

† Leſſius *de Perf. divin. lib.* 12. *cap.* 4. *p.* 104.

† The ſtraitneſs of this *Union* is expreſt, and may be ſomewhat conceiv'd, by the union of *Fire* with *Iron*; [Fire pierceth through all the parts of Iron, it unites it ſelf with every Particle, beſtows a light, heat, purity upon all of it; you cannot diſtinguiſh the Iron from the Fire, or the Fire from the Iron, yet they are diſtinct Natures: So the *Deity* is united to the whole *Humanity*, ſeaſons it, and beſtows an excellency upon it, yet the Natures ſtill remain diſtinct. And as during that union of *Fire* with *Iron*, the Iron is uncapable of ruſt or blackneſs; ſo is the *Humanity* uncapable of Sin: And as the operation of Fire is attributed to the red-hot Iron, (as the Iron may be ſaid to heat, burn, and the Fire may be ſaid to cut and pierce) yet the imperfections of the Iron do not affect the Fire; ſo in this Myſtery, thoſe things which belong to the *Divinity* are aſcribed to the *Humanity*, and thoſe things which belong to the *Humanity* are aſcribed to the *Divinity*, in regard of the Perſon in whom thoſe Natures are united; yet the Imperfections of the *Humanity* do not hurt the *Divinity*.] The Divinity of Chriſt is as really united with the Humanity, as the *Soul* with the *Body*: The Perſon was one, though the Natures were two, ſo united, that the Sufferings of the Humane Nature were the Sufferings of that Perſon, and the dignity of the Divine was imputed to the Humane, by reaſon of that Unity of both in one Perſon: Hence the Blood of the Humane Nature is ſaid to be the *Blood of God* †. * All things aſcrib'd to the Son of God, may be aſcrib'd to this Man; and the things aſcrib'd to this Man, may be aſcrib'd to the Son of God, as this Man is the Son of God Eternal, Almighty: And it may be ſaid, *God ſuffered*, was *Crucify'd*, *&c.* for the Perſon of Chriſt is but *one*, moſt ſimple; the *Perſon* ſuffer'd, that was *God* and *Man* united, making One Perſon.

† Acts 20. 28.

* Leſſius *p.* 103, 104

4. And tho' the Union be ſo ſtrait, *yet without confuſion of the Natures, or change of them into one another.* * The *two* Natures of Chriſt are not mixed, as Liquors that incorporate with one another when they are poured into a Veſſel; the *Divine Nature* is not turn'd into the *Humane*, nor the *Humane* into the *Divine*, one Nature doth not ſwallow up another and make a *third* Nature, diſtinct from each of them. The Deity is not turned into the Humanity, as *Air* (which is next to a Spirit) may be thickned and turned into *Water*, and Water may be rarified into Air by the power of *Heat* boyling it. The *Deity* cannot be chang'd, becauſe the Nature of it is to be unchangeable: It would not be a Deity, if it were Mortal, and capable of Suffering. The *Humanity* is not chang'd into the *Deity*, for then Chriſt could not have been a Sufferer: If the *Humanity* had been ſwallow'd up into the *Deity*, it had loſt its own diſtinct Nature, and put on the Nature of the Deity, and conſequently been uncapable of Suffering: *Finite* can never by any mixture be chang'd into *Infinite*, nor *Infinite* into *Finite*.

* Leſſius, *ut antea*, *p.* 103, 104. Amyrald. Irenic. *p.* 284.

This Union in this regard may be reſembled to the Union of *Light* and *Air*, which are ſtrictly joyn'd; for the Light paſſes through all parts of the Air, but they are not confounded, but remain in their diſtinct Eſſences as before the Union, without the leaſt confuſion with one another. * The Divine Nature remains as it was before the Union, entire in it ſelf, only the Divine Perſon aſſumes another Nature to himſelf. The Humane Nature remains, as it would have done had it exiſted ſeparately from the Λόγος, except that then it would have had a proper ſubſiſtence by it ſelf, which now it borrows from its union with the Λόγος, or *Word*; but that doth not belong to the Conſtitution of its Nature.

*Amyrald. Iren. *p.* 282.

Now let us *conſider*, what a wonder of Power is all this: The knitting a Noble Soul to a Body of Clay was not ſo great an exploit of Almightineſs, as the eſpouſing Infinite and Finite together. Man is further diſtant from God, than Man from Nothing. What a wonder is it, that *two* Natures infinitely diſtant, ſhould be more intimately united than any thing in the World, and yet without any confuſion? That the ſame Perſon ſhould have both a Glory and a Grief; an infinite Joy in the Deity, and an unexpreſſible Sorrow in the Humanity? That a God upon a Throne ſhould be an Infant in a Cradle; the Thundering Creator be a weeping Babe, and a ſuffering Man, are ſuch expreſſions of mighty Power, as well as condeſcending Love, that they aſtoniſh Men upon Earth, and Angels in Heaven.

3. *Power was evident in the progreſs of his Life.* In the Miracles he wrought; How often did he expel malicious and powerful Devils from their habitations, hurl them from their Thrones, and make them fall from Heaven *like Lightning*? How many Wonders were wrought by his bare Word, or a ſingle Touch? *Sight* reſtor'd to the Blind, and *Hearing* to the Deaf; *Palſie* Members reſtor'd to the exerciſe of their functions; a diſmiſs given to many deplorable Maladies, impure *Leproſies* chas'd from the Perſons they had infected, and *Bodies* beginning to putrifie rais'd from the Grave. But the mightieſt Argument of Power was his *Patience*. That he who was in his Divine Nature elevated above the World, ſhould ſo long continue upon a Dung-hill, endure the *contradiction of Sinners* againſt himſelf, be patiently ſubject to the Reproaches and Indignities of Men, without diſplaying that Juſtice which was eſſential to the Deity, and in eſpecial manner daily merited by their provoking Crimes. The Patience of Man under great Affronts, is a greater Argument of Power, than the Brawneſs of his Arm: A Strength employ'd in the revenge of every Injury, ſignifies a greater infirmity in the Soul than there can be ability in the Body.

4. *Divine Power was apparent in his Reſurrection.* The unlocking the Belly of the *Whale* for the deliverance of *Jonas*; the reſcue of *Daniel* from the Den of *Lions*; and the reſtraining the *Fire* from burning the *Three Children*, were ſignal declarations of his Power, and types of the Reſurrection of our Saviour. But what are thoſe to that which was repreſented by them? That was a power over Natural Cauſes, a curbing of Beaſts, and reſtraining of Elements; but in the Reſurrection of Chriſt, God exercis'd a power over himſelf, and quench'd the Flames of his own *Wrath*, hotter than Millions of *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Furnaces; unlock'd the Priſon doors, wherein the *Curſes* of the Law had lodg'd our Saviour, ſtronger than the Belly and Ribs of a *Leviathan*. In the reſcue of *Daniel* and *Jonas*, God overpower'd Beaſts, and in this tore up the ſtrength of the Old Serpent, and pluck'd the Scepter from the hand of the Enemy of Mankind. The Work of *Reſurrection* indeed, conſider'd in it ſelf, requires the efficacy of an Almighty Power: Neither Man nor Angel can create new diſpoſitions in a dead Body, to render it capable of lodging a Spiritual Soul; nor can they reſtore a diſlodged Soul, by their own power, to ſuch a Body. The reſtoring a dead Body to life requires an Infinite Power, as well as the Creation of the World: But there was in the Reſurrection of Chriſt ſomething more difficult than this; while he lay in the Grave he was under the *Curſe* of the Law, under the execution of that dread-

dreadful Sentence, *Thou ſhalt die the death.* His *Reſurrection* was not only the re-tying the Marriage Knot between his Soul and Body, or the rouling the *Stone* from the Grave; but a taking off an infinite weight, the *Sin* of Mankind, which lay upon him: So vaſt a weight could not be removed without the ſtrength of an Almighty Arm. 'Tis therefore aſcribed, not to an ordinary operation, but an operation †Rom. 1. 4. with *Power* †, and ſuch a Power wherein the Glory of the Father did appear. *Rom.* 6. 4. *Rais'd up from the dead by the glory of the Father*, that is, the glorious Power of God. As the Eternal Generation is ſtupendous, ſo is his Reſurrection, which is called, a *new begetting* of him, *Acts* 13. 33. 'Tis a wonder of Power, that the Divine and Human Nature ſhould be joyn'd; and no leſs wonder, that his Perſon ſhould ſurmount and riſe up from the Curſe of God, under which he lay. The *Apoſtle* therefore adds one expreſſion to another, and heaps up a variety, ſignifying thereby that one was not enough to repreſent it, *Eph.* 1. 19. *Exceeding greatneſs of power, and working of mighty power, which he wrought in Chriſt when he raiſed him from the dead.* It was an *hyperbole* of Power, the excellency of the Mightineſs of his Strength; the loftineſs of the expreſſions ſeems to come ſhort of the apprehenſion he had of it in his Soul.

Secondly, This Power appears *in the Publication and Propagation of the Doctrin of Redemption.*

The Divine Power will appear, if you conſider,

1. The *Nature of the Doctrin.*
2. The *Inſtruments employ'd in it.*
3. The *Means they us'd to propagate it.*
4. The *Succeſs they had.*

I. The *Nature of the Doctrin.*

1. *It was contrary to the common received Reaſon of the World.* The *Philoſophers*, the Maſters of Knowledge among the *Gentiles*, had Maxims of a different ſtamp from it. Tho' they agreed in the Being of a God, yet their Notions of his Nature were confus'd and embroil'd with many Errors; the Unity of God was not commonly aſſented unto: They had multiplied Deities according to the Fancies they had receiv'd from ſome of a more elevated Wit and refin'd Brain, than others. Tho' they had ſome notion of Mediators, yet they placed in thoſe Seats, their publick Benefactors; Men that had been uſeful to the World, or their particular Countries, in imparting to them ſome profitable Invention. To diſcard thoſe, was to charge themſelves with Ingratitude to them, from whom they had receiv'd ſignal benefits, and to whoſe Mediation, Conduct, or Protection, they aſcrib'd all the Succeſs they had been bleſſed with in their ſeveral Provinces; and to charge themſelves with Folly, for rendring an Honour and Worſhip to them ſo long. Could the Doctrine of a Crucified Mediator, whom they had never ſeen, that had conquer'd no Country for them, never enlarg'd their Territories, brought to light no new profitable Invention for the encreaſe of their Earthly welfare, as the reſt had done, be thought ſufficient to balance ſo many of their reputed *Heroes?* How ignorant were they in the foundations of the True Religion? The belief of a Providence was ſtaggering; nor had they a true proſpect of the nature of Virtue and Vice: Yet they had a fond Opinion of the ſtrength of their own Reaſon, and the Maxims that had been handed * 1 Tim. 6. 20. down to them by their Predeceſſors, which * *Paul* entitles, a *Science falſly ſo called*, either meant of the *Philoſophers* or the *Gnoſticks*. They preſum'd that they were able to meaſure all things by their own Reaſon; whence, when the *Apoſtle* came to preach the Doctrine of the Goſpel at *Athens*, the great School of Reaſon in that Age, they gave him no better a Title than that of a *Babler*, *Acts* 17. 18. and *openly mocked him*, Verſ. 32. a *Seed-gatherer* *, one that hath no more Brain or Senſe than a Fellow that gathers up Seeds that are ſpilt in a Market, or one that hath a vain and empty ſound without Senſe or Reaſon, like a fooliſh Mountebank; ſo ſlightly did thoſe Rationaliſts of the World think of the Wiſdom of Heaven. That the Son of God ſhould veil himſelf in a mortal Body, and ſuffer a diſgraceful Death in it, were things above the ken of Reaſon. * Σπερμολόγος.

Beſides, the World had a general diſeſteem of the Religion of the *Jews*, and were prejudic'd againſt any thing that came from them. Whence the *Romans* that uſed to incorporate the gods of other conquer'd Nations in their *Capitol*, never moved to have the God of *Iſrael* worſhip'd among them. Again, they might argue againſt it with much fleſhly Reaſon: Here is a *Crucified God* preached by a company of mean and ignorant perſons; what Reaſon can we have to entertain this Doctrine, ſince the *Jews*, who (as they tell us) had the *Prophecies* of him, did not acknowledge him? Surely, had there been ſuch Predictions, they would not have Crucified, but Crowned their King, and expected from him the Conqueſt of the Earth under their power? what reaſon have we to entertain him, whom his own Nation (among whom he lived, with whom he converſed) ſo unanimouſly, by the Vote of the Rulers as well as the Rout, rejected? It was impoſſible to conquer Minds poſſeſſed with ſo many Errors, and applauding themſelves in their own Reaſon, and to render them capable of receiving Revealed Truths without the influence of a Divine Power.

2. *It was contrary to the Cuſtoms of the World.* The ſtrength of Cuſtom in moſt Men ſurmounts the ſtrength of Reaſon, and Men commonly are ſo wedded to it, that they will be ſooner divorc'd from any thing, than the Modes and Patterns receiv'd from their Anceſtors. The endeavouring to change Cuſtoms of an ancient ſtanding, hath begotten Tumults and furious Mutinies among Nations, though the change would have been much for their advantage.

This *Doctrine* ſtruck at the Root of the Religion of the World, and the Ceremonies wherein they had been educated from their Infancy, deliver'd to them from their Anceſtors, confirm'd by the cuſtomary Obſervance of many Ages, rooted in their Minds, and eſtabliſh'd by their Laws. *Acts* 18. 13. *This Fellow perſwadeth us to worſhip God contrary to the Law*, againſt Cuſtoms, to which they aſcrib'd the happineſs of their States, and the proſperity of their People; and would put in the place of this Religion they would aboliſh, a new one inſtituted by a man whom the *Jews* had condemn'd, and put to death upon a Croſs, as an Impoſtor, Blaſphemer, and Seditious perſon.

It was a *Doctrine* that would change the Cuſtoms of the *Jews*, who were entruſted with the *Oracles of God.* It would bury for ever their Ceremonial Rites deliver'd to them by *Moſes* from that God, who had with a mighty hand brought them out of *Egypt*, conſecrated their Law with *Thunders* and *Lightnings* from *Mount Sinai*, at the time of its publication, back'd it with ſevere Sanctions, confirm'd it by many *Miracles*, both in the *Wilderneſs* and their *Canaan*, and had continued it for ſo many *Hundred Years.* They could not but remember how they had been ravag'd by other Nations, and Judgments ſent upon them when they neglected and ſlighted it; and with what great Succeſs they were follow'd when they valu'd and obſerv'd it; and how they had abhorred the Author of this new Religion, who had ſpoken ſlightly of their Traditions, till they put him

him to death with Infamy. Was it an eaſie matter to divorce them from that Worſhip, upon which were entail'd (as they imagin'd) their *Peace*, *Plenty*, and *Glory*, things of the deareſt regard with Mankind? The *Jews* were no leſs devoted to their *Ceremonial Traditions*, than the *Heathen* were to their *Vain Superſtitions*.

This Doctrine of the *Goſpel* was of that nature, that the ſtate of Religion all over the Earth muſt be overturned by it; the Wiſdom of the *Greeks* muſt vail to it, the Idolatry of the People muſt ſtoop to it, and the prophane Cuſtoms of Men muſt moulder under the weight of it. Was it an eaſie matter for the Pride of Nature to deny a cuſtomary Wiſdom, to entertain a new Doctrine againſt the Authority of their Anceſtors; to inſcribe *Folly* upon that which hath made them admir'd by the reſt of the World? Nothing can be of greater eſteem with Men, than the Credit of their *Law-givers* and *Founders*, the Religion of their Fathers, and Proſperity of themſelves; hence the Minds of Men were ſharpned againſt it. The *Greeks*, the wiſeſt Nation, ſlighted it as Fooliſh; the *Jews*, the Religious Nation, ſtumbled at it, as contrary to the received Interpretations of Ancient Prophecies and carnal Conceits of an *Earthly Glory*. The dimmeſt Eye may behold the difficulty to change Cuſtom, a Second Nature: 'Tis as hard as to change a *Wolf* into a *Lamb*, to level a *Mountain*, ſtop the courſe of the *Sun*, or change the Inhabitants of *Africk* into the colour of *Europe*. *Cuſtom* dips Men in as durable a Dye, as *Nature*. The difficulties of carrying it on againſt the Divine Religion of the *Jew*, and rooted Cuſtoms of the *Gentiles*, were unconquerable by any but an Almighty Power. And in this the Power of God hath appeared wonderfully.

3. *It was contrary to the Senſuality of the World, and the Luſts of the Fleſh.* How much the *Gentiles* were over-grown with baſe and unworthy Luſts at the time of the Publication of the Goſpel, needs no other Memento than the *Apoſtles* Diſcourſe, *Rom.* 1. As there was no Error but prevail'd upon their Minds, ſo there was no brutiſh Affection but was wedded to their Hearts. The *Doctrine* propoſed to them was not eaſie; it flatter'd not the Senſe, but checked the Stream of Nature. It thundred down thoſe three great Engines whereby the Devil had ſubdued the World to himſelf, *the luſt of the Fleſh, the luſt of the Eye, and the pride of Life*. Not only the moſt ſordid Affections of the Fleſh, but the more refin'd Gratifications of the Mind: It ſtript Nature both of *Devil* and *Man*; of what was commonly eſteem'd great and vertuous. That which was the Root of their Fame, and the ſatisfaction of their Ambition, was ſtruck at by this Ax of the Goſpel. The firſt Article of it ordered them to deny themſelves, not to preſume upon their own worth; to lay their Underſtandings and Wills at the Foot of the Croſs, and reſign them up to one newly crucified at *Jeruſalem*: Honours and Wealth were to be deſpis'd, Fleſh to be tam'd, the Croſs to be born, Enemies to be loved, Revenge not to be ſatisfied, Blood to be ſpilt, and Torments to be endured for the Honour of One they never ſaw, nor ever before heard of; who was preached with the Circumſtances of a ſhameful Death, enough to affright them from the Entertainment: And the Report of a Reſurrection and glorious Aſcenſion were things never heard of by them before, and unknown in the World, that would not eaſily enter into the belief of Men: The Croſs, Diſgrace, Self-denial, were only diſcours'd of in order to the attainment of an inviſible World, and an unſeen reward which none of their Predeceſſors ever returned to acquaint them with; a patient Death, contrary to the pride of Nature, was publiſht as the way to Happineſs and a bleſſed Immortality: The deareſt Luſts were to be pierced to death for the honour of this new Lord. Other Religions brought Wealth and Honour; this ſtruck them off from ſuch expectations, and preſented them with no Promiſe of any thing in this Life, but a proſpect of Miſery: except thoſe inward Conſolations to which before they had been utter Strangers, and had never experimented. It made them to depend not upon themſelves, but upon the ſole Grace of God. It decried all natural, all moral Idolatry, things as dear to Men as the Apple of their Eyes. It deſpoil'd them of whatſoever the Mind, Will, and Affections of Men, naturally lay claim to, and glory in. It pulled Self up by the Roots, unman'd carnal Man, and debas'd the Principle of Honour and Self-ſatisfaction, which the World counted at that time noble and brave. In a word, it took them off from themſelves, to act like Creatures of God's framing; to know no more than he would admit them, and do no more than he did command them. How difficult muſt it needs be to reduce Men, that plac'd all their happineſs in the Pleaſures of this Life, from their pompous Idolatry and brutiſh Affections, to this mortifying Religion? What might the World ſay? Here is a Doctrine will render us a company of puling Animals: Farewel Generoſity, Bravery, Senſe of Honour, Courage in enlarging the Bounds of our Country, for an ardent Charity to the bittereſt of our Enemies. Here's a Religion will ruſt our Swords, Canker our Arms, diſpirit what we have hitherto called Vertue, and annihilate what hath been eſteem'd worthy and comely among Mankind. Muſt we change Conqueſt for Suffering, the increaſe of our Reputation for Self-denial, the natural Sentiment of Self-preſervation for effecting a dreadful Death? How impoſſible was it that a Crucified Lord, and a Crucifying Doctrine, ſhould be received in the World without the mighty Operation of a Divine Power upon the Hearts of Men? And in this alſo the Almighty Power of God did notably ſhine forth.

II. Divine Power appear'd *in the Inſtruments employ'd for the publiſhing and propagating the Goſpel*. Who were

1. *Mean and worthleſs in themſelves*. Not noble and dignified with an Earthly Grandeur, but of a low Condition, meanly bred: So far from any ſplendid Eſtates, that they poſſeſſed nothing but their Nets; without any Credit and Reputation in the World; without Comlineſs and Strength; as unfit to ſubdue the World by Preaching, as an Army of Hares were to conquer it by War. Not learned Doctors bred up at the Feet of the Famous *Rabbins* at *Jeruſalem*, whom *Paul* calls *the Princes of the World* *; nor nurs'd up in the School of *Athens*, under the *Philoſophers* and Orators of that time: Not the Wiſe-men of *Greece*, but the Fiſhermen of *Galilee*; naturally skill'd in no Language but their own, and no more exact in that than thoſe of the ſame Condition in any other Nation: Ignorant of every thing but the Language of their Lakes and their Fiſhing Trade; except *Paul*, call'd ſometime after the reſt to that employment: And after the deſcent of the Spirit, they were ignorant and unlearned in every thing but the Doctrine they were commanded to publiſh; for the Council before whom they were ſummon'd, prov'd them to be ſo, which increaſed their wonder at them, *Acts* 4. 13. Had it been publiſht by a Voice from Heaven, That *Twelve poor Men*, taken out of Boats and Creeks, without any help of Learning, ſhould conquer the World to the Croſs, it might have been thought an Illuſion againſt all the Reaſon of Men; yet

* 1 Cor. 2. 8.

yet we know it was undertaken and accompliſh'd by them. They publiſh'd this Doctrine in *Jeruſalem*, and quickly ſpread it over the greateſt part of the World. Folly out-witted Wiſdom, and Weakneſs over-power'd Strength. The Conqueſt of the *Eaſt* by *Alexander* was not ſo admirable as the Enterpriſe of theſe poor men. He attempted his Conqueſt with the hands of a warlike Nation, tho' indeed but a ſmall number of Thirty thouſand againſt Multitudes, many hundred thouſands of the Enemies; yet an effeminate Enemy; a People inur'd to Slaughter and Victory attack'd great numbers, but enfeebled by Luxury and Voluptuouſneſs. Beſides, he was bred up to ſuch Enterprizes, had a learned Education under the beſt Philoſopher, and a military Education under the beſt Commander, and a natural Courage to animate him. Theſe Inſtruments had no ſuch advantage from Nature; the Heavenly Treaſure was placed in thoſe Earthen Veſſels, as *Gideon*'s Lamps in Empty Pitchers, *Judg.* 7. 16. that *the Excellency* or Hyperbole *of the Power might be of God*, 2 *Cor.* 4. 7. and the ſtrength of his Arm be diſplay'd in the infirmity of the Inſtruments. They were deſtitute of Earthly Wiſdom, and therefore deſpis'd by the *Jews*, and derided by the *Gentiles*; the Publiſhers were accounted Madmen, and the Embracers Fools. Had they been Men of known natural Endowments, the Power of God had been vail'd under the Gifts of the Creature.

2. *Therefore a Divine Power ſuddenly ſpirited them, and fitted them for ſo great a Work.* Inſtead of Ignorance, they had the knowledge of the Tongues; and they that were ſcarce well skill'd in their own Dialect, were inſtructed on the ſudden to ſpeak the moſt flouriſhing Languages of the World, and Diſcourſe to the People of ſeveral Nations, the *great things of God* *. Though they were not enrich'd with any Worldly wealth, and *poſſeſs'd nothing*, yet they were ſo ſuſtain'd that they wanted nothing in any place where they came, a Table was ſpread for them in the midſt of their bittereſt Enemies. Their *Fearfulneſs* was turn'd into *Courage*, and they that a few days before skulk'd in Corners for fear of the *Jews* †, ſpeak boldly in the *Name of that Jeſus*, whom they had ſeen put to death by the power of the Rulers and the Fury of the People: They reproach them with the Murder of their Maſter, and out-brave that great People in the midſt of their *Temple*, with the glory of that Perſon they had ſo lately *Crucified* ‖. *Peter*, that was not long before qualm'd at the preſence of a Maid, was not daunted at the preſence of the Council, that had their hands yet reeking with the Blood of his Maſter; but being filled with the *Holy Ghoſt*, ſeems to dare the Power of the *Prieſts* and *Jewiſh Governours*, and is as confident in the *Council-Chamber*, as he had been cowardly in the *High-Prieſt's Hall* *, the efficacy of Grace triumphing over the Fearfulneſs of Nature. Whence ſhould this Ardor and Zeal, to propagate a Doctrine that had already born the Scars of the Peoples Fury, be, but from a mighty Power, which changed thoſe *Hares* into *Lions*, and ſtript them of their natural Cowardiſe to cloath them with a Divine Courage; making them in a moment both Wiſe and Magnanimous, alienating them from any Conſultations with Fleſh and Blood? As ſoon as ever the *Holy Ghoſt* came upon them *as a mighty ruſhing Wind*, they move up and down for the Intereſt of God; as *Fiſh*, after a great Clap of Thunder, are rouz'd, and move more nimbly on the top of the Water; therefore that which did ſo fit them for this undertaking is called by the title of *Power from on high*, Luke 24. 49.

* Act. 2. 11.
† John 20. 19.
‖ Act. 2. 23.
Act. 3. 13.
* Act. 4. 9, &c.

III. The Divine Power appears *in the Means whereby it was propagated.*

1. *By Means different from the Methods of the World.* Not by force of Arms, as ſome Religions have taken root in the World. *Mahomet*'s Horſe hath trampled upon the Heads of Men, to imprint an *Alcoran* in their Brains, and robb'd Men of their Goods to plant their Religion. But the *Apoſtles* bore not this Doctrine through the World upon the points of their Swords; they preſented a *Bodily Death*, where they would beſtow an *Immortal Life*: They employ'd not Troops of Men in a warlike poſture, which had been poſſible for them after the *Goſpel* was once ſpread; they had no Ambition to ſubdue Men unto themſelves, but to God; they coveted not the Poſſeſſions of others; deſign'd not to enrich themſelves; invaded not the Rights of Princes, nor the Liberties and Properties of the People; they rifled them not of their Eſtates, nor ſcar'd them into this Religion by a fear of loſing their Worldly happineſs. The Arguments they uſed would naturally drive them from an entertainment of this Doctrine, rather than allure them to be Proſelytes to it: Their deſign was to change their Hearts, not their Government; to wean them from the love of the *World*, to a love of a *Redeemer*; to remove that which would ruine their Souls. It was not to enſlave them, but ranſom them; they had a *Warfare*, but not with *Carnal Weapons*, but ſuch as were *mighty through God for the pulling down of ſtrong holds*, 2 *Cor.* 10. 4. they uſed no weapons but the Doctrin they preach'd. Others that have not gained Conqueſts by the edge of the Sword and the Stratagems of War, have extended their Opinions to others by the ſtrength of Humane Reaſon, and the Inſinuations of Eloquence. But the *Apoſtles* had as little flouriſh in their Tongues, as edge upon their Swords. Their Preaching was *not with the enticing words of Man's Wiſdom* *; their Preſence was mean, and their Diſcourſes without varniſh; their Doctrine was plain, a *Crucified Chriſt*; a Doctrine unlac'd, ungarniſh'd, untoothſome to the World; but they had the *demonſtration of the Spirit*, and a *mighty Power* for their Companion in the Work. The Doctrine they preached, *viz.* the *Death*, *Reſurrection*, and *Aſcenſion of Chriſt*, are called the *Powers*, not of this World, but of the *World to come* †. No leſs than a Supernatural Power could conduct them in this Attempt, with ſuch weak Methods in Humane appearance.

* 1 Cor. 2. 4.
† Heb. 6. 5.

2. *Againſt all the Force, Power, and Wit of the World.* The Diviſions in the *Eaſtern* Empire, and the feeble and conſuming State of the *Weſtern*, contributed to *Mahomet*'s Succeſs ‖. But never was *Rome* in a more flouriſhing condition: *Learning*, *Eloquence*, *Wiſdom*, *Strength* were at the higheſt pitch: Never was there a more diligent Watch againſt any *Innovations*; never was that State governed by more ſevere and ſuſpicious Princes, than at the time when *Tiberius*, and *Nero*, held the Reins. No time ſeemed to be more unfit for the entrance of a *New Doctrine* than that Age, wherein it begun to be firſt publiſh'd; never did any Religion meet with that Oppoſition from Men. *Idolatry* hath been often ſetled without any Conteſt; but this hath ſuffered the ſame Fate with the Inſtitutor of it, and endured the *Contradictions of Sinners* againſt it ſelf: And thoſe that publiſh'd it, were not only without any worldly prop, but expos'd themſelves to the Hatred and Fury, to the Racks and Tortures of the ſtrongeſt Powers on Earth. It never ſet foot in any place, but the Country was in an *uproar* *; Swords were drawn to deſtroy it; Laws made to ſuppreſs it; Priſons provided for the Profeſſors of it; Fires kindled to conſume them, and Executioners had a perpetual employment to ſtifle the progreſs of it.

‖ Daillé, 15 *Serm.* p. 57.
* Acts 19. 28.

Rome in the Conqueſt of Countries chang'd not the Religion, Rites, and Modes of their Worſhip:

They alter'd their Civil Government, but left them to the liberty of their Religion, and many times joyned with them in the Worſhip of their peculiar gods; and ſometime imitated them at *Rome*, inſtead of aboliſhing them in the Cities they had ſubdu'd. But all their *Councils* were aſſembled, and their force was bandied *againſt the Lord, and againſt his Chriſt*; and that City that kindly receiv'd all manner of *Superſtitions*, hated this Doctrine with an irreconcileable hatred. It met with *Reproaches* from the Wiſe, and *Fury* from the Potentates; it was derided by the *one* as the greateſt Folly, and perſecuted by the *other* as contrary to God and Mankind; the *one* were afraid to loſe their Eſteems by the Doctrine, and the *other* to loſe their Authority by a *Sedition* they thought a change of Religion would introduce. The *Romans*, that had been Conquerors of the Earth, fear'd Inteſtine Commotions, and the falling aſunder the Links of their Empire: Scarce any of their firſt Emperors, but had their *Swords* dy'd red in the Blood of the *Chriſtians*: The *Fleſh* with all its Luſts, the *World* with all its Flatteries, the *Stateſmen* with all their Craft, and the *Mighty* with all their Strength joyn'd together to extirpate it: Though many Members were taken off by the Fires, yet the *Church* not only lived, but flouriſh'd in the Furnace. Converts were made by the death of *Martyrs*, and the Flames which conſumed their Bodies, were the occaſion of firing Mens hearts with a Zeal for the Profeſſion of it. Inſtead of being extinguiſh'd, the Doctrine ſhone more bright, and multiplied under the Sickles that were employ'd to cut it down: God order'd every circumſtance ſo, both in the Perſons that publiſh'd it, the Means whereby, and the Time when, that nothing but his Power might appear in it, without any thing to dim and darken it.

IV. The Divine Power was conſpicuous *in the great ſucceſs it had under all theſe difficulties.* Multitudes were propheſied of to embrace it; whence the Prophet *Iſaiah*, after the Prophecy of the Death of Chriſt, *Iſa.* 53. calls upon the Church to enlarge her Tents, and *lengthen out her Cords*, to receive thoſe Multitudes of Children that ſhould call her Mother. *Iſa.* 54. 2, 3. for ſhe ſhould *break forth on the right hand and on the left, and her ſeed ſhould inherit the Gentiles:* The Idolaters and Perſecutors ſhould liſt their Names in the Muſter-Roll of the Church.

Preſently after the Deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt from Heaven upon the *Apoſtles*, you find the hearts of *Three thouſand melted* by a plain declaration of this Doctrine; who were a little before ſo far from having a favourable thought of it, that ſome of them at leaſt, if not all, had expreſt their Rage againſt it, in voting for the Condemning and Crucifying the *Author of it* *: But in a moment they were ſo alter'd, that they breath out Affections inſtead of Fury; neither the reſpect they had to their Rulers, nor the honour they bore to their Prieſts; nor the deriſions of the People, nor the threatning of Puniſhment, could ſtop them from owning it in the face of multitudes of Diſcouragements. How wonderful is it that they ſhould ſo ſoon, and by ſuch ſmall means pay a reverence to the Servants, who had none for the Maſter? that they ſhould hear them with patience, without the ſame Clamour againſt them as againſt Chriſt, *Crucifie them, crucifie them?* But, that their hearts ſhould ſo ſuddenly be enflam'd with Devotion to him dead, whom they ſo much abhorred when living. It had gained footing not in a corner of the World, but in the moſt famous Cities; in *Jeruſalem*, where Chriſt had been Crucified; in *Antioch*, where the Name of *Chriſtians* firſt began; in *Corinth*, a place of Ingenious Arts; and *Epheſus*, the Seat of a noted Idol. In leſs than *Twenty years* there was never a Province of the *Roman* Empire, and ſcarce any part of the known World but was ſtored with the Profeſſors of it. *Rome*, that was the *Metropolis* of the Idolatrous World, had multitudes of them ſprinkled in every corner, whoſe *Faith was ſpoken of throughout the World* *. The Court of *Nero*, that Monſter of Mankind, and the cruelleſt and ſordidſt Tyrant that ever breathed, was not empty of ſincere Votaries to it; there were *Saints in Cæſar's houſe*, while *Paul* was under *Nero*'s Chain *: And it maintain'd its ſtanding, and flouriſh'd in ſpite of all the force of Hell, *Two hundred and fifty years* before any Sovereign Prince eſpouſed it.

* Acts 2. 41, 42.

* Rom. 1. 8.

* Phil. 4.

The Potentates of the Earth had conquer'd the Lands of Men, and ſubdued their Bodies; theſe vanquiſh'd Hearts and Wills, and brought the moſt beloved Thoughts under the *Yoke of Chriſt*: So much did this Doctrine overmaſter the Conſciences of its Followers, that they rejoyced more at their Yoke, than others at their Liberty; and counted it more a glory to die for the honour of it, than to live in the profeſſion of it. Thus did our Saviour reign, and gather Subjects in the midſt of his Enemies; in which reſpect, in the firſt diſcovery of the *Goſpel*, he is deſcrib'd as *a mighty Conqueror*, Rev. 6. 2. and ſtill conquering in the greatneſs of his ſtrength.

How great a Teſtimony of his Power is it, that from ſo ſmall a Cloud ſhould riſe ſo glorious a *Sun*, that ſhould chaſe before it the darkneſs and power of Hell; triumph over the Idolatry, Superſtition, and Prophaneneſs of the World? This plain Doctrine vanquiſh'd the Obſtinacy of the *Jews*, baffl'd the Underſtanding of the *Greeks*, humbl'd the Pride of the Grandees, threw the *Devil* not only out of Bodies but Hearts; tore up the foundation of his Empire, and planted the *Croſs* where the Devil had for many Ages before eſtabliſh'd his *Standard*. How much more than a humane Force is illuſtrious in this whole Conduct? Nothing in any Age of the World can parallel it; it being ſo much againſt the methods of Nature, the diſpoſition of the World, and (conſidering the Reſiſtance againſt it) ſeems to ſurmount even the work of Creation. Never were there in any Profeſſion ſuch multitudes, not of *Bedlams*, but Men of *Sobriety*, *Acuteneſs*, and *Wiſdom*, that expos'd themſelves to the fury of the Flames, and challeng'd Death in the moſt terrifying ſhapes, for the honour of this Doctrine.

To *conclude*, This ſhould be often meditated upon to form our Underſtandings to a full aſſent to the *Goſpel*, and the Truth of it; the want of which conſideration of *Power*, and the cuſtomarineſs of an Education in the outward profeſſion of it, is the ground of all the *Prophaneneſs* under it, and *Apoſtacy* from it; the diſeſteem of the *Truth* it declares, and the neglect of the *Duties* it enjoyns. The more we have a proſpect and ſenſe of the Impreſſions of *Divine Power* in it, the more we ſhall have a Reverence of the *Divine Precepts*.

III. The third thing is, the Power of God appears *in the application of Redemption*, as well as in the Perſon Redeeming, and the publication and propagation of the Doctrine of Redemption.

1. *In the planting Grace.*
2. *In the pardon of Sin.*
3. *In the preſerving Grace.*

1. *In the planting Grace.* There is no Expreſſion which the Spirit of God hath thought fit in Scripture to reſemble this Work to, but argues the exerting of a *Divine Power* for the effecting of it. When it is expreſt by *Light*, it is as much as the Power of God in creating the *Sun*; when by *Regeneration*, 'tis as much as the Power of God in forming an *Infant*, and faſhioning all the parts of a Man; when

when 'tis called *Reſurrection*, 'tis as much as the rearing of the Body again out of putrified Matter; when it is called *Creation*, 'tis as much as erecting a comely *World* out of meer Nothing, or an inform and uncomely Maſs. As we could not contrive the *Death of Chriſt* for our Redemption, ſo we cannot form our *Souls* to the Acceptation of it; the infinite efficacy of *Grace* is as neceſſary for the one, as the infinite *Wiſdom of God* was for laying the Platform of the other.

'Tis by his Power we have whatſoever pertains
* 2 Pet. 1. 3. to *Godlineſs* as well as *Life* *: He puts his Fingers upon the handle of the Lock, and turns the Heart to what Point he pleaſes; the Action whereby he
† Coloſſ. 1. 13. ἐῤῥύσατο. performs this, is expreſt by a word of *Force* †. *He hath ſnatch'd us from the power of Darkneſs*; the Action whereby it is perform'd manifeſts it. In reference to this Power it is called *Creation*, which is a production from Nothing; and *Converſion* is a production from ſomething more uncapable of that ſtate, than meer Nothing is of Being. There is a greater diſtance between the Terms of *Sin* and *Righteouſneſs*, *Corruption* and *Grace*, than between the Terms of *Nothing* and *Being*; the greater the diſtance is, the more Power is requir'd to the producing any thing. As in *Miracles*, the Miracle is the greater where the Change is the greater; and the Change is the greater where the Diſtance is the greater: As it was a more ſignal mark of Power to change a *dead Man to life*, than to change a *ſick Man to health*; ſo that the change here being from a Term of a greater diſtance, is more powerful than the Creation of *Heaven* and *Earth*: Therefore whereas Creation is ſaid to be wrought *by his Hands*, and the Heavens *by his Fingers*, or *his Word*; Con-
* Iſa. 53. 1. verſion is ſaid to be wrought by *his Arm* *: In Creation we had an *Earthly*; by Converſion a *Heavenly ſtate*: In Creation, *Nothing* is changed into *Something*; in Converſion, *Hell* is transform'd into *Heaven*, which is more than the turning *Nothing* into a glorious *Angel*. In that Thankſgiving of our Saviour for the *Revelation* of the knowledge of himſelf to *Babes*, the ſimple of the World, he gives the
† Mat. 11. 5 Title to his Father, of *Lord of Heaven and Earth* †, intimating it to be an act of his Creative and Preſerving Power; that Power whereby he formed *Heaven* and *Earth*, hath preſerved the ſtanding, and govern'd the motions of all Creatures from the beginning of the World.

'Tis reſembl'd to the moſt Magnificent Act of Divine Power that God ever put forth, *viz.* that
* Eph. 1. 19. *in the Reſurrection of our Saviour* *, wherein there was more than an ordinary impreſſion of Might. 'Tis not ſo ſmall a Power as that whereby we ſpeak with *Tongues*, or whereby Chriſt opened the Mouths of the *Dumb* and the Ears of the *Deaf*, or unlooſed the Cords of *Death* from a Perſon. 'Tis not that Power whereby our *Saviour* wrought thoſe ſtupendous Miracles when he was in the World; but that Power which wrought a Miracle that amaz'd the moſt knowing Angels, as well as ignorant Man. The taking off the weight of the *Sin of the World* from our Saviour, and advancing him in his Humane Nature to rule over the *Angelical* Hoſt, making him Head of *Principalities* and *Powers*; as much as to ſay, as great as all that Power which is diſplay'd in our *Redemption*, from the firſt foundation to the laſt line in the ſuperſtructure. 'Tis
* 2 Cor. 4. 7. therefore often ſet forth with an Emphaſis, as *Excellency of Power* *, and *Glorious power* †. *To glory*
† 2 Pet. 1. 3. *and vertue*, we tranſlate it; but it is διὰ δόξης, *Through glory and vertue*, that is, by a glorious vertue or ſtrength.

2. *The Inſtrument whereby it is wrought is dignified with the title of Power.* The *Goſpel* which God uſeth in this great Affair is called, *The power of God to ſalvation*, Rom. 1. 16. And the *Rod of ſtrength*, Pſal. 110. 2. And the day of the Goſpels appearance in the Heart, is emphatically called, *The day of Power*, verſ. 3. wherein he brings down ſtrong Holds and towring Imaginations. * And therefore the Angel *Gabriel*, which Name ſignifies the *Power of God*, was always ſent upon thoſe Meſſages which concerned the Goſpel, as to *Daniel*, *Zechary*, *Mary*. The *Goſpel* is the Power of God in a way of Inſtrumentality, but the Almightineſs of God is the Principal in a way of Efficiency. The *Goſpel* is the Scepter of Chriſt; but the *Power* of Chriſt is the Mover of that Scepter. The *Goſpel* is not as a bare Word ſpoken, and propoſing the thing; but as back'd with a higher efficacy of Grace: As the *Sword* doth inſtrumentally cut, but the Arm that weilds it gives the blow, and makes it ſucceſsful in the ſtroke. But this Goſpel is the *Power of God*, becauſe he edgeth this by his own Power, to ſurmount all reſiſtance, and vanquiſh the greateſt Malice of that Man he deſigns to work upon.

* Grotius in Luke 1. 19.

The Power of God is conſpicuous,

1. *In turning the heart of Man againſt the ſtrength of the Inclinations of Nature.* In the forming of Man of the Duſt of the Ground, as the Matter contributed nothing to the Action whereby God form'd it, ſo it had no Principle of reſiſtance contrary to the deſign of God: But in converting the Heart, there is not only wanting a principle of Aſſiſtance from him in this Work, but the whole ſtrength of Corrupt Nature is alarm'd to combat againſt the Power of his Grace. When the *Goſpel* is preſented, the Underſtanding is not only ignorant of it, but the Will perverſe againſt it; the one doth not reliſh, and the other doth not eſteem the Excellency of the Object. The Carnal Wiſdom in the Mind contrives againſt it, and the rebellious Will puts the Orders in execution againſt the Counſel of God, which requires the invincible Power of God to enlighten the *dark Mind*, to know what it ſlights; and the *fierce Will*, to embrace what it loaths. The ſtream of Nature cannot be turned, but by a Power above Nature: 'Tis not all the Created Power in Heaven and Earth can change a *Swine* into a Man, or a venomous *Toad* into a holy and illuſtrious *Angel*. Yet this Work is not ſo great in ſome reſpect as the ſtilling the fierceneſs of Nature, the ſilencing the ſwelling Waves in the Heart, and the caſting out thoſe brutiſh Affections which are born and grow up with us. There would be no, or far leſs reſiſtance in a meer Animal, to be changed into a Creature of a higher rank, than there is in a Natural Man to be turned into a ſerious Chriſtian.

There is in every Natural Man a ſtoutneſs of heart, a ſtiff neck, unwillingneſs to good, forwardneſs to evil: Infinite Power quells this ſtoutneſs, demoliſheth theſe ſtrong Holds, turns this wild *Aſs* in her courſe, and routs thoſe Armies of turbulent Nature againſt the Grace of God. To ſtop the Floods of the *Sea* is not ſuch an act of Power, as to turn the Tyde of the Heart. This Power hath been employ'd upon every Convert in the World: What would you ſay then, if you knew all the Chanels in which it hath run ſince the days of *Adam*? If the alteration of one Rocky heart into a Pool of Water be a wonder of Power, what then is the calming and ſweetning by his Word thoſe *One hundred forty four thouſand* of the Tribes of *Iſrael*, and that numberleſs Multitude of all *Nations* and *People* that ſhall ſtand *before the Throne*, *, which were all naturally ſo many raging *Seas*? Not one converted Soul from *Adam*, to the laſt that ſhall be in the end of the World, but is a Trophy of the Divine

* Rev. 7. 9.

Conqueſt. None were pure Voluntiers, nor liſted themſelves in his Service, till he put forth his ſtrong Arm to draw them to him. No man's Underſtanding but was chain'd with *Darkneſs*, and fond of it; no Man but had *Corruption* in his Will, which was dearer to him than any thing elſe which could be propos'd for his true happineſs. Theſe things are moſt evident in Scripture and Experience.

2. As 'tis wrought againſt the Inclinations of Nature; ſo *againſt a multitude of Corrupt habits rooted in the Souls of Men.* A Diſtemper in its firſt Invaſion may more eaſily be cured, than when it becomes Chronical and Inveterate. The ſtrength of a Diſeaſe, or the complication of many, magnifies the Power of the *Phyſician*, and efficacy of the Medicine that tames and expels it. What Power is that which hath made Men ſtoop, when *Natural habits* have been grown Giants by Cuſtom; when the *putrefaction of Nature* hath engendred a multitude of Worms; when the *Ulcers* are many and deplorable; when *many Cords*, wherewith God would have bound the *Sinner*, have been broken, and (like *Sampſon*) the wicked Heart hath gloried in its ſtrength, and grown more proud, that it hath ſtood like a *ſtrong Fort* againſt thoſe Batteries, under which others have fallen flat?

Every *proud Thought*, every *evil Habit* captivated, * 2 Cor. 10. 5. ſerves for matter of Triumph to the *Power of God**. What reſiſtance will a multitude of them make, when *one* of them is enough to hold the Faculty under its dominion, and intercept its Operations? So many *cuſtomary Habits*, ſo many *old Natures*, ſo many *different Strengths* added to Nature, every one of them ſtanding as a *Barricado* againſt the way of Grace; all the Errors the *Underſtanding* is poſſeſſed with, think the *Goſpel* folly; all the Vices the *Will* is filled with, count it the Fetter and Band. Nothing ſo contrary to Man, as to be thought a *Fool*; nothing ſo contrary to Man, as to enter into *ſlavery*. 'Tis no eaſie matter to plant the *Croſs* of Chriſt upon a Heart guided by many Principles againſt the Truth of it, and byaſs'd by a world of Wickedneſs againſt the Holineſs of it. *Nature* renders a man too feeble and indiſpos'd, and *Cuſtom* renders a Man more weak and unwilling to change † Jer. 13. 23. his hue†. To diſpoſſeſs Man then of his Self-eſteem and Self-excellency; to make room for God in the Heart, where there was none but for Sin, as dear to him as himſelf; to hurl down the *pride of Nature*; to make *ſtout Imaginations* ſtoop to the *Croſs*; to make *deſires of Self-advancement* ſink under a *Zeal for the glorifying of God*, and an *over-ruling deſign for his Honour*, is not to be aſcrib'd to any, but an out-ſtretched Arm weilding the *Sword of the Spirit*. To have a heart full of the *Fear of God*, that was juſt before filled with a *Contempt* of him; to have a ſenſe of his *Power*, an eye to his *Glory*, admiring thoughts of his *Wiſdom*, a Faith in his *Truth*, that had lower thoughts of him and all his Perfections, than he had of a Creature: To have a *hatred* of his habitual Luſts, that had brought him in much ſenſitive Pleaſure; to *loath* them as much as he *loved* them; to *cheriſh* the Duties he hated; to live by *Faith* in, and *Obedience* to the Redeemer, who was before ſo heartily under the conduct of *Satan* and *Self*; to chaſe the acts of Sin from his *Members*, and the pleaſing thoughts of Sin from his *Mind*; to make a ſtout Wretch willingly fall down, crawl upon the ground, and adore that *Saviour* whom before he out-dar'd, is a Triumphant Act of Infinite Power that can *ſubdue all things to it ſelf*, and break thoſe multitudes of Locks and Bolts that were upon us.

3. *Againſt a multitude of Temptations and Intereſts.* The Temptations Rich Men have in this World are ſo numerous and ſtrong, that the entrance of one of them into the *Kingdom of Heaven*, that is, the entertainment of the *Goſpel* is made by our Saviour an *impoſſible thing with Men*, and procurable only by *the Power of God**. The Divine Strength * Luk. 18. 24, 25, 26. only can ſeparate the World from the Heart, and the Heart from the World. There muſt be an Incomprehenſible Power to chaſe away the *Devil*, that had ſo long, ſo ſtrong a footing in the Affections, to render the Soil he had ſown with ſo many *Tares* and *Weeds* capable of good Grain; to make Spirits that had found the ſweetneſs of Worldly proſperity, wrap up all their Happineſs in it, and not only bent down, but (as it were) buried in Earth and Mud, to be looſened from thoſe beloved Cords, to diſreliſh the Earth for a *Crucified Chriſt*; I ſay, this muſt be the effect of an Almighty Power.

4. *The manner of Converſion* ſhews no leſs the Power of God. There is not only an irreſiſtible Force uſed in it, but an agreeable Sweetneſs. The Power is ſo Efficacious, that nothing can vanquiſh it; and ſo Sweet, that none did ever complain of it. The Almighty Virtue diſplays it ſelf invincibly, yet without Conſtraint, compelling the *Will* without offering Violence to it, and making it ceaſe to be Will: Not forcing it, but changing it; not dragging it, but drawing it; making it *will* where before it *nill'd*; removing the Corrupt Nature of the Will, without invading the Created Nature and Rights of the Faculty, not working in us againſt the Phyſical Nature of the Will, but working *to* * Phil. 2. 13. *will**. This work is therefore called *Creation*, *Reſurrection*, to ſhew its Irreſiſtible Power; 'Tis called *Illumination*, *Perſwaſion*, *Drawing*, to ſhew the ſuitableneſs of its Efficacy to the nature of the Humane Faculties: 'Tis a *drawing with Cords*, which teſtifies an Invincible ſtrength; but, with *Cords of Love*, which teſtifies a Delightful conqueſt: 'Tis hard to determine whether it be more Powerful than Sweet, or more Sweet than Powerful. 'Tis no mean part of the Power of God to twiſt together *Victory* and *Pleaſure*; to give a blow as delightful as ſtrong, as pleaſing to the Sufferer, as it is ſharp to the Sinner.

II. The Power of God in the application of Redemption is evident *in the Pardoning a Sinner.*

1. *In the Pardon it ſelf.* The Power of God is made the ground of his *Patience*; or the reaſon why he is Patient, is, becauſe he would *ſhew his Power**. 'Tis a part of Magnanimity to paſs by * Rom. 9. 22. Injuries: As weaker Stomachs cannot concoct the tougher Food, ſo weak Minds cannot digeſt the harder Injuries: He that paſſes over a Wrong, is ſuperior to his Adverſary that does it. When God ſpeaks of his own Name as *Merciful*, he ſpeaks firſt of himſelf as *Powerful*, Exod. 34. 6. *The Lord, the Lord God*, that is, the Lord the *ſtrong Lord*, *Jehovah*, the ſtrong *Jehovah*. *Let the Power of my Lord be great*, ſaith *Moſes*, when he prays for the Forgiveneſs of his People †: The word *Jigdal* is writ- † Num. 14. 17. ten with a great *Iod*, or a *Iod* above the other Letters. The Power of God in Pardoning is advanc'd beyond an ordinary ſtrain, beyond the Creative ſtrength. In the Creation, he had power over the Creatures; in *this*, power over himſelf: In Creation, not Himſelf, but the Creatures were the Object of his Power; in that no Attribute of his Nature could Article againſt his Deſign. In the pardon of a Sinner, after many Overtures made to him and refus'd by him, God exerciſeth a power over himſelf; for the Sinner hath diſhonour'd God, provok'd his *Juſtice*, abuſed his *Goodneſs*, done Injury to all thoſe Attributes which are neceſſary to his relief: It was not ſo in Creation, nothing was uncapable of diſobliging God from bringing it into Being.

וְיִגְדַּל נָא, *be exalted.* Sept. כֹּחַ *Strength, &c.*

ing. The *Duſt*, which was the Matter of *Adam*'s Body, needed only the extrinſick Power of God to form it into a *Man*, and inſpire it with a *living Soul*: It had not render'd it ſelf obnoxious to Divine Juſtice, nor was capable to excite any diſputes between his Perfections. But after the entrance of *Sin*, and the merit of *Death* thereby, there was a reſiſtance in Juſtice to the free Remiſſion of Man: God was to exerciſe a Power over himſelf, to anſwer his *Juſtice*, and pardon the *Sinner*; as well as a power over the Creature, to reduce the Runaway and Rebel. Unleſs we have recourſe to the Infiniteneſs of God's Power, the infiniteneſs of our *Guilt* will weigh us down: We muſt conſider not only that we have a mighty Guilt to preſs us, but a mighty God to relieve us. In the ſame act of his being our Righteouſneſs, he is our Strength: *In the Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength*, Iſai. 45. 24.

2. *In the ſenſe of Pardon.* When the Soul hath been wounded with the ſenſe of ſin, and its Iniquities have ſtar'd it in the face; the raiſing the Soul from a deſpairing Condition, and lifting it above thoſe Waters which terrified it; to caſt the light of Comfort, as well as the light of Grace, into a heart covered with more than an *Egyptian* Darkneſs, is an act of his infinite and creating Power; *Iſa.* 57. 19. *I create the fruit of the lips, peace.* Men may wear out their Lips with numbring up the Promiſes of Grace and Arguments of Peace; but all will ſignifie no more without a creative Power, than if all Men and Angels ſhould call to that White upon the Wall to ſhine as ſplendidly as the *Sun*. God only can create *Jeruſalem*, and every Child of *Jeruſalem* a *rejoycing* *. A Man is no more able to apply to himſelf any word of Comfort under the ſenſe of Sin, than he is able to convert himſelf, and turn the propoſals of the Word into gracious Affections in his heart. To *reſtore the joy of Salvation*, is in *David*'s judgment an act of Soveraign Power, equal to that of *creating a clean heart*, Pſal. 51. 10, 12. Alas, 'tis a ſtate like to that of *Death*; as Infinite Power can only raiſe from Natural death, ſo from a Spiritual death, alſo from a Comfortleſs death: *In his favour there is life*; in the want of his favour there is death. The Power of God hath ſo placed Light in the *Sun*, that all Creatures in the World, all the Torches upon Earth kindled together cannot make it Day, if that doth not riſe: ſo all the Angels in Heaven, and Men upon Earth, are not competent Chirurgions for a *wounded Spirit*. The cure of our Spiritual Ulcers, and the pouring in Balm, is an act of Soveraign Creative Power: 'Tis more viſible in ſilencing a Tempeſtuous Conſcience, than the Power of our Saviour was in the ſtilling the ſtormy *Winds* and the roaring *Waves*. As none but Infinite Power can remove the Deſpairing ſenſe of it.

* Iſa. 65. 18

III. This Power is evident *in the preſerving Grace*. As the Providence of God is a manifeſtation of his Power in a continual Creation; ſo the *preſervation* of *Grace*, is a manifeſtation of his Power in a continual Regeneration. To keep a Nation under the Yoke, is an act of the ſame Power that ſubdu'd it. 'Tis this that *ſtrengthens Men in ſuffering* againſt the Fury of Hell †; 'tis this that keeps them from falling againſt the *force of Hell*, the *Father's hand*, John 10. 29. His *ſtrength* abates and moderates the violence of Temptations; his *Staff* ſuſtains his People under them; his *Might* defeats the Power of *Satan*, and bruiſeth him under a Believers feet. The Counterworkings of Indwelling Corruption; the reluctances of the Fleſh againſt the breathings of the Spirit; the fallacy of the Senſes, and the rovings of the Mind, have ability quickly to ſtifle and extinguiſh Grace, if it were not maintained by that Powerful blaſt that firſt inbreathed it. No leſs Power is ſeen in *perfecting* it, than was in planting it ‖; no leſs in fulfilling the work of Faith, than in ingrafting the *Word of Faith*, 2 Theſſ. 1. 11.

† Coloſ. 1. 13.

‖ 2 Pet. 1. 3.

The *Apoſtle* well underſtood the Neceſſity and Efficacy of it in the preſervation of *Faith*, as well as in the firſt infuſion, when he expreſſes himſelf in thoſe terms of a Greatneſs or Hyperbole of Power, his *Mighty Power*, or the *Power of his Might*, Epheſians 1. 19. The Salvation he beſtows, and the Strength whereby he effects it, are joyned together in the *Prophet*'s Song, *Iſai.* 12. 2. *The Lord is my ſtrength and my ſalvation*: And indeed, God doth more magnifie his Power in continuing a Believer in the World, a weak and half-rigg'd Veſſel, in the midſt of ſo many Sands whereon it might ſplit; ſo many Rocks whereon it might daſh; ſo many Corruptions within, and ſo many Temptations without; than if he did immediately tranſport him into Heaven, and clothe him with a perfectly Sanctified Nature.

To *Conclude*: What is there then in the World which is deſtitute of Notices of Divine Power? Every Creature affords us the Leſſon; all acts of Divine Government are the Marks of it. Look into the Word, and the manner of its propagation inſtructs us in it; your *changed Natures*, your *pardoned Guilt*, your *ſhining Comfort*, your *quell'd Corruptions*, the ſtanding of your *ſtaggering Graces*, are ſufficient to preſerve a ſenſe, and prevent a forgetfulneſs of this great Attribute, ſo neceſſary for your ſupport, and conducing ſo much to your comfort.

Uſes.

I. Of *Information and Inſtruction.*

1. If Incomprehenſible and Infinite Power belongs to the Nature of God, *then Jeſus Chriſt hath a Divine Nature, becauſe the Acts of Power proper to God are aſcribed to him.* This perfection of *Omnipotence* doth unqueſtionably pertain to the Deity, and is an incommunicable Property, and the ſame with the Eſſence of God: He therefore to whom this Attribute is aſcribed, is eſſentially God.

This is challenged by Chriſt in conjunction with Eternity; *Revel.* 1. 8. *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, ſaith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.* This the Lord Chriſt ſpeaks of himſelf. He who was equal with God, proclaims himſelf by the Eſſential Title of the Godhead, part of which he repeats again, *virſe* 11. And this is the Perſon *which walks in the midſt of the ſeven golden Candleſticks*; the Perſon that *was dead and now lives*, verſ. 17, 18. which cannot poſſibly be meant of the *Father*, the Firſt Perſon, who can never come under that denomination of *having been dead*. Being therefore adorn'd with the ſame Title, he hath the ſame Deity; and though his *Omnipotence* be only poſitively aſſerted, *verſe* 8. yet his *Eternity* being aſſerted, *verſ.* 11, 17. it inferreth his *Immenſe Power*; for he that is Eternal without limits of Time, muſt needs be conceived Powerful, without any daſh of Infirmity.

Again, When He is ſaid to be *a Child born* and *a Son given*, in the ſame breath he is called the *Mighty God* *. 'Tis introduc'd as a ground of Comfort to the Church, to preſerve their Hopes in the accompliſhment of the Promiſes made to them before. They ſhould not imagine him to have only the Infirmity of a Man, though he was vail'd in the appearance of a Man. No, they ſhould look through the diſguiſe of his *Fleſh*, to the Might of his *Godhead*. The Attribute of *Mighty* is added to the

* Iſai. 9. 6.

the Title *G O D*, becauſe the conſideration of Power is moſt capable to ſuſtain the drooping Church in ſuch a Condition, and to prop up her hopes. 'Tis upon this account he ſaith of himſelf, that *whatſoever things the Father doth, thoſe alſo doth the Son likewiſe*, John 5.19. In creation of Heaven, Earth, Sea, and the preſervation of all Creatures, the Son works with the ſame Will, Wiſdom, Vertue, Power, as the Father works: Not as two may concur in an Action in a different manner, as an Agent and an Inſtrument, a Carpenter and his Tools; but in the ſame manner of Operation, ὁμοίως, which we tranſlate *Likewiſe*, which doth not expreſs ſo well the Emphaſis of the word. There is no diverſity of Action between Us; what the Father doth, that I do by the ſame Power, with the ſame Eaſineſs in every reſpect; there is the ſame Creative, Productive, Conſervative Power in both of us; and that not in one work that is done *ad extra*, but in All, in whatſoever the Father doth. *In the ſame manner*; not by a Delegated, but Natural and Eſſential Power, by one undivided operation and manner of working.

1. *The Creation, which is a work of Omnipotence, is more than once aſcrib'd to him.* This he doth own himſelf; the Creation of the Earth, and of Man upon it; the ſtretching out the Heavens by his Hands, and the forming of *all the Hoſt of them by his Command*, Iſai. 45. 12. He is not only the Creator of *Iſrael*, the Church, *verſe* 12. but of the whole World, and every Creature on the face of the Earth, and in the Glories of the Heavens; which is repeated alſo *verſe* 18. where in this act of Creation he is called *God* himſelf, and ſpeaks of himſelf in the Term *Jehovah*; and ſwears by himſelf, *verſe* 23. What doth he ſwear? *That unto me every knee ſhall bow, and every tongue ſhall ſwear.* Is this Chriſt? Yes, if the *Apoſtle* may be believed, who applies it to him, *Rom.* 14. 11. to prove the appearance of all Men before the Judgment Seat of Chriſt, whom the *Prophet* calls, *verſe* 15. a *God that hides himſelf*; and ſo he was a hidden God when obſcur'd in our fleſhly Infirmities. He was in conjunction with the Father when the *Sea* receiv'd his Decree, and the *foundations of the Earth* were appointed; not as a Spectator, but as an Artificer, for ſo the word in *Prov.* 8. 30. ſignifies, *As one brought up with him*; it ſignifies alſo, *A cunning* †Cant. 7. 1. *Workman* †. He was the *Eaſt*, or the *Sun* from whence ſprang all the light of Life and Being to the Creature; ſo the word קדם *verſe* 22. which is tranſlated, *Before his works of old*, is rendred by ſome, and ſignifies the *Eaſt* as well as *Before*: But if it notes only his Exiſtence before, 'tis enough to prove his Deity.

The *Scripture* doth not only allow him an Exiſtence before the World, but exalts him as the cauſe of the World: A thing may precede another that is not the cauſe of that which follows; a precedency in Age doth not entitle one Brother or thing the cauſe of another: But our *Saviour* is not only ancienter then the World, but is the Creator of the World, *Heb.* 1. 10, 11. *Who laid the Foundations of the Earth, and the Heavens are the works of his hands.* So great an Elogy cannot be given to one deſtitute of *Omnipotence*. Since the diſtance between *Being* and *not Being* is ſo vaſt a Gulf that cannot be ſurmounted and ſtept over, but by an Infinite Power: He is *the Firſt* and *the Laſt*, that ‖ Iſa. 41. 4. called the *Generations from the beginning* ‖, and had an Almighty voice to call them out of Nothing. In which regard he is called, *The everlaſting Father*, Iſai. 9. 6. as being the Efficient of Creation; as God is called *the Father of the Rain*, or as *Father* is taken for the Inventor of an Art; as *Jubal*, the firſt Framer and Inventor of Muſick, is called, The *Father of ſuch as handle the Harp*, Gen. 4. 21. And that Perſon is ſaid to *make the Sea, and form the dry Land by his hands*, Pſal. 95. 5, 6. againſt whom we are exhorted not to *harden our hearts*, verſe 8. which is applied to *Chriſt* by his *Apoſtle*, Heb. 3. 8. in the 15th *verſe* he is called, *A great King*, and *a great God our Maker*. The places wherein the Creation is attributed to *Chriſt*, thoſe that are the Antagoniſts of his *Deity*, would evade by underſtanding them of the New or Evangelical, not of the firſt, old and material Creation: But what appearance is there for ſuch a ſenſe? Conſider,

1. That of *Heb.* 1. 10, 11. 'tis ſpoken of that *Earth* and *Heavens* which were in the *beginning* of Time; 'tis that Earth that *ſhall periſh*, that Heaven that ſhall be *folded up*, that Creation that ſhall *grow old* towards a decay; that is, only the viſible and material Creation: The Spiritual ſhall endure for ever; it grows not old to decay, but grows up to a perfection; it ſprouts up to its happineſs, not to its detriment. The ſame Perſon creates that ſhall deſtroy, and the ſame World is created by him that ſhall be deſtroyed by him, as well as it ſubſiſted by virtue of his *Omnipotency*.

2. Can that alſo, *Heb.* 1. 2. *By whom alſo he made the worlds*, ſpeaking of *Chriſt*, bear the ſame plea? It was the ſame Perſon by whom *God ſpake to us in theſe laſt times*, the ſame Perſon which he hath conſtituted *Heir of all things, by whom alſo he made the worlds*: And the Particle *Alſo*, intimates it to be a diſtinct act from his Speaking or Prophetical Office, whereby he reſtored and new created the World, as well as the rightful Foundation God had to make him *Heir of all things*. It refers likewiſe, not to the time of Chriſt's ſpeaking upon earth; but to ſomething paſt, and ſomething different from the publication of the Goſpel: 'Tis not, *doth make*, which had been more likely if the *Apoſtle* had meant only the New Creation; but *hath made* *, referring to time long ſince paſt, ſomething done before his appearance upon the Earth as a Prophet. *By whom alſo he made the Worlds*, or *Ages*, all things ſubjected to, or meaſured by Time, which muſt be meant according to the *Jewiſh* Phraſe of this material viſible World: So they entitle God in their Liturgy, the *Lord of Ages*, that is, the Lord of the World, and all Ages and Revolutions of the World, from the Creation to the laſt period of Time. If any thing were in Being before this Frame of *Heaven* and *Earth*, and within the compaſs of Time, it receiv'd Being and Duration from the Son of God. The *Apoſtle* would give an Argument to prove the equity of making him Heir of all things *as Mediator*, becauſe he was the Framer of all things *as God*. He may well be the Heir or Lord of *Angels* as well as *Men*, who created Angels as well as Men: All things were juſtly under his Power as *Mediator*, ſince they deriv'd their Exiſtence from him as *Creator*.

* Evidence.

3. But thirdly, What Evaſion can there be for that, *Coloſſ.* 1. 16. *By whom were all things created that are in Heaven, and that are in Earth, whether they be Thrones, or Dominions, or Principalities, or Powers, all things were created by him and for him.* He is ſaid to be the Creator of Material and Viſible things, as well as Spiritual and Inviſible; of things in *Heaven*, which needed no reſtoration, as well as things on *Earth*, which were polluted by Sin, and ſtood in need of a new Creation. How could the *Angels* belong to the new Creation, who had never put off the honour and purity of the firſt? Since they never diveſted themſelves of their original Integrity, they could not be reinveſted with that which they never loſt. Beſides, ſuppoſe the

holy

holy *Angels* be one way or other reduc'd as parts of the new Creation, as being under the Mediatory Government of our *Saviour*, as their Head, and in regard of their Confirmation by him in that happy ſtate. In what manner ſhall the *Devils* be rank'd among new Creatures? They are called *Principalities* and *Powers* as well as the *Angels*, and may come under the Title of *Things inviſible*: That they are called *Principalities* and *Powers* is plain, *Epheſ.* 6. 12. *For we wreſtle not againſt Fleſh and Blood, but againſt Principalities and Powers, the Rulers of the darkneſs of this world; againſt Spiritual wickedneſs in high places.* Good Angels are not there meant, for what War hath Believers with them, or they with Believers? They are the Guardians of them, ſince *Chriſt* hath taken away the Enmity between our Lord and theirs, in whoſe quarrel they were engag'd againſt us: And ſince the *Apoſtle* ſpeaking of *All things created by him*, expreſſeth it ſo, that it cannot be conceived he ſhould except any thing; how come the finally Impenitent and Unbelievers, which are *things in earth*, and viſible, to be liſted here in the Roll of *New Creatures*? None of theſe can be called *New Creatures*, becauſe they are ſubjected to the Government of Chriſt; no more than the *Earth* and *Sea*, and the Animals in it, are made New Creatures, becauſe they are all under the Dominion of Chriſt and his Providential Government. Again, the *Apoſtle* manifeſtly makes the Creation he here ſpeaks of, to be the Material, and not the New Creation; for that he ſpeaks of afterwards as a diſtinct act of our Lord Jeſus under the Title of *Reconciliation*, Coloſſ. 1. 20, 21. which was the reſtoration of the World, and the ſatisfying for that *Curſe* that lay upon it. His intent is here to ſhew, that not an Angel in Heaven, nor a Creature upon Earth, but was placed in their ſeveral degrees of Excellency by the Power of the Son of God, who after that act of Creation and the entrance of Sin, was the *Reconciler of the World through the Blood of his Croſs.*

4. There is another place as clear, *John* 1. 3. *All things were made by him, and without him was nothing made that was made.* The Creation is here aſcrib'd to him; Affirmatively, *All things were made by him*; Negatively, *There was nothing made without him*: and the words are Emphatical, οὐδὲ ἕν, *Not one thing*: excepting nothing; including inviſible things, as well as things conſpicuous to ſenſe only, mentioned in the ſtory of the Creation, *Gen.* 1. not only the intire Maſs, but the diſtinct Parcels, the ſmalleſt Worm and the higheſt Angel, owe their Original to him. And if not *one* thing, then the Matter was not created to his hands; and his Work conſiſted not only in the forming things from that Matter: If that *one* thing of Matter were excepted, a chief thing were excepted; if *not one thing* were excepted, then he created Something of Nothing, becauſe Spirits, as *Angels* and *Souls*, are not made of any pre-exiſting or fore-created Matter. How could the *Evangeliſt* phraſe it more extenſively and comprehenſively? This is a Character of *Omnipotency*; to create the World, and every thing in it, of Nothing, requires an Infinite Virtue and Power. If all things were created by him, they were not created by him *as Man*, becauſe Himſelf, as Man, was not in Being before the Creation: If all things were made by him, then Himſelf was not made, Himſelf was not created; and to be exiſtent without being made, without being created, is to be unboundedly Omnipotent. And if we underſtand it of the New Creation, as they do that will not allow him an exiſtence in his *Deity* before his *Humanity*, it cannot be true of that; for how could he regenerate *Abraham*, make *Simeon* and *Anna* new Creatures, who *waited for the ſalvation of Iſrael*, and form *John Baptiſt*, and fill him with the *Holy Ghoſt*, even *from the womb* * (who belong'd to the new Creation, and was to *prepare the way*) if *Chriſt* had not a Being before him? The *Evangeliſt* alludes to, and explains the Hiſtory of the Creation in the beginning, and acquaints us what was meant by *God ſaid*, ſo often, *viz. the Eternal Word*, and deſcribes him in his Creative Power, manifeſted in the framing the World, before he deſcribes him in his Incarnation, when he came to lay the Foundation of the reſtoration of the World, *John* 1. 14. *The Word was made fleſh*, this Word who was *with God, who was God, who made all things*, and gave Being to the moſt glorious Angels and the meaneſt Creature without exception; this *Word*, in time *was made fleſh.* * Luke 1. 15.

5. The *Creation* of things mentioned in theſe *Scriptures* cannot be attributed to him as an Inſtrument. As if when it is ſaid, *God created all things by him*, and *by him made the Worlds*, we are to underſtand the Father to be the Agent, and the Son to be a Tool in his Father's hand, as an Ax in the hand of a Carpenter, or a File in the hand of a Smith, or a Servant acting by Command as the Organ of his Maſter. The Prepoſition *Per*, or διὰ, doth not alway ſignifie an Inſtrumental cauſe: When it is ſaid, that the *Apoſtle* gave the *Theſſalonians* a Command *by Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 2, was Chriſt the Inſtrument, and not the Lord of that Command the *Apoſtle* gave? The immediate operation of Chriſt dwelling in the *Apoſtles*, was that whereby they gave the Commands to their Diſciples. When we are called *by God*, 1 *Cor.* 1. 9. Is he the Inſtrumental or Principal cauſe of our effectual Vocation? And can the Will of God be the Inſtrument of putting *Paul* into the Apoſtleſhip, or the Soveraign cauſe of inveſting him with that Dignity, when he calls himſelf an *Apoſtle by the will of God*? Epheſ. 1. 3. And when all things are ſaid to be *through* God, as well as *of* him, muſt he be counted the Inſtrumental cauſe of his own Creation; Counſels, and Judgments *? When we *mortifie the deeds of the Body through the Spirit*, Rom. 8. 13. or keep the *Treaſure of the Word by the Holy Ghoſt*, 2 *Tim.* 1. 14. Is the Holy Ghoſt of no more dignity in ſuch acts than Inſtrument? Nor doth the gaining a thing *by* a Perſon make him a meer Inſtrument or Inferior; as when a Man gains his Right in a way of Juſtice againſt his Adverſary by the Magiſtrate, is the Judge inferior to the Suppliant? If the *Word* were an Inſtrument in the Creation, it muſt be a created or uncreated Inſtrument: If created, it could not be true what the *Evangeliſt* ſaith, that *All things were made by him*, ſince himſelf the principal thing could not be made by himſelf; if Uncreated, he was God, and ſo acted by a Divine Omnipotency, which ſurmounts an Inſtrumental cauſe. But indeed, an Inſtrument is impoſſible in Creation, ſince it is wrought only by an act of the Divine Will. Do we need any Organ to an Act of Volition? the efficacious Will of the Creator is the cauſe of the Original of the Body of the World, with its particular Members and exact Harmony: It was form'd *by a Word* and eſtabliſh'd *by a Command* †; the beauty of the Creation ſtood up at the Precept of his Will. Nor was the *Son* a Partial cauſe; as when many are ſaid to build a Houſe, one works one part, and another frames another part: God created all things by the immediate operation of the Son, in the Unity of Eſſence, Goodneſs, Power, Wiſdom; not an extrinſick, but a connatural Agent. As the *Sun* doth illuſtrate all things by his Light, and quickens all things by his Heat; ſo God created the * Rom. 11. 36.

† Pſal. 33. 9.

Worlds

Worlds *by Christ*, as he was the *brightness* or splendor *of his Glory*, the *exact image of his Person*; which follows the declaration of his making the Worlds *by* him *, to shew, that he acted not as an Instrument, but one in Essential conjunction with him; as Light and Brightness with the *Sun*. But suppose he did make the World as a kind of Instrument, He was then before the World, not bounded by Time; and Eternity cannot well be conceiv'd belonging to a Being without Omnipotency: He is the *End* as well as the Autor of the Creatures †; not only the Principle which gave them Being, but the Sea into whose glory they run and dissolve themselves, which consists not with the meanness of an Instrument.

* Heb. 1. 3, 4.

† Colos. 1. 16.

2. As Creation, so *Preservation is ascribed to him*, Colos. 1. 17. *By him all things consist.* As he preceded all things in his Eternity, so he establishes all things by his Omnipotency, and fixes them in their several Centers, that they sink not into that nothing from whence he fetched them. By him they flourish in their several Beings, and observe the Laws and Orders he first appointed: That Power of his which extracted them from insensible Nothing, upholds them in their several Beings with the same facility as he spake Being into them, even *by the word of his Power* *, and by one Creative continued Voice called all Generations from the beginning to the Period of the World †, and causes them to flourish in their several seasons. 'Tis *by him Kings reign, and Princes decree Justice*, and all things are confin'd within the limits of Government. All which are Acts of an Infinite Power.

* Heb. 1. 3.

† Isa. 41. 4.

3. *Resurrection is also ascrib'd to him.* The Body crumbled to Dust, and that Dust blown to several quarters of the World, cannot be gathered in its distinct parts, and new formed for the entertainment of the Soul, without the Strength of an Infinite Arm. This he will do and more; change the vileness of an Earthly Body into the glory of an Heavenly one; a Dusty Flesh into a Spiritual Body, which is an argument of a Power invincible, to which all things cannot but stoop; for it is by such an operation, which testifies an ability *to subdue all things to himself* *; especially when he works it with the same ease as he did the Creation, by the power of his Voice. *John* 5. 28. *All that are in the Graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth:* Speaking them into a restored Life from insensible Dust, as he did into Being from an empty Nothing. The greatest acts of Power are own'd to belong to Creation, Preservation, Resurrection: *Omnipotence* therefore is his Right; and therefore a Deity cannot be denied to him that inherits a Perfection essential to none but God, and impossible to be entrusted in, or managed by the hands of any Creatures.

* Phil. 3. 21.

And this is no mean comfort to those that believe in him: He is, in regard of his Power, *the Horn of Salvation*; so *Zechariah* sings of him, *Luk.* 1. 69. Nor could there be any more *Mighty* found out upon whom God could have *laid our help* *. No reason therefore to doubt his ability to save to the utmost, who hath the Power of *Creation*, *Preservation*, and *Resurrection* in his hands. His Promises must be accomplish'd, since nothing can resist him: He hath Power to fulfil his Word, and bring all things to a final issue, because he is *Almighty*; by his outstretched Arm in the deliverance of his *Israel* from *Egypt*, (for it was his Arm, 1 *Cor.* 10.) he shew'd, that he was able to deliver us from Spiritual *Egypt*. The charge of Mediator to expiate Sin, vanquish Hell, form a Church, conduct and perfect it, are not to be effected by a Person of less ability than Infinite. Let this *Almightiness* of his be the Bottom, wherein to cast and fix the Anchor of our Hopes.

* Psal. 89. 19.

2. Information. Hence may be inferred *the Deity of the Holy Ghost.* Works of Omnipotency are ascribed to the *Spirit of God:* By the motion of the Wings of this Spirit, as a Bird over her Eggs, was that rude and unshapen Mass hatch'd into a comely *World* *. The *Stars*, or perhaps the *Angels*, are meant by the *garnishing of the Heavens* in the *Verse before the Text*, were brought forth in their comeliness and dignity, as the Ornaments of the upper World, by this Spirit; *By his Spirit he hath garnished the Heavens.* To this Spirit *Job* ascribes the formation both of the Body and Soul under the Title of *Almighty*, *Job* 33. 4. *The Spirit of God hath made, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life. Resurrection*, another work of Omnipotency, is attributed to him, *Rom.* 8. 11. The *Conception* of our Saviour in the Womb; the *Miracles* that he wrought, were by the power of the *Spirit* in him. *Power* is a Title belonging to him, and sometimes both are put together, 1 *Thess.* 1. 5. and other places. And that great Power of changing the Heart, and sanctifying a polluted Nature, a work greater than Creation, is frequently acknowledg'd in the Scripture to be the peculiar act of the *Holy Ghost.* The *Father*, *Son*, *Spirit*, are one Principle in Creation, Resurrection, and all the Works of Omnipotence.

* Gen. 1. 2. *So the word* Moved *properly signifies.*

3. Inference from the Doctrine. *The Blessedness of God is hence evidenc'd.* If God be Almighty, he can want nothing; all *want* speaks Weakness. If he doth what he will, he cannot be miserable; all *Misery* consists in those things which happen contrary to our Will. There is nothing can hinder his Happiness, because nothing can resist his Power. Since he is *Omnipotent*, nothing can hurt him, nothing can strip him of what he hath, of what he is *. If he can do whatsoever he will, he cannot want any thing that he wills: He is as happy, as great, as glorious as he will; for he hath a perfect liberty of Will to will, and a perfect Power to attain what he will; His Will cannot be restrained, nor his Power mated. It would be a defect in Blessedness, to will what he were not able to do: *Sorrow* is the result of a want of Power, with a presence of Will. † If he could will any thing which he could not effect, he would be miserable, and no longer God: He can do whatsoever he pleases, and therefore can want nothing that pleases him. He cannot be infinitely happy, the original of whose Happiness is not in himself: Nothing can be infinitely happy, that is limited and bounded.

* Sabunde, *Tit.* 39.

† Pont. *par.* 6. *med.* 16. *p.* 531.

4. *Hence is a ground for the Immutability of God.* As he is uncapable of changing his Resolves, because of his Infinite Wisdom, so he is uncapable of being forced to any Change, because of his Infinite Power. Being *Almighty*, He can be no more changed from Power to Weakness; than being *All-wise*, He can be changed from Wisdom to Folly; or being *Omniscient*, from Knowledge to Ignorance. He cannot be alter'd in his Purposes, because of his *Wisdom*, nor in the manner and method of his Actions, because of his *Infinite Strength.* Men indeed, when their Designs are laid deepest, and their Purposes stand firmest, yet are forced to stand still, or change the manner of the execution of their Resolves, by reason of some outward Accidents that obstruct them in their course; for having not Wisdom to foresee future hindrances, they have not power to prevent them, or strength to remove them, when they unexpectedly interpose themselves between their desire and performance: But no created Power has strength enough to be a bar against God. By the same act of his Will that he resolves a thing, he can puff away any Impediments that seem to rise up against him. He that wants no Means to effect

effect his purposes, cannot be check'd by any thing that riseth up to stand in his way: *Heaven*, *Earth*, *Sea*, the deepest places, are too weak to resist his
* Psal. 135. 6. Will *. The Purity of the *Angels* will not, and the *Devil*'s Malice cannot frustrate his Will; the one voluntarily obeys the beck of his hand, and the other are vanquisht by the power of it. What can make him change his Purposes, who (if he please) can dash the *Earth* against the *Heavens* in the twinkling of an Eye, untying the World from its Center, clap the *Stars* and *Elements* together into one Mass, and blow the whole Creation of *Men* and *Devils* into Nothing. Because he is Almighty, therefore he is Immutable.

5. Hence is inferred *the Providence of God, and his Government of the World.* His *Power*, as well as his *Wisdom*, gives him a right to Govern: Nothing can equal him, therefore nothing can share the Command with him; since All things are his Works, 'tis fittest they should be under His Order: He that frames a work, is fittest to guide and govern it. God hath the most Right to Govern, because he hath Knowledge to direct his Power, and Power to execute the results of his Wisdom: He knows what is convenient to order, and hath Strength to effect what he orders. As his Power would be oppressive without *Goodness* and *Wisdom*, so his Goodness and Wisdom would be fruitless without Power. An Artificer that hath lost his hands may direct, but cannot make an Engine: A Pilot that hath lost his Arms, may advise the way of Steerage, but cannot hold the Helm; something is wanting in him to be a compleat Governour: But since both *Counsel* and *Power* are Infinite in God, hence results an Infinite Right to Govern, and an Infinite Fitness, because his Will cannot be resisted, his Power cannot be enfeebled or diminish'd; he can quicken and encrease the strength of all Means as he pleases. He can hold all things in the World together, and preserve them in those Functions wherein he setled them, and conduct them to those ends for which he designed them.

Every Artificer, the more Excellent he is, and the more Excellency of Power appears in his work, is the more careful to maintain and cherish it. Those that deny Providence, do not only ravish from him the bowels of his *Goodness*, but strip him of a main exercise of his *Power*, and engender in Men a suspicion of Weariness and Feebleness in him; as tho' his strength had been spent in making them, that none is left to guide them. They would make him Headless in regard of his *Wisdom*, and Bowelless in regard of his *Goodness*, and Armless in regard of his *Strength*: If he did not, or were not able to preserve and provide for his Creatures, his Power in making them would be in a great part an Invisible Power; if he did not preserve what he made, and govern what he preserves, it would be a kind of strange and rude Power, to make, and suffer it to be dasht in pieces at the pleasure of others. If the Power of God should relinquish the World, the life of things would be extinguisht, the Fabrick would be confounded, and fall into a deplorable *Chaos*. That which is composed of so many various pieces, could not maintain its Union, if there were not a secret Virtue binding them together, and maintaining those varieties of links.

Well then, since God is not only so good, that he cannot will any thing but what is good: so Wise, that he cannot err or mistake; but also so Able, that he cannot be defeated or mated: He hath every way a full Ability to govern the World; where those three are Infinite, the right and fitness resulting from thence is unquestionable: And indeed, to deny God this Active part of his Power, is to render him Weak, Foolish, Cruel, or all.

6. Here is a *ground for the Worship of God.* Wisdom and Power are the grounds of the Respect we give to Men; they being both infinite in God, are the foundation of a solemn Honour to be returned to him by his Creatures. If a Man make a curious Engine, we honour him for his skill; if another vanquish a vigorous Enemy, we admire him for his Strength: And shall not the efficacy of God's Power in *Creation*, *Government*, *Redemption*, enflame us with a sense of the Honour of his Name and Perfections? We admire those Princes that have vast Empires, numerous Armies, that have a power to conquer their Enemies, and preserve their own People in Peace: How much more ground have we to pay a mighty Reverence to God, who without Trouble and Weariness made and manages this vast Empire of the World by a Word and Beck? What sensible thoughts have we of the noise of Thunder, the power of the Sun, the storms of the Sea? These things that have no Understanding have struck Men with such a Reverence, that many have ador'd them as gods. What Reverence and Adoration doth this *Mighty Power*, joyned with an *Infinite Wisdom* in God, demand at our hands?

All Religion and Worship stands especially upon two Pillars, *Goodness* and *Power* in God; if either of these were defective, all Religion would faint away. We can expect no entertainment with him without Goodness, nor any benefit from him without Power. This God prefaceth to the Command to Worship him, the benefit his Goodness had conferr'd upon them, and the *Powerful manner* of conveyance of it to them, 2 *Kin.* 17. 36. *The Lord brought you up from the Land of* Egypt *with great Power and an Out-stretched Arm; him shall you fear, and him shall you worship, and to him shall you do sacrifice.* Because this Attribute is a main foundation of Prayer, the *Lord's Prayer* is concluded with a doxology of it, *For thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory.* As he is Rich, possessing all Blessings; so he is Powerful, to confer all Blessings on us, and make them efficacious to us. The * *Jews* repeat many times in their Prayers, some say an hundred times מלך העולם *The King of the World*; 'tis both an Awe and an Encouragement. We could not without consideration of it pray in Faith of Success; nay, we could not pray at all, if his Power were defective to help us, and his Mercy too weak to relieve us. Who would sollicite a Lifeless, or lye a prostrate Suppliant to a feeble Arm! Upon this Ability of God, our Saviour built his Petitions, *Heb.* 5. 7. *He offered up strong Cries unto him that was able to save him from death.* *Abraham*'s Faith hung upon the same string, *Rom.* 4. 21. and the Captiv'd *Church* supplicates God to act according to the *greatness of his power*, Psal. 79. 11. In all our Addresses this is to be ey'd and consider'd, God is able to help, to relieve, to ease me, let my misery be never so great, and my strength never so weak. *If thou wilt thou canst make me clean*, was the Consideration the *Leper* had when he came to worship Christ; he was clear in his *Power*, and therefore worshiped him, though he was not equally clear in his *Will*. All *Worship* is shot wrong that is not directed to, and conducted by the thoughts of this Attribute, whose assistance we need. When we beg the Pardon of our Sins, we should eye *Mercy* and *Power*; when we beg his righting us in any case where we are unjustly oppress, we do not eye *Righteousness* without *Power*; when we plead the performance of his Promise, we do not regard his *Faithfulness* only without the prop of his *Power*. As *Power* ushers in all the Attributes of God in their exercise and manifestation in the World, so should it be the Butt our Eyes should be

* Capel. *in* 1 Tim. 1. 17

Mat. 8. 2.

fixed upon in all our acts of Worſhip: As without his Power his other Attributes would be uſeleſs, ſo without Apprehenſions of his Power our Prayers will be Faithleſs and Comfortleſs. The Title in the *Lord's Prayer* directs us to a proſpect both of his Goodneſs and Power; his Goodneſs in the word *Father*, his Greatneſs, Excellency and Power in the word *Heaven*. The heedleſs Conſideration of the Infiniteneſs of this Perfection roots up Piety in the midſt of us, and makes us ſo careleſs in Worſhip. Did we more think of that Power that rais'd the World out of nothing; that orders all Creatures by an act of his Will; that perform'd ſo great an exploit, as that of our Redemption, when maſterleſs Sin had triumphed over the World, we ſhould give God the Honour and Adoration which ſo great an excellency challengeth and deſerves at our hands, tho' we our ſelves had not been the work of his hands, or the monuments of his ſtrength; How could any Creature engroſs to it ſelf that reverence from us which is due to the powerful Creator, of whom it comes infinitely ſhort in Strength, as well as Wiſdom?

7. From this we have *a ground for the belief of the Reſurrection*. God aims at the glory of his Power, as well as the glory of any other Attribute. *Moſes* elſe would not have cull'd out this as the main Argument in his pleading with God, for the ſheathing the Sword which he began to draw out againſt them in the Wilderneſs, *Numb.* 14. 16. *The Nations will ſay, becauſe the Lord was not able to bring theſe people into the Land which he ſware to them*, &c. As the finding out the particulars of the duſt of our Bodies diſcovers the vaſtneſs of his Knowledge; ſo to raiſe them, will manifeſt the glory of his Power as much as Creation: Bodies that have moulder'd away into multitudes of Atoms, been reſolved into the Elements, paſſed thro' varieties of changes; been ſometimes the matter to lodge the form of a Plant, or been turned into the ſubſtance of a Fiſh or Fowl, or vapour'd up into a Cloud, and been part of that matter which hath compacted a Thunder-bolt; diſpos'd of in places far diſtant, ſcatter'd by the Winds, ſwallow'd and concocted by Beaſts; for theſe to be called out from their different places of abode, to meet in one Body, and be reſtored to their former Conſiſtency in a marriage union in the *twinkling of an eye* *, 'tis a Conſideration that may juſtly amaze us; and our ſhallow Underſtandings are too feeble to comprehend it. But is it not credible, ſince all the Diſputes againſt it may be ſilenc'd by reflections on Infinite Power, which nothing can oppoſe, for which nothing can be eſteem'd too difficult to effect, which doth not imply a Contradiction in it ſelf. It was no leſs amazing to the *bleſſed Virgin*, to hear a Meſſage that ſhe ſhould Conceive a Son without knowing a Man; but ſhe is quickly anſwer'd by the Angel, with a *Nothing is impoſſible to God*, *Luk.* 1. 34, 37. The diſtinct parts of our Bodies cannot be hid from his All-ſeeing Eye, where-ever they are lodged, and in all the Changes they paſs through, as was diſcourſed when the Omniſcience of God was handled; ſhall then the collection of them together be too hard for his Invincible Power and Strength, and the uniting all thoſe parts into a Body, with new diſpoſitions, to receive their ſeveral Souls, be too big and bulky for that Power which never yet was acquainted with any bar? Was not the Miracle of our Saviour's multiplying the Loaves, ſuppoſe it had not been by a new Creation, but a collection of Grain from ſeveral parts, very near as ſtupendous as this? Had any one of us been the only Creatures made juſt before the matter of the World, and beheld that inform *Chaos* covered with a *thick darkneſs*, mentioned *Gen.* 1. 2. would not the Report, that from this dark deep, next to nothing, ſhould be rais'd ſuch a multitude of comely Creatures, with ſuch innumerable varieties of Members, Voices, Colours, Motions, and ſuch numbers of ſhining Stars; a bright Sun, one uniform Body of Light from this Darkneſs, that ſhould like a Giant, rejoyce to run a race for many thouſands of years together, without ſtop or wearineſs: Would not all theſe have ſeemed as incredible as the Collection of ſcatter'd Duſt? What was it that erected the innumerable Hoſt of Heaven, the glorious Angels, and glittering Stars, for ought we know, more numerous than the Bodies of Men, but an act of the Divine Will; and ſhall the Power that wrought this, ſink under the Charge of gathering ſome diſpers'd Atoms, and compacting them into a Humane Body? † Can you tell how the Duſt of the ground was kneaded by God into the Body of Man, and changed into Fleſh, Skin, Hair, Bones, Sinews, Veins, Arteries and Blood, and fitted for ſo many ſeveral Activities, when a Humane Soul was breath'd into it? Can you imagine how a Rib taken from *Adam*'s ſide, a lifeleſs Bone, was formed into Head, Hands, Feet, Eyes? Why may not the matter of men which have been, be reſtor'd, as well as that which was not, be firſt erected? Is it harder to repair thoſe things which were, than to create thoſe things which were not? Is there not the ſame Artificer? Hath any Diſeaſe or Sickline's abated his Power? Is the *Ancient of days* grown feeble; or ſhall the Elements and other Creatures, that alway yet obey'd his Command, ruffle againſt his raiſing Voice, and refuſe to diſgorge thoſe remains of Humane Bodies they have ſwallow'd up in their ſeveral Bowels? Did the whole World, and all the parts of it riſe at his word, and ſhall not ſome parts of the World, the Duſt of the Dead, ſtand up out of the Graves at a word of the ſame mighty Efficacy? Do we not annually ſee thoſe Marks of Power which may ſtun our Incredulity in this concern? Do you ſee in a ſmall Acorn or little Seed, any ſuch ſights, as a Tree with Body, Bark, Branches, Leaves, Flowers, Fruit, where can you find them? Do you know the inviſible Corners where they lurk in that little Body? And yet theſe you afterwards view riſing up from this little Body, when ſown in the Ground, that you could not poſſibly have any proſpect of when you roul'd it in your hand, or open'd its Bowels. And why may not all the particulars of our Bodies, however diſpos'd as to their diſtinct Natures inviſibly to us, remain diſtinct, as well as if you mingle a thouſand Seeds together, they will come up in their diſtinct kinds, and preſerve their diſtinct Vertues?

Again, Is not the making Heaven and Earth, the Union of the Divine and Humane Nature, Eternity and Infirmity, to make a Virgin conceive a Son, bear the Creator, and bring forth the Redeemer, to form the Blood of God of the Fleſh of a Virgin, a greater work than the Calling together and uniting the ſcatter'd parts of our Bodies, which are all of one Nature and Matter? And ſince the Power of God is manifeſted in pardoning innumerable Sins, is not the ſcattering our Tranſgreſſions, as far as the *Eaſt* is from the *Weſt*, as the expreſſion is, *Pſal.* 103. 12. and caſting ſuch numbers into the depths of the Sea, which is God's Power over himſelf, a greater Argument of *Might*, than the recalling and repairing the Atoms of our Bodies from their various receptacles? 'Tis not hard for them to believe this of the Reſurrection, that have been ſenſible of the weight and force of their Sins, and the Power of God in pardoning and vanquiſhing that mighty reſiſtance which was made in their Hearts againſt the

* 1 Cor. 15. 22.

† Lingend. *Tom.* 3. *p.* 779, 780.

the power of his renewing and ſanctifying Grace. The conſideration of the Infinite Power of God, is a good ground of the belief of the Reſurrection.

8. Since the Power of God is ſo great and incomprehenſible, *How ſtrange is it that it ſhould be contemned and abuſed by the Creatures as it is?* The Power of God is beaten down by ſome, outraged by others, blaſphemed by many under their Sufferings. The ſtripping God of the honour of his Creation, and the glory of his Preſervation of the World, falls under this charge: Thus do they that deny his framing the World alone, or thought the firſt matter was not of God's creation: and ſuch as fancied an Evil Principle, the Author of all Evil, as God is the Author of all Good, and ſo exempt from the Power of God, that it could not be vanquiſh'd by him. Theſe things have formerly found Defenders in the World; but they are in themſelves ridiculous and vain, and have no footing in common Reaſon, and are not worthy of debate in a Chriſtian Auditory.

In *General*, all Idolatry in the World did ariſe from the want of a due Notion of this Infinite Power. The Heathen thought one God was not ſufficient for the managing all things in the World, and therefore they feign'd ſeveral gods that had ſeveral charges: As *Ceres* preſided over the Fruits of the Earth; *Eſculapius* over the Cure of Diſtempers; *Mercury* for Merchandiſe and Trade; *Mars* for War and Battels; *Apollo* and *Minerva* for Learning and Ingenious Arts; and *Fortune* for Caſual things. Whence doth the other ſort of Idolatry, the adoring our Bags and Gold, our dependencies on, and truſting in Creatures for help, ariſe, but from Ignorance of God's Power, or mean and ſlender Apprehenſions of it?

Firſt, There is *a Contempt of it.*
Secondly, *An Abuſe of it.*

1. *'Tis contemn'd in every Sin, eſpecially in obſtinacy in Sin.* All Sin whatſoever is built upon ſome falſe Notion or monſtrous Conception of one or other of God's Perfections, and in particular of this. It includes a ſecret and lurking Imagination, that we are able to grapple with *Omnipotence*, and enter the liſts with *Almightineſs*; what elſe can be judged of the *Apoſtle*'s expreſſion, 1 *Cor.* 10. 22. *Do we provoke the Lord to jealouſie, are we ſtronger than he?* Do we think we have an Arm too powerful for that Juſtice we provoke, and can repel that Vengeance we exaſperate? Do we think we are an even match for God, and are able to deſpoil him of his Divinity? To deſpiſe his Will, violate his Order, practiſe what he forbids with a ſevere Threatning, and pawns his Power to make it good; is to pretend to have *an Arm like God*, and be able to *thunder* with a Voice equal or ſuperior to him, as the expreſſion is *Job* 40. 9. All Security in Sin is of this ſtrain; When Men are not concerned at Divine Threatnings, nor ſtagger'd in their ſinful Race, they intimate, that the Declarations of Divine Power are but Vain-glorious boaſtings; that God is not ſo ſtrong and able as he reports himſelf to be; and therefore they will venture it, and dare him to try, whether the ſtrength of his Arm be as forcible as the Words of his Mouth are terrible in his Threats; this is to believe themſelves Creators, not Creatures. We magnifie God's Power in our wants, and debaſe it in our Rebellions; as though Omnipotence were only able to ſupply our Neceſſities, and unable to revenge the Injuries we offer him.

2. This Power is Contemn'd *in Diſtruſt of God.* All *Diſtruſt* is founded in a doubting of his Truth, as if he would not be as good as his Word; or of his Omniſcience, as if he had not a memory to retain his Word; or of his Power, as if He could not be as great as his Word. We meaſure the Infinite Power of God by the ſhort Line of our Underſtandings, as if Infinite Strength were bounded within the narrow compaſs of our Finite Reaſon; as if He could do no more than we were able to do.

How ſoon did thoſe *Iſraelites* loſe the remembrance of God's out-ſtretched Arm, when they utter'd that Atheiſtical Speech, *Pſal.* 78. 9. *Can God furniſh a Table in the Wilderneſs?* As if he that turned the Duſt of *Egypt* into *Lice*, for the puniſhment of their Oppreſſors, could not turn the Duſt of the *Wilderneſs* into *Corn*, for the ſupport of their Bodies? As if he that had miraculouſly rebuked the *Red Sea*, for their Safety, could not provide *Bread* for their Nouriſhment? Though they had ſeen the *Egyptians* with loſt Lives in the Morning, in the ſame place where *Their* Lives had been miraculouſly preſerved in the Evening; yet They diſgrace that Experimented Power, by oppoſing to it the Stature of the *Anakims*, the Strength of their Cities, and the height of their Walls, *Num.* 13. 32. and *Num.* 14. 3. *Wherefore hath the Lord brought us into this Land to fall by the Sword?* As tho' the *Giants* of *Canaan* were too ſtrong for Him, for whom they had ſeen the Armies of *Egypt* too weak. How did they contract the Almightineſs of God into the littleneſs of a Little man, as if he muſt needs ſink under the Sword of a *Canaanite?*

This *Diſtruſt* muſt ariſe either from a flat *Atheiſm*, a denial of the Being of God, or his Government of the World; or unworthy Conceits of a Weakneſs in him, that he had made Creatures too hard for himſelf; that he were not ſtrong enough to grapple with thoſe mighty *Anakims*, and give them the poſſeſſion of *Canaan* againſt ſo great a Force. *Diſtruſt* of him implies either, that he was alway deſtitute of Power, or that his Power is exhauſted by his former Works, or that it is limited, and near a Period: 'Tis to deny him to be the Creator that moulded Heaven and Earth. Why ſhould we by Diſtruſt put a ſlight upon that Power which he hath ſo often expreſt, and which in the minuteſt Works of his hands ſurmount the force of the ſharpeſt Underſtanding?

3. 'Tis Contemn'd *in too great a fear of Man which ariſeth from a diſtruſt of Divine Power.* Fear of Man, is a crediting the Might of Man with a diſrepute of the Arm of God; it takes away the glory of his Might, and renders the Creature ſtronger than God, and God feebler than a Mortal; as if the Arm of Man were a *Rod of Iron*, and the Arm of God a *brittle Reed.* How often do Men tremble at the Threatnings and Hectorings of Ruffians, yet will ſtand as Stakes againſt the Precepts and Threatnings of God, as though he had leſs Power to preſerve us, than Enemies had to deſtroy? With what diſdain doth God ſpeak to Men infected with this Humour? *Iſa.* 51. 12, 13. *Who art thou, that art afraid of a Man that ſhall die, and of the Son of Man that ſhall be made as graſs; and forgetteſt the Lord thy Maker, that hath ſtretched forth the Heavens, and laid the foundation of the Earth; and haſt feared continually every day, becauſe of the fury of the Oppreſſor?*

To fear Man, that is as Graſs, that cannot think a Thought without a Divine concourſe, that cannot breath, but by a Divine Power, nor touch a Hair without Licenſe firſt granted from Heaven: This is a forgetfulneſs, and conſequently a ſlight of that Infinite Power, which hath been manifeſted in founding the Earth and garniſhing the Heavens. All Fear of Man, in the way of our Duty, doth in ſome ſort thruſt out the remembrance, and diſcredit the great Actions of the Creator. Would not a Mighty Prince think it a Diſparagement to him, if his

Servant ſhould decline his Command for fear of one of his Subjects? And hath not the Great God juſt cauſe to think himſelf diſgrac'd by us, when we deny him Obedience for fear of a Creature: As though he had but an *Infant ability* too feeble to bear us out in Duty, and uncapable to ballance the ſtrength of an Arm of Fleſh?

4. 'Tis Contemn'd *by truſting in our ſelves, in Means, in Man, more than in God.* When in any Diſtreſs we will try every Creature-refuge, before we have recourſe to God; and when we apply our ſelves to him, we do it with ſuch ſlight and perfunctory frames, and with ſo much deſpondency, as if we deſpair'd either of his Ability or Will to help us; and implore him with cooler Affections, than we ſollicite Creatures: Or, when in a Diſeaſe we depend upon the vertue of the Medicine, the ability of the Phyſician, and reflect not upon that Power that endued the Medicine with that vertue, and ſupports the quality in it, and concurs to the operation of it. When we depend upon the activity of the Means, as if they had power originally in themſelves, and not derivatively; and do not eye the Power of God animating and aſſiſting them. We cannot expect relief from any thing with a neglect of God, but we render it in our Thoughts more powerful than God: We acknowledge a greater fulneſs in a ſhallow Stream, than in an Eternal Spring; we do in effect depoſe the true God, and create to our ſelves a new one; we aſſert by ſuch a kind of acting, the Creature, if not ſuperior, yet equal with God, and independent on him. When we truſt in our own ſtrength, without begging his Aſſiſtance, or boaſt of our own ſtrength, without acknowledging his concurrence, as the *Aſſyrian*; *By the ſtrength of my hand have I done this, I have put down the Inhabitants like a valiant man*, Iſa. 10.13. 'Tis as if the *Ax ſhould boaſt it ſelf againſt him that hews therewith*, and thinks it ſelf more mighty than the Arm that weilds it, *Verſ.* 15, when we truſt in others more than in God. Thus God upbraids thoſe by the *Prophet* that ſought help from *Egypt*, telling them, *Iſa.* 31. 3. *The Egyptians were men, and not gods*; intimating, that by their dependance on them, they render'd them gods, and not Men, and advanc'd them from the ſtate of Creatures to that of Almighty Deities. 'Tis to ſet a Pile of Duſt, a heap of Aſhes, above Him that created and preſerves the World. To truſt in a Creature, is to make it as Infinite as God; to do that which is impoſſible in it ſelf to be done. God himſelf cannot make a Creature infinite, for that were to make him God.

'Tis alſo contemn'd when we aſcribe what we receive to the Power of Inſtruments, and not to the Power of God. Men, in whatſoever they do for us, are but the Tools whereby the Creator works. Is it not a diſgrace to the Limner to admire his Penſil, and not himſelf; to the Artificer, to admire his File and Engines, and not his Power? *'Tis not I*, ſaith *Paul*, *that labour, but the Grace*, the efficacious Grace, *of God which is in me.* Whatſoever good we do is from him, not from our ſelves; to aſcribe it to our ſelves, or to Inſtruments, is to overlook and contemn his Power.

5. *Unbelief of the Goſpel is a contempt and diſowning Divine Power.* This Perfection hath been diſcover'd in the Conception of Chriſt, the union of the *two* Natures, his Reſurrection from the Grave, the Reſtoration of the World, and the Converſion of Men, more than in the Creation of the World: Then what a diſgrace is *Unbelief* to all that Power, that ſo ſeverely puniſh'd the *Jews* for the rejecting the *Goſpel*; turn'd ſo many Nations from their beloved Superſtitions; humbled the Power of Princes and the Wiſdom of Philoſophers; chas'd *Devils* from their Temples, by the weakneſs of Fiſhermen; planted the Standard of the *Goſpel*, againſt the common Notions and inveterate Cuſtoms of the World? What a diſgrace is *Unbelief* to this Power which hath preſerved *Chriſtianity* from being extinguiſh'd by the force of Men and Devils, and kept it flouriſhing in the midſt of Sword, Fire, and Executioners; that hath made the *Simplicity* of the Goſpel overpower the *Eloquence* of Orators, and multiply'd it from the aſhes of *Martyrs*, when it was deſtitute of all Humane Aſſiſtances? Not heartily to believe and embrace that Doctrine, which hath been attended with ſuch marks of Power, is a high reflection upon this Divine Perfection, ſo highly manifeſted in the firſt publication, propagation, and preſervation of it.

II. *The power of God is abuſed*, as well as contemned.

1. *When we make uſe of it to juſtifie Contradictions.* The Doctrine of *Tranſubſtantiation* is an abuſe of this Power. When the Maintainers of it cannot anſwer the Abſurdities alledg'd againſt it, they have recourſe to the Power of God. It implies a Contradiction, that the *ſame Body* ſhould be on Earth and in Heaven at the ſame inſtant of time; that it ſhould be at the Right Hand of God, and in the Mouth and Stomach of a Man; that it ſhould be a Body of *Fleſh*, and yet *Bread* to the Eye and to the Taſte; that it ſhould be Viſible and Inviſible, a glorious *Body*, and yet gnawn by the Teeth of a Creature; that it ſhould be multiplied in a Thouſand places, and yet an entire Body in every one, where there is no Member to be ſeen, no Fleſh to be taſted; that it ſhould be above us in the higheſt Heavens, and yet within us in our lower Bowels: Such Contradictions as theſe are an Abuſe of the Power of God.

Again, We abuſe this *Power* when we believe every idle Story that is reported, becauſe God is able to make it ſo, if he pleaſed. We may as well believe *Æſop*'s *Fables* to be true, that Birds ſpake, and Beaſts reaſoned, becauſe the Power of God can enable ſuch Creatures to ſuch acts. God's Power is not the Rule of our Belief of a thing without the exerciſe of it in matter of Fact, and the declaration of it upon ſufficient Evidence.

2. The Power of God is abus'd, *by preſuming on it, without uſing the means he hath appointed.* When Men ſit with folded Arms, and make a Confidence in his Power, a glorious Title to their *Idleneſs* and *Diſobedience*; they would have his Strength do all, and his Precept ſhould move them to do nothing; this is a truſt of his Power againſt his Command, a pretended glorifying his Power with a ſlight of his Sovereignty. Though God be Almighty, yet for the moſt part he exerciſeth his Might in giving life and ſucceſs to Second Cauſes and lawful Endeavours. When we ſtay in the Mouth of Danger, without any Call ordering us to continue, and againſt a Door of Providence open'd for our reſcue, and ſanctuary our ſelves in the *Power of God* without any Promiſe, without any Providence conducting us; this is not to glorifie the Divine Might, but to neglect it, in neglecting the means which his Power affords to us for our eſcape: *To condemn it to our humors; to work Miracles for us according to our wills, and againſt his own. God could have ſent a *Worm* to be *Herod*'s Executioner, when he ſought the life of our *Saviour*, or imploy'd an Angel from Heaven to have tied his hands or ſtopt his breath, and not put *Joſeph* upon a flight to *Egypt* with our Saviour; yet had it not been an abuſe of the Power of God, for *Joſeph* to have neglected the Precept, and ſlighted the Means God gave him for the

*Harwood p. 13.

the preſerving his own life and that of the Childs? *Chriſt* himſelf, when the *Jews* conſulted to deſtroy him, preſum'd not upon the *Power of God* to ſecure him, but uſed ordinary means for his preſervation, by *walking no more openly*, but retiring himſelf into a City near the *Wilderneſs* till the *hour was come*, and the Call of his Father manifeſt †. A raſh running upon Danger, though for the Truth it ſelf, is a preſuming upon, and conſequently an abuſe of this Power; a proud challenging it to ſerve our turns againſt the Authority of his Will, and the Force of his Precept: A not reſting in his Ordinate Power, but demanding his Abſolute Power to pleaſure our Follies and Preſumptions; concluding and expecting more from it than what is authoriz'd by his Will.

† John 11. 53, 54.

2. Inſtruction. If Infinite Power be a peculiar Property of God, *How miſerable will all wicked Rebels be under this Power of God?* Men may break his Laws, but not impair his Arm; they may ſlight his Word, but cannot reſiſt his Power. If he ſwear that he will ſweep a place with the Beſom of Deſtruction, *As he hath thought, ſo ſhall it come to paſs; and as he hath purpoſed, ſo ſhall it ſtand*, Iſa. 14. 23, 24. Rebels againſt an Earthly Prince may exceed him in ſtrength, and be more powerful than their Soveraign: None can equal God, much leſs exceed him. As none can exerciſe an act of hoſtility againſt him without his permiſſive Will, ſo none can ſtruggle from under his hand without his poſitive Will. He hath an Arm not to be moved, a Hand not to be wrung aſide. God is repreſented on his Throne like a *Jaſper Stone*, *Rev.* 4. 3. as one of Invincible Power when he comes to Judge; the *Jaſper* is a Stone which withſtands the greateſt Force *. Though Men reſiſt the order of his Laws, they cannot reſiſt the Sentence of their puniſhment, nor the execution of it. None can any more exempt themſelves from the Arm of his Strength, than they can from the Authority of his Dominion. As they muſt bow to his Sovereignty, ſo they muſt ſink under his Force. A Priſoner in this World may make his eſcape, but a Priſoner in the World to come cannot; *Job* 10. 7. *There is none that can deliver out of thine hand.* There is *none to deliver* when he *tears in pieces*, *Pſal.* 50. 22. His Strength is uncontroulable; hence his *Throne* is repreſented as a *Fiery flame*, *Dan.* 7. 9. As a ſpark of Fire hath power to kindle one thing after another, and encreaſe till it conſumes a Forreſt, a City, ſwallow up all combuſtible Matter, till it conſumes a World, and many Worlds, if they were in Being. What power hath a Tree to reſiſt the Fire, though it ſeems mighty when it outbraves the Winds? What Man to this day hath been able to free himſelf from that Chain of *Death*, God clapt upon him for his Revolt? And if he be too feeble to reſcue himſelf from a Temporal, much leſs from an Eternal Death. The *Devils* have to this minute groaned under the Pile of Wrath, without any ſucceſs in delivering themſelves by all their ſtrength, which much ſurmounts all the ſtrength of *Mankind*, nor have they *any* hopes to work their reſcue to *Eternity*.

* Grot. in loc.

How fooliſh is every Sinner? Can we poor Worms ſtrut it out againſt Infinite Power? We cannot reſiſt the meaneſt Creatures when God commiſſions them, and puts a Sword into their hands. They will not, no not the *Worms*, be ſtartled at the glory of a King, when they have their Creator's Warrant to be his Executioners *. Who can withſtand him, when he commands the Waves and Inundations of the Sea to leap over the Shore; when he divides the Ground in Earthquakes, and makes it gape wide to ſwallow the Inhabitants of it; when the Air is corrupted to breed Peſtilences; when Storms and Showers, unſeaſonably falling, putrifie the Fruits of the Earth; what created Power can mend the matter, and with a prevailing Voice ſay to him, What doſt thou?

* Acts 12. 23.

There are *two* Attributes God will make glitter in Hell to the full, his *Wrath* and his *Power*, Rom. 9. 22. *What if God willing to ſhew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much Long-ſuffering the veſſels of wrath fitted for deſtruction?* If it were meer Wrath, and no Power to ſecond it, it were not ſo terrible; but 'tis *Wrath* and *Power*, both are joyn'd together: 'Tis not only a ſharp Sword, but a powerful Arm; and not only that, for then it were well for the damned Creature, To have many ſharp blows, and from a ſtrong Arm; this may be without putting forth the higheſt ſtrength a Man hath: But in this God makes it his deſign to make his Power known and conſpicuous; He takes the Sword (as it were) in both hands, that he may ſhew the ſtrength of his Arm in ſtriking the harder blow; and therefore the *Apoſtle* calls it, 2 *Theſſ.* 1. 9. the *Glory of his Power*, which puts a Sting into this Wrath; and it is called, *Rev.* 19. 15, the *fierceneſs of the wrath of the Almighty*. God will do it in ſuch a manner, as to make Men ſenſible of his Almightineſs in every ſtroke. How great muſt that Vengeance be, that is back'd by all the Strength of God? When there will be a powerful Wrath without a powerful Compaſſion; when all his Power ſhall be exerciſed in Puniſhing, and not the leaſt mite of it exercis'd in Pitying; how irreſiſtible will be the load of ſuch a weighty Hand? How can the *duſt of the Ballance* break the mighty Bars, or get out of the Liſts of a powerful Vengeance, or hope for any grain of Comfort? Oh, that every obſtinate Sinner would think of this, and conſider his unmeaſurable boldneſs in thinking himſelf able to grapple with *Omnipotence!* What force can any have to reſiſt the preſence of him, before whom Rocks melt, and the Heavens at length ſhall be ſhrivel'd up as a Parchment by the laſt Fire? As the Light of God's Face is too dazling to be beheld by us; ſo the Arm of his Power is too mighty to be oppoſed by us. His Almightineſs is above the reach of our Potſheard ſtrength, as his Infiniteneſs is above the capacity of our purblind Underſtandings. God were not Omnipotent, if his Power could be render'd ineffectual by any.

Uſe II. *Comfort.*

A *Second Uſe* of this Point from the Conſideration of the Infinite Power of God, is of *Comfort*. As Omnipotence is an Ocean that cannot be fathom'd; ſo the Comforts from it are ſtreams that cannot be exhauſted. What Joy can be wanting to him that finds himſelf folded in the Arms of *Omnipotence?*

This Perfection is made over to Believers in the Covenant, as well as any other Attribute; *I am the Lord your God*; therefore that Power which is as eſſential to the Godhead as any other Perfection of his Nature, is in the rights and extent of it aſſur'd unto you. Nay, we may not ſay, it is made over more than any other, becauſe it is that which animates every other Perfection, and is the Spirit that gives them Motion and Appearance in the World. If God had expreſt himſelf in particular, as, *I am a True God, a Wiſe God, a Loving God, a Righteous God, I am yours*; what would all or any of thoſe have ſignified, unleſs the other alſo had been imply'd, as, *I am an Almighty God, I am your God?* In God's making over himſelf in any particular Attribute, this of his *Power* is included in every one, without which all his other Grants would be inſignificant. 'Tis a Comfort that Power is in the hand of God; it can never be better placed, for he can never uſe his Power to injure his confiding Creature:

ture: If it were in our own hands, we might uſe it to injure our ſelves. 'Tis a Power in the hand of an indulgent Father, not a hard-hearted Tyrant: 'Tis a juſt Power, *His right hand is full of Righteouſneſs*, Pſal. 48. 10. becauſe of his Righteouſneſs he can never uſe it ill, and becauſe of his Wiſdom he can never uſe it unſeaſonably. Men that have ſtrength, often miſplace the actings of it, becauſe of their Folly; and ſometimes imploy it to baſe ends, becauſe of their Wickedneſs: But this Power in God is alway awaken'd by *Goodneſs*, and conducted by Wiſdom; 'tis never exercis'd by Self-will and Paſſion, but according to the Immutable Rule of his own Nature, which is *Righteouſneſs*. How Comfortable is it to think that you have a God that can do what he pleaſes; nothing ſo difficult but he can effect, nothing ſo ſtrong but he can over-rule? You need not dread Men, ſince you have One to reſtrain them; nor fear Devils, ſince you have One to chain them: No Creature but is acted by this Power; no Creature but muſt fall upon the withdrawing of this Power. It was not all laid out in Creation: 'Tis not weaken'd by his preſervation of things; he hath yet a fulneſs of Power, and a reſidue of Spirit: For whom ſhould that Eternal *Arm of the Lord* be diſplay'd, and that Incomprehenſible *Thunder of his Power* be ſhot out, but for thoſe for whoſe ſake, and for whoſe comfort, it is revealed in his Word?

In Particular,

1. Here is *Comfort in all Afflictions and Diſtreſſes*. Our Evils can never be ſo great to oppreſs us, as his Power is great to deliver us. The ſame Power that brought a World out of a *Chaos*, and conſtituted, and hath hitherto preſerved the regular Motion of the Stars, can bring Order out of our Confuſions, and Light out of our Darkneſs. When our Saviour was in the greateſt diſtreſs, and beheld the Face of his Father frowning, while he was upon the *Croſs*, in his Complaint to him he exerciſeth Faith upon his Power, *Matth.* 27. 46. *Eli, Eli; My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* that is, *My ſtrong, my ſtrong*; *El* is a Name of Power belonging to God: He comforts himſelf in his Power while he complains of his Frowns. Follow his pattern, and forget not that Power that can ſcatter the Clouds, as well as gather them together. The *Pſalmiſt*'s ſupport in his Diſtreſs was in the Creative Power of God, *Pſal.* 121. 2. *My help comes from the Lord which made Heaven and Earth.*

2. 'Tis Comfort *in all ſtrong and ſtirring Corruptions and mighty Temptations*. 'Tis by this we may arm our ſelves, and *be ſtrong in the power of his might*, Epheſ. 6. 10. By this we may conquer Principalities and Powers as dreadful as Hell, but not ſo mighty as Heaven. By this we may triumph over Luſts within, too ſtrong for an Arm of Fleſh. By this the *Devils* that have poſſeſſed us may be caſt out; the batter'd Walls of our Souls may be repaired, and the Sons of *Anak* laid flat. That Power that brought Light out of Darkneſs, and over-maſter'd the deformity of the *Chaos*, and ſet bounds to the Ocean, and dried up the *Red Sea* by a Rebuke, can quell the Tumults in our Spirits, and level Spiritual *Goliahs* by his Word. When the *Diſciples* heard the terrifying Speech of our *Saviour*, concerning *Rich men*, that it was eaſier *for a Camel to go through the Eye of a Needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God*, Matth. 19. 24. to entertain the Goſpel, which commanded Self-denial; and that, becauſe of the Alurements of the World, and the ſtrong Habits in their Soul; Chriſt refers them to the Power of God, *Verſe* 26. who could expel thoſe ill Habits, and plant good ones; *with Men this is impoſſible, but with God all all things are poſſible*. There is no reſiſtance but he can ſurmount; no ſtrong Hold but he can demoliſh; no Tower, but he can level.

3. 'Tis Comfort from hence, *that all Promiſes ſhall be performed*. *Goodneſs* is ſufficient to make a Promiſe, but *Power* is neceſſary to perform a Promiſe. Men that are honeſt, cannot often make good their words, becauſe ſomething may intervene that may ſhorten their Ability; but nothing can diſable God, without diminiſhing his Godhead. He hath an Infiniteneſs of Power to accompliſh his Word, as well as an Infiniteneſs of Goodneſs to make and utter his Word. That *Might whereby he made Heaven and Earth*, and *his keeping Truth for ever*, are joyn'd together, *Pſal.* 146. 5, 6. His Father's Faithfulneſs, and His Creative Power, are link'd together. 'Tis upon this *Baſis* the Covenant, and every part of it, is eſtabliſh'd, and ſtands as firm as the *Almightineſs* of God, whereby he ſprung up the Earth, and rear'd the Heavens. *No power can reſiſt his will*, Rom. 9. 19. *Who can diſanul his purpoſe, and turn back his hand when it is ſtretched out?* Iſa. 14. 27. His Word is unalterable, and his Power is invincible. He could not deceive himſelf, for he knew his own ſtrength when he promiſed: No unexpected event can change his Reſolution, becauſe nothing can happen without the compaſs of his Foreſight. No Created Strength can ſtop him in his Action, becauſe all Creatures are ready to ſerve him at his Command; not the Devils in Hell, nor all the Wicked Men on Earth, ſince he hath ſtrength to reſtrain them, and an Arm to puniſh them. What can be too hard for him that created Heaven and Earth? Hence it was, that when God promiſed any thing anciently to his People, he uſed often the Name of the *Almighty*, the *Lord that created Heaven and Earth*, as that which was an undeniable Anſwer to any Objection, againſt any thing that might be made againſt the greatneſs and ſtupendiouſneſs of any Promiſe; by that *Name* in all his Works of Grace *was he known to them*, *Exod.* 6. 3. When we are ſure of his Will, we need not queſtion his Strength, ſince he never over-engageth himſelf above his Ability. He that could not be reſiſted by nothing in Creation, nor vanquiſh'd by *Devils* in Redemption, can never want Power to glorifie his Faithfulneſs in his Accompliſhment of whatſoever he hath promiſed.

4. From this Infiniteneſs of Power in God, we have ground of *Aſſurance for Perſeverance*. Since *Converſion* is reſembled to the Works of *Creation* and *Reſurrection*, two great Marks of his *Strength*, he doth not ſurely employ himſelf in the firſt work of Changing the Heart, to let any Created ſtrength baffle that Power which he began and intends to glorifie. It was this Might that ſtruck off the Chain, and expell'd that *ſtrong one* that poſſeſſed you. What if you are too weak to keep him out of his loſt poſſeſſion, will God loſe the glory of his firſt ſtrength, by ſuffering his foiled Adverſary to make a re-entry, and regain his former uſurpation? His Out-ſtretched Arm will not do leſs by his Spiritual, than it did by his National *Iſrael*: It guarded them all the way to *Canaan*, and left them not to ſhift for themſelves, after he had ſtruck off the Fetters of *Egypt*, and buried their Enemies in the *Red Sea*, *Deut.* 1. 31. This Greatneſs of the *Father* above all, our Saviour makes the ground of Believers continuance for ever, againſt the blaſts of Hell and Engines of the World, *John* 10. 29. *My Father is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hands*. Our keeping is not in our own weak hands, but in the hands of him who is mighty to ſave. That Power of God keeps us which intends our Salvation. In all fears of falling away,

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ſhelter your ſelves in the Power of God: *He ſhall be holden up*, ſaith the *Apoſtle*, ſpeaking concerning one weak in Faith; and no other Reaſon is rendred by him but this, *for God is able to make him to ſtand*, Rom. 14. 4.

5. From this Attribute of the Infinite Power of God, we have a ground of *comfort in the loweſt eſtate of the Church*. Let the ſtate of the Church be never ſo deplorable, the condition never ſo deſperate, that Power that created the World, and ſhall raiſe the Bodies of Men, can create a happy ſtate for the Church, and raiſe her from an overwhelming Grave: Though the Enemies trample upon her, they cannot upon the Arm that holds her, which by the leaſt motion of it, can lift her up above the heads of her Adverſaries, and make them feel the thunder of that Power that none can underſtand: By the *blaſt of God they periſh*, and *by the breath of his Noſtrils they are conſumed*, Job 4.9. they *ſhall be ſcattered as Chaff before the wind*: If once he *draw his hand out of his boſom*, all muſt *Pſal. 74.11. fly before him, or ſink under him *: And when there is *none to help, his own Arm ſuſtains him, and † Iſa. 63.5. brings ſalvation †, and his fury doth uphold him.* What if the Church totter under the underminings of Hell? What if it hath a ſad Heart and wet Eyes? In what a little moment can he make the night turn into day, and make the *Jews* that were preparing for death in *Shuſhan*, triumph over the Necks of their Enemies, and march in one hour with Swords in their hands, that expected the laſt hour *ropes about their necks*? Eſth. 9.1,5. If *Iſrael* be purſued by *Pharaoh*, the Sea ſhall open its arms to protect them: If they be thirſty, a Rock ſhall ſpout out water to refreſh them: If they be hungry, Heaven ſhall be their Granary for *Manna*: If *Jeruſalem* be beſieg'd, and hath not force enough to encounter *Senacherib*, an Angel ſhall turn the Camp into an *Aceldema*, a Field of Blood. His People ſhall not want deliverances, till God want a Power of working Miracles, for their ſecurity: He is more jealous of his Power, than the Church can be of her Safety. And if we ſhould want other Arguments to preſs him, we may implore him by virtue of his Power: For when there is nothing in the Church as a Motive to him to ſave it, there is enough in his own Name, and *the illuſtration of his Power*, Pſal. 106. 8. Who can grapple with the Omnipotency of that God, who is jealous of, and zealous for the honour of it? And therefore God, for the moſt part, takes ſuch opportunities to deliver, wherein his Almightineſs may be moſt conſpicuous, and his Counſels moſt admirable. He awakened not himſelf to deliver *Iſrael*, till they were upon the brink of the *Red Sea*; nor to reſcue the *three Children*, till they were in the fiery Furnace; nor *Daniel*, till he was in the *Lions Den*. 'Tis in the *weakneſs* of his Creature that *his ſtrength is perfected*; not in a way of addition of perfectneſs to it, but in a way of manifeſtation of the perfection of it. As it is the perfection of the Sun to ſhine and enlighten the World, not that the Sun receives an increaſe of light by the darting of his Beams, but diſcovers his Glory to the admiration of Men, and pleaſure of the World. If it were not for ſuch occaſions, the World would not regard the Mightineſs of God, nor know what Power were in him. It traverſes the Stage in its fulneſs and liveline upon ſuch occaſions, when the Enemies are ſtrong, and their ſtrength edg'd with an intenſe hatred, and but little time between the contrivance and execution. 'Tis the great comfort that the loweſt Diſtreſſes of the Church are a fit *Scene* for the diſcovery of this Attribute, and that the Glory of God's Omnipotence, and the Churches Security, are ſo ſtraitly linkt together. 'Tis a promiſe that will never be forgotten by God, and ought never to be forgotten by us, that *in this Mountain, the hand of the Lord ſhall reſt* ‖; that is, the Power of the Lord ſhall ‖ Iſa. 25.10. abide; *and* Moab *ſhall be trodden under him, even as Straw is trodden down for the Dunghil.* And *the Plagues of* Babylon *ſhall come in one day, death and mourning, and famine; for ſtrong is the Lord who judges her*, Rev. 18. 8.

Uſe III.

The *Third Uſe* is for *Exhortation*.

1. *Meditate on this Power of God, and preſs it often upon your Minds.* We conclude many things of God that we do not practically ſuck the comfort of, for want of deep thoughts of it, and frequent inſpection into it. We believe God to be true, yet diſtruſt him; we acknowledge him powerful, yet fear the motion of every ſtraw. Many Truths, though aſſented to in our Underſtandings, are kept under hatches by corrupt Affections, and have not their due influence, becauſe they are not brought forth into the open Air of our Souls by Meditation. If we will but ſearch our hearts, we ſhall find it is the Power of God we often doubt of. When the heart of *Ahaz* and his Subjects trembled at the Combination of the *Syrian* and *Iſraelitiſh* Kings againſt him, for want of a confidence in the Power of God, God ſends his *Prophet* with Commiſſion to work a miraculous ſign at his own choice, to rear up his fainting heart; and when he refus'd to ask a ſign out of diffidence of that Almighty Power, the *Prophet* complains of it as an affront to his *Maſter* *. *Moſes* ſo great a Friend of God, was o- * Iſa. 7.12, 13. vertaken with this kind of Unbelief, after all the Experiments of God's miraculous Acts in *Egypt*; the Anſwer God gives him, manifeſts this to be at the Core: *Is the Lord's hand waxed ſhort?* Numb. 11.23.

For want of actuated Thoughts of this, we are many times turned from our known Duty by the blaſt of a Creature; as though Man had more power to diſmay us, than God hath to ſupport us in his commanded way. The belief of God's Power is one of the firſt ſteps to all Religion; without ſettled Thoughts of it, we cannot pray lively and believingly, for the obtaining the Mercies we want, or the averting the Evils we fear; we ſhould not love him, unleſs we are perſwaded he hath a Power to bleſs us; nor fear him, unleſs we were perſwaded of his Power to puniſh us. The frequent thoughts of this would render our Faith more ſtable, and our Hopes more ſtedfaſt; it would make us more feeble to ſin, and more careful to obey. When the *Virgin* ſtagger'd at the Meſſage of the *Angel*, that ſhe ſhould *bear a Son*, he in his Anſwer turns her to the Creative Power of God, *Luke* 1. 35. *The Power of the higheſt ſhall over-ſhadow thee.* Which ſeems to be in alluſion to the Spirits moving upon the face of the Deep, and bringing a comely World out of a confus'd Maſs. Is it harder for God to make a Virgin conceive a Son by the power of his Spirit, than to make a World? Why doth he reveal himſelf ſo often under the Title of *Almighty*, and preſs it upon us, but that we ſhould preſs it upon our ſelves? And ſhall we be forgetful of that, which every thing about us, every thing within us is a mark of? How come we by a power of ſeeing and hearing, a faculty and act of Underſtanding and Will, but by this Power framing us, this Power aſſiſting us? What though the Thunder of his Power cannot be underſtood, no more can any other perfection of his Nature; ſhall we therefore ſeldom think of it? The Sea cannot be fathom'd, yet the Merchant excuſeth not himſelf from ſailing upon the Surface of it. We cannot glorifie God, without due conſideration of this Attribute, for his *Power* is his *Glory* as much as any other, and called both by the Name of *Glory*, *Rom.* 6. 4.

ſpeaking of Chriſt's Reſurrection by the Glory of the Father; and alſo *the riches of his Glory*, Eph. 3. 16. Thoſe that have ſtrong Temptations in their courſe and over-preſſing Corruptions in their hearts, have need to think of it out of Intereſt, ſince nothing but this can relieve them. Thoſe that have experimented the working of it in their new Creation, are oblig'd to think of it out of gratitude. It was this mighty Power over himſelf that gave riſe to all that pardoning Grace already conferred, or hereafter expected; without it our Souls had been conſum'd, the World overturned; we could not have expected a happy Heaven, but have lain yelling in an Eternal Hell; had not the power of his Mercy exceeded that of his Juſtice, and his Infinite Power executed what his Infinite Wiſdom had contrived for our Redemption. How much alſo ſhould we be raiſ'd in our Admirations of God, and raviſh our ſelves in contemplating that Might that can raiſe innumerable Worlds in thoſe Infinite imaginary Spaces without this Globe of Heaven and Earth, and exceed unconceivably what he hath done in the Creation of this?

2. From the preſſing the conſideration of this upon our ſelves, *Let us be induc'd to truſt God upon the account of his Power.* The main end of the revelation of his power to the *Patriarchs*, and of the miraculous Operations of it in *Egypt*, was to induce them to an entire repoſing themſelves in God: And the *Pſalmiſt* doth ſcarce ſpeak of the Divine Omnipotence without making this Inference from it; and ſcarce exhorts to a truſt in God, but backs it with a Conſideration of his Power in Creation, it being the chief ſupport of the Soul, *Pſal.* 146. 1. *Happy is he whoſe hope is in the Lord his God, which made Heaven and Earth, the Sea and all that therein is.* That Power is invincible that drew the World out of nothing: Nothing can happen to us harder than the making the World without the concurrence of Inſtruments: No difficulty can nonplus that ſtrength, that hath drawn all things out of nothing, or out of a confus'd Matter next to nothing: No power can rifle what we commit to him, 2 *Tim.* 1. 12. He is all Power, above the reach of all Power; all other powers in the World flowing from him, or depending on him. He is worthy to be truſted, ſince we know him true, without ever breaking his word, and Omnipotent, never failing of his purpoſe; and a confidence in it is the chief act whereby we can glorifie this Power, and credit his Arm. A ſtrong God, and a weak Faith in Omnipotence, do not ſute well together. Indeed we are more engaged to a truſt in Divine Power than the Ancient *Patriarchs* were: They had the Verbal Declaration of his Power, and many of them little other Evidence of it, than in the Creation of the World; and their Faith in God being eſtabliſh'd in this firſt diſcovery of his Omnipotence, drew out it ſelf further to believe, That whatſoever God promiſed by his Word, he was able to perform, as well as the Creation of the *World out of nothing*; which ſeems to be the intendment of the *Apoſtle*, *Hebr.* 11. 3. Not barely to ſpeak of the Creation of the World by God, which was a thing the *Hebrews* underſtood well enough from their Ancient Oracles; but to ſhew the Foundation of the *Patriarchs* Faith, *viz. God making the World by his Word*, and what uſe they made of the Diſcovery of his Power in that, to lead them to believe the promiſe of God concerning the *Seed of the Woman* to be brought into the World. But we have not only the ſame Foundation, but ſuperadded Demonſtrations of this Attribute in the Conception of our Saviour, the Union of the two Natures, the glorious Redemption, the Propagation of the Goſpel, and the new Creation of the World. They relied upon the naked Power of God, without thoſe more illuſtrious Appearances of it, which have been in the Ages ſince, and arriv'd to our notice: We have the wonderful Effects of that which they had but obſcure Expectations of.

1. Conſider, *Truſt in God can never be without taking in God's power as a concurrent Foundation with his Truth.* 'Tis the main ground of Truſt, and ſo ſet forth in the Prophet, *Iſai.* 26. 4. *Truſt ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlaſting ſtrength.* And the Faith of the Ancients ſo recommended *Heb.* 11. had this chiefly for its ground; and the Faith in Goſpel-times is called a *Truſting on his Arm*, Iſai. 51. 5. All the Attributes of God are the Objects of our Veneration, but they do not equally contribute to the producing Truſt in our hearts; his Eternity, Simplicity, Infiniteneſs raviſh and aſtoniſh our Minds when we conſider them: But there is no immediate tendency in their Nature to allure us to a confidence in him, no not in an innocent State; much leſs in a laps'd and revolted Condition: But the other Perfections of his Nature, as his Holineſs, Righteouſneſs, Mercy, are amiable to us in regard of the immediate Operations of them upon and about the Creature, and ſo have ſomething in their own Nature to allure us to repoſe our ſelves in him: But yet thoſe cannot engage to an intire truſt in him, without reflecting upon his Ability, which can only render thoſe uſeful and ſucceſsful to the Creature. For whatſoever Bars ſtand in the way of his holy, righteous, and merciful Proceedings towards his Creatures, are not over-maſter'd by thoſe Perfections, but by that Strength of his which can only relieve us in concurrence with the other Attributes. How could his Mercy ſuccour us without his Arm, or his Wiſdom guide us without his Hand, or his Truth perform Promiſes to us without his ſtrength? As no Attribute can act without it, ſo in our Addreſſes to him upon the account of any particular Perfection in the Godhead according to our Indigency, one Eye muſt be perpetually fixed upon this of his Power; and our Faith would be feeble and diſpirited without eying this: Without this, his *Holineſs*, which hates Sin, would not be regarded; and his *Mercy*, pitying a grieving Sinner, would not be valued. As this Power is the ground of a wicked man's Fear, ſo it is the ground of a good man's Truſt. This was that which was the principal ſupport of *Abraham*, not barely his Promiſe, but his *Ability to make it good*, Rom. 4. 21. And when he was commanded to ſacrifice *Iſaac*, the *ability of God to raiſe him up again*, Heb. 11. 19. All Faith would droop, and be in the mire, without leaning upon this. All thoſe Attributes which we conſider as Moral in God, would have no influence upon us, without this, which we conſider Phyſically in God. Though we value the kindneſs Men may expreſs to us in our Diſtreſſes, yet we make them not the Objects of our confidence, unleſs they have an ability to act what they expreſs. There can be no truſt in God without an eye to his Power.

Amyraut. *Moral. Tom.* 5. *p.* 170.

2. *Sometimes the Power of God is the ſole Object of Truſt.* As when we have no promiſe to aſſure us of his Will, we have nothing elſe to pitch upon but his Ability; and that not his abſolute Power, but his ordinate, in the way of his Providence; we muſt not truſt in it ſo, as to expect he ſhould pleaſe our humour with freſh Miracles, but reſt upon his Power, and leave the manner to his Will. *Aſa* when ready to Conflict with the vaſt *Ethiopian* Army, pleaded nothing elſe but this *Power of God* *. And the *three Children*, who had no particular promiſe of Deliverance (that we read of) ſtuck

* 2 Chron. 14. 11.

to God's Ability to preſerve them againſt the King's threatning, and own'd it in the face of the King, yet with ſome kind of inward intimations in their own Spirits that he would alſo deliver them; *Dan.* 3. 17. *Our God whom we ſerve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery Furnace.* And accordingly the Fire burnt the Cords that tied them, without ſinging any thing elſe about them. But when this Power hath been exercis'd upon like occaſions, 'tis a Preſident he hath given us to reſt upon. Preſidents in Law are good Pleas, and ſtrong Encouragements to the Client to expect Succeſs in his Sute. *Our Fathers truſted in thee, and thou didſt deliver them*, ſaith *David*, Pſal. 22. 4. And *Jehoſaphat* in a caſe of diſtreſs, 2 *Chron.*20. 7. *Art not thou our God, that didſt drive out the Inhabitants of this Land before thy People Iſrael?* When we have not any Statute Law and Promiſe to plead, we may plead his Power, together with the former Preſidents and Acts of it. The *Centurion* had nothing elſe to act his Faith upon, but the Power of Chriſt, and ſome Evidences of it in the Miracles reported of him; but he is ſilent in the latter, and caſts himſelf only upon the former, acknowledging that *Chriſt* had the ſame *command over Diſeaſes, as himſelf had over his Soldiers* *. And our Saviour, when he receives the petition of the blind men, requires no more of them in order to a Cure, but a belief of his Ability to perform it; *Matth.* 9. 28. *Believe you that I am able to do this?* His Will is not known but by Revelation, but his Power is apprehended by Reaſon, as eſſentially and eternally linkt with the Notion of a God. God alſo is jealous of the Honour of this Attribute; and ſince it is ſo much virtually diſcredited, he is pleaſed when any do cordially own it, and intirely reſign themſelves to the aſſiſtance of it.

* Matth. 8. 10.

Well then, in all Duties where Faith is particularly to be acted, forget not this as the main prop of it: Do you pray for a flouriſhing and triumphing Grace? Conſider him *as able to make all Grace to abound in you*, 2 Cor. 9. 8. Do you want comfort and reviving under your Contritions and godly Sorrow? Conſider him as he declares himſelf, *The high and lofty One*, Iſa. 57. 15. Are you under preſſing Diſtreſſes? take *Eliphaz* his Advice to *Job*, when he tells him what he himſelf would do if he were in his caſe; *Job* 5. 8. *I would ſeek unto God, and unto God would I commit my Cauſe:* But obſerve under what conſideration, *Verſe* 9. as to one *that doth great things and unſearchable; marvellous things without number.* When you beg of him the melting your rocky Hearts, the daſhing in pieces your ſtrong Corruptions, the drawing his beautiful Image in your Soul, the quickning your dead Hearts, and reviving your drooping Spirits, and ſupplying your Spiritual wants, conſider him as one *able to do abundantly*, not only *above what you can ask*, but *above what you can think*, Eph. 3. 20. Faith will be ſpiritleſs, and Prayer will be liveleſs, if Power be not eyed by us in thoſe things which cannot be done without an Arm of Omnipotence.

3. This Doctrine teacheth us *Humility* and *Submiſſion*. The vaſt diſproportion between the mightineſs of God, and the meanneſs of a Creature, inculcates the Leſſon of Humility in his Preſence: How becoming is Humility *under a mighty hand?* 1 *Pet.* 5. 6. What is an Infant in a Giant's hand, or a Lamb in a Lions paw? Submiſſion to irreſiſtible Power is the beſt Policy, and the beſt Security: This gratifies and draws out Goodneſs, whereas Murmuring and Reſiſtance exaſperates and ſharpens Power. We ſanctifie his Name, and glorifie his ſtrength by falling down before it; 'tis an acknowledgment of his inviſible ſtrength, and our inability to match it. How low ſhould we therefore lye before him, againſt whoſe Power our Pride and Murmuring can do no good, who can out-wreſtle us in our Conteſts, and alway *overcome when he judges?* Rom. 3. 4.

4. This Doctrine teacheth us, *not to fear the pride and force of Man.* How unreaſonable is it, to fear a limited above an unbounded Power? How unbecoming is the fear of a Man in him, who hath an intereſt in a Strength able to curb the ſtrongeſt Devils? Who would tremble at the Threats of a Dwarf, that hath a mighty and watchful Giant for his Guard? If *God* doth but *ariſe, his Enemies are ſcattered*, Pſal. 68. 1. the leaſt motion makes them fly before him: 'Tis no difficult thing for him, that made them by a word, to unmake their deſigns, and ſhiver them in pieces by the breath of his mouth: *He brings Princes to nothing, and makes the Judges of the Earth vanity; they wither when he blows upon them, and their ſtock ſhall not take root in the Earth. He can command a whirlwind to take them away as ſtubble*, Iſa. 40. 23, 24. yea, with the *ſhaking of his hand, he makes Servants to become Rulers* of thoſe that were their Maſters, *Zech.* 2. 9. Whole Nations are no more in his hands than a *morning Cloud*, or the *dew upon the ground*, or *the chaff before the wind*, or the ſmoak againſt the motion of the Air, which though it appear out of a Chimney like a black invincible Cloud, is quickly diſperſt, and becomes inviſible *. How inconſiderable are the moſt Mighty to this Strength, which can puff away a whole World of proud Graſhoppers, and a whole Sky of daring Clouds? He that by his word maſters the Rage of the Sea, can overrule the Pride and Power of Men. Where is the Fury of the Oppreſſor? It cannot over-leap the Bounds he hath ſet it, nor march an inch beyond the point he hath preſcrib'd it. Fear not the Confederacies of Man, but *ſanctifie the Lord of Hoſts, let him be your fear, and let him be your dread*, Iſa. 8. 13. To fear Men is to diſhonour the Name of God, and regard him as a feeble Lord, and not as the Lord of Hoſts, who is mighty in ſtrength, ſo that they that harden themſelves againſt him *ſhall not proſper.*

* Hoſ. 13 3

5. Therefore this Doctrine teacheth us *the fear of God.* The *Prophet Jeremiah* counts it as an impoſſible thing for Men to be deſtitute of the Fear of God, when they ſeriouſly conſider his Name to be great and mighty. *Jer.* 10. 6, 7. *Thou art great, and thy Name is great in might; who would not fear thee, O thou King of Nations?* Shall we not tremble at his Preſence, who hath placed the *Sand for the bound of the Sea by a perpetual Decree*; that though the Waves thereof toſs themſelves, yet they *cannot prevail*, Jer. 5. 22. He can Arm the weakeſt Creature for our deſtruction, and diſarm the ſtrongeſt Creatures which appear for our preſervation. He can command a Hair, a Crumb, a Kernel to go awry, and ſtrangle us. He can make the Heavens braſs over our head, ſtop cloſe the Bottles of the Clouds, and make the Fruit of the Fields droop, when there is a ſmall diſtance to the Harveſt; he can arm Mens Wit, Wealth, Hands againſt themſelves: He can turn our ſweet Morſels into bitter, and our own Conſciences into devouring Lions: He can root up Cities by Moles, and conquer the proudeſt by Lice and Worms. The Omnipotence of God is not only the Object of a Believer's truſt, but a Believer's fear. 'Tis from the conſideration of this Power only, that our *Saviour* preſſes his Diſciples, whom he intitles his *Friends*, *to fear God*; which Leſſon he preſſes by a *double repetition*, and with a kind of Aſſeveration, without rendring any other Reaſon than this of the *abi-*

lity of God to caſt into Hell, Luke 12. 5. We are to fear him becauſe he can; but bleſs his Goodneſs becauſe he will not. In regard of his Omnipotence, he is to be reverenc'd, not only by mortal Men, but by the bleſſed Angels, who are paſt the fear of any danger by his Power, being confirm'd in a happy ſtate by his unalterable Grace: When they adore him for his Holineſs, they reverence him for his Power with covered Faces: The Title of the *Lord of Hoſts* is joyned in their reverential praiſe with that of his Holineſs, *Iſai.* 6. 3. *Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hoſts.* How ſhould we adore that Power which can preſerve us, when Devils and Men conſpire to deſtroy us? How ſhould we ſtand in awe of that Power which can deſtroy us, though Angels and Men ſhould combine to preſerve us? The parts of his ways which are diſcovered, are ſufficient Motives to an humble and reverential Adoration: But who can fear and adore him according to the vaſtneſs of his Power, and his excellent Greatneſs, ſince the *Thunder of his Power who can underſtand?*

A

A DISCOURSE UPON THE Holineſs of GOD.

EXODUS XV. 11.

Who is like unto thee, Oh Lord, among the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in Holineſs, fearful in Praiſes, doing Wonders?

THIS Verſe is one of the loftieſt deſcriptions of the Majeſty and Excellency of God in the whole Scripture *. 'Tis a part of *Moſes*'s Ἐπινίκιον, or *Triumphant Song*, after a great, and real, and a Typical Victory; in the Womb of which all the deliverances of the *Church* were couch'd. 'Tis the firſt Song upon Holy Record, and it conſiſts of Gratulatory and Prophetick Matter: It caſts a look backward, to what God did for them in their Deliverance from *Egypt*; and a look forward, to what God ſhall do for the *Church* in future Ages. That Deliverance was but a rough draught of ſomething more excellent to be wrought towards the cloſing up of the World; when his Plagues ſhall be poured out upon the *Antichriſtian* Powers, which ſhould revive the ſame *Song of Moſes* in the Church; as fitted ſo many Ages before for ſuch a Scene of Affairs †. 'Tis obſerv'd therefore, that many Words in this Song are put in the *Future Tenſe*, noting a time to come; and the very firſt word, *ver.* 1. *Then ſang* Moſes *and the Children of* Iſrael *this Song:* יָשִׁר *ſhall ſing*; implying, that it was compos'd and calculated for the celebrating ſome greater Action of God's, which was to be wrought in the World ‖. Upon this account ſome of the *Jewiſh Rabbins*, from the conſideration of this Remark, aſſerted the Doctrine of the *Reſurrection* to be meant in this place; That *Moſes* and thoſe *Iſraelites* ſhould riſe again to ſing the ſame Song, for ſome greater Miracles God ſhould work, and greater Triumphs he ſhould bring forth, exceeding thoſe Wonders at their Deliverance from *Egypt*.

* Trap. *in loc.*

† Rev. 15. 2, 3.

‖ Manaſſ. ben. Iſrael. *de Reſurr.* lib. 1. cap. 1. p. 7.

* It conſiſts of, 1. *A Preface*, Verſ. 1. *I will ſing unto the Lord.*

* Pareus *in* Exod. 15.

2. *An Hiſtorical Narration of Matter of Fact*, Verſ. 3, 4. *Pharaoh's Chariots and his Hoſt hath he caſt into the Red Sea*; which he ſolely aſcribes to God, *verſ.* 6. *Thy right hand, oh Lord, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, oh Lord, hath daſht in pieces the Enemy*; which he doth Prophetically, as reſpecting ſomething to be done in After-times; or further, for the compleating of that Deliverance; or, as others think, reſpecting their entring into *Canaan*; for the words in theſe two *Verſes* are put in the *Future Tenſe*. The manner of the Deliverance is deſcribed *verſ.* 8. *The Floods ſtood upright as an heap, and the Depths were congeal'd in the heart of the Sea.* In the 9th Verſe he magnifies the Victory from the Vainglory and Security of the Enemy; *The Enemy ſaid, I will purſue, I will overtake, I will divide the ſpoil*, &c. And *Verſ.* 16, 17. he prophetically deſcribes the fruit of this Victory, in the influence it ſhall have upon thoſe Nations, by whoſe Confines they were to travel to the Promiſed Land; *Fear and dread ſhall fall upon them: By the greatneſs of thy Arm they ſhall be as ſtill as a ſtone, till thy People paſs over which thou haſt purchaſed.* The phraſe of this, and the 17th and 18th Verſes, ſeems to be more magnificent than to deſign only the bringing the *Iſraelites* to the Earthly *Canaan*; but ſeems to reſpect the gathering his Redeemed Ones together, to place them in the Spiritual Sanctuary which he had eſtabliſh'd, wherein the Lord ſhould reign for ever and ever, without any Enemies to diſturb his Royalty; *The Lord ſhall reign for ever and ever*, v. 18. The *Prophet*, in the midſt of his Hiſtorical Narrative, ſeems to be in an extaſie, and breaks out in a ſtately exaltation of God in the Text.

Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods, &c.] Interrogations are in Scripture the ſtrongeſt Affirmations or Negations: 'Tis here a ſtrong Affirmation of the Incomparableneſs of God, and a ſtrong denial of the worthineſs of all Creatures to be Partners with him in the degrees of his Excellency: 'Tis a preference of God before all Creatures in *Holineſs*, to which the purity of Creatures is but a ſhadow; in deſert of Reverence and Veneration, he being *Fearful in Praiſes*. The Angels cover their Faces when they adore him in his particular Perfections.

Amongſt the gods.] Among the *Idols* of the Nations, ſay ſome; Others ſay *, 'Tis not to be found that the *Heathen Idols* are ever dignified with the Title of *Strong* or *Mighty*, as the word tranſlated *Gods* doth import; and therefore underſtand it of the Angels, or other Potentates of the World; or rather incluſively, of all that are noted for, and can lay claim to the Title of *Strength* and *Might* upon the Earth or in Heaven. God is ſo Great and Majeſtick, that no Creature can ſhare with him in his Praiſe.

* Rivet.

Fearful in Praiſes.] Various are the Interpretations of this paſſage: To be *reverenc'd in praiſes*; his Praiſe ought to be celebrated with a Religious Fear. Fear is the Product of his Mercy as well as his Juſtice; *He hath forgiveneſs that he may be fea-*

red, Pſal. 130. 4. Or, *Fearful in praiſes*; whom none can praiſe without amazement at the conſiderations of his works. * None can truly praiſe him without being affected with aſtoniſhment at his Greatneſs. Or, *Fearful in praiſes* †; whom no Mortal can ſufficiently praiſe, ſince he is above all praiſe. Whatſoever a Human Tongue can ſpeak, or an Angelical Underſtanding think of the Excellency of his Nature, and the Greatneſs of his Works, falls ſhort of the vaſtneſs of the Divine Perfection. A Creature's Praiſes of God are as much below the tranſcendent Eminency of God, as the meaneſs of a Creature's Being is below the Eternal Fulneſs of the Creator. Or rather, *Fearful*, or Terrible *in praiſes*; that is, in the Matter of thy Praiſe: And the Learned *Rivet* concurs with me in this ſenſe. The Works of God celebrated in this *Song* were Terrible: It was the miraculous overthrow of the Strength and Flower of a Mighty Nation, His Judgments were ſevere, as well as his Mercy was ſeaſonable. The word נורא ſignifies *Glorious* and *Illuſtrious*, as well as *Terrible* and *Fearful*. No Man can hear the Praiſe of thy Name, for thoſe great Judicial Acts, without ſome Aſtoniſhment at thy Juſtice, the Stream, and thy Holineſs the Spring of thoſe Mighty Works. This ſeems to be the ſenſe of the following words, *Doing wonders:* Fearful in the Matter of thy Praiſe, they being Wonders which thou haſt done among us and for us.

* *Calvin.*

† *Munſter.*

Doing wonders.] Congealing the Waters by a Wind, to make them ſtand like Walls for the reſcue of the *Iſraelites*, and melting them by a Wind, for the overthrow of the *Egyptians*, are Prodigies that challenge the greateſt Adorations of that *Mercy* which delivered the one, and that *Juſtice* which puniſh'd the other; and of the Arm of that Power whereby he effected both his gracious and his righteous Purpoſes.

Doctr. Whence obſerve, That *the Judgments of God upon his Enemies, as well as his Mercies to his People, are matter of Praiſe.* The Perfections of God appear in both. *Juſtice* and *Mercy* are ſo link'd together in his acts of Providence, that the one cannot be forgotten whiles the other is acknowledg'd. He is never ſo Terrible as in the *Aſſemblies of his Saints*, and the Deliverance of them, *Pſal.* 89. 7. As the Creation was erected by him for his glory, ſo all the Acts of his Government are deſign'd for the ſame end; and his Creatures deny him his due, if they acknowledge not his Excellency in whatſoever dreadful, as well as pleaſing Garbs, it appears in the World. His Terror as well as his Righteouſneſs appears, when he is a *God of Salvation*, Pſal. 65. 5. *By terrible things in righteouſneſs wilt thou anſwer us, O God of our Salvation.*

But the Expreſſion I pitch upon in the *Text* to handle, is *Glorious in Holineſs*. He is *Magnified* or *Honourable in Holineſs*; ſo the word נאדר is tranſlated, *Iſa.* 42. 21. *He will magnifie the Law, and make it honourable.* Thy Holineſs hath ſhone forth admirably in this laſt Exploit, againſt the Enemies and Oppreſſors of thy People. The *Holineſs of God* is his glory, as his *Grace* is his Riches: *Holineſs* is his Crown, and his *Mercy* is his Treaſure. This is the Bleſſedneſs and Nobleneſs of his Nature; it renders him glorious in himſelf, and glorious to his Creatures, that underſtand any thing of this lovely Perfection.

Doctr. *Holineſs is a glorious Perfection belonging to the Nature of God.* Hence he is in Scripture ſtiled often the *Holy one*, the *Holy one of Jacob*, the *Holy one of Iſrael*; and oftner entituled *Holy*, than *Almighty*, and ſet forth by this part of his Dignity more than by any other. This is more affix'd as an Epithete to his Name than any other: You never find it expreſt, his *Mighty Name*, or his *Wiſe Name*, but his *Great Name*, and moſt of all, his *Holy Name*. This is his greateſt Title of Honour, in *this* doth the Majeſty and Venerableneſs of his Name appear. When the Sinfulneſs of *Senacherib* is aggravated, the Holy Ghoſt takes the riſe from this Attribute, 2 *Kin.* 19. 22. *Thou haſt lift up thine eyes on high, even againſt the Holy One of Iſrael*; not againſt the *Wiſe*, *Mighty*, &c. but againſt the *Holy One of Iſrael*, as that wherein the Majeſty of God was moſt illuſtrious. 'Tis upon this account he is called *Light*, as Impurity is called *Darkneſs*; both in this ſence are oppoſed to one another: He is a pure and unmixt Light, free from all blemiſh in his Eſſence, Nature, and Operations.

1. *Heathens have own'd it. Proclus* calls him, the *Undefiled Governour of the World* *. The Poetical Transformations of their Falſe gods, and the Extravagancies committed by them, was (in the account of the wiſeſt of them) an unholy thing to report and hear †. ‖ And ſome vindicate *Epicurus* from the Atheiſm wherewith he was commonly charged; that he did not deny the Being of God, but thoſe adulterous and contentious Deities the People worſhipped, which were Practiſes unworthy and unbecoming the Nature of God. Hence they aſſerted, that Virtue was an imitation of God, and a Virtuous Man bore a reſemblance to God: If Virtue were a Copy from God, a greater Holineſs muſt be own'd in the Original. And when ſome of them were at a loſs, how to free God from being the Author of Sin in the World, they aſcribe the birth of Sin to Matter, and run into an abſurd Opinion, fancying it to be uncreated, that thereby they might exempt God from all mixture of Evil; ſo ſacred with them was the Conception of God, as a *Holy God.*

* Ἀχείρωτον ἡγεμόνα.

† Οὐδ' ἀκόυειν ὅσιον Ammon. in Plut. de Ει apud Delphos, p. 393.

‖ Gaſſend. Tom. 1. Phyſ. §. 1. lib. 4. cap. 2. p. 289.

2. *The Abſurdeſt Hereticks have own'd it.* * The *Manichees* and *Marchionites*, that thought Evil came by Neceſſity, yet would ſalve God's being the Author of it, by aſſerting two diſtinct Eternal Principles, One the Original of Evil, as God was the Fountain of good: So rooted was the Notion of this Divine Purity, that none would ever ſlander Goodneſs it ſelf with that which was ſo diſparaging to it.

* Petav. Theol. Dogmat. tom. 1. lib. 6. cap. 5. p. 415.

3. *The Nature of God cannot rationally be conceived without it.* Tho' the *Power* of God be the firſt Rational Concluſion, drawn from the ſight of his Works; *Wiſdom* the next, from the order and connexion of his Works: *Purity* muſt reſult from the beauty of his Works: That God cannot be deform'd by Evil, who hath made every thing ſo beautiful in its time. The Notion of a God cannot be entertain'd without ſeparating from him whatſoever is impure and beſpotting both in his Eſſence and Actions. Tho' we conceive him Infinite in Majeſty, Infinite in Eſſence, Eternal in Duration, Mighty in Power, and Wiſe and Immutable in his Counſels; Merciful in his Proceedings with Men, and whatſoever other Perfections may dignifie ſo Sovereign a Being; yet if we conceive him deſtitute of this excellent Perfection, and imagine him poſſeſſed with the leaſt contagion of Evil, we make him but an Infinite Monſter, and ſully all thoſe Perfections we aſcrib'd to him before; we rather own him a *Devil*, than a *God*. 'Tis a contradiction to be God and to be Darkneſs, or to have one Mote of Darkneſs mixed with his Light. 'Tis a leſs Injury to him to deny his Being, than to deny the Purity of it; the one makes him no God, the other a deform'd, unlovely, and a deteſtable God.

Plutarch ſaid not amiſs, that he ſhould count himſelf leſs injur'd by that Man that ſhould deny that there was ſuch a Man as *Plutarch*, than by him that

that ſhould affirm that there was ſuch a one indeed, but he was a debauch'd Fellow, a looſe and vicious Perſon. 'Tis a leſs wrong to God to diſcard any acknowledgments of his Being, and to count him Nothing, than to believe him to exiſt, but imagine a baſe and unholy Deity: He that ſaith, *God is not Holy*, ſpeaks much worſe than he that ſaith, *There is no God at all.*

Let theſe *two Things* be conſider'd:

I. *If any, this Attribute hath an excellency above his other Perfections.* There are ſome Attributes of God we prefer, becauſe of our Intereſt in them, and the relation they bear to us: As we eſteem his *Goodneſs* before his *Power*; and his *Mercy* whereby he relieves us, before his *Juſtice* whereby he puniſheth us. As there are ſome we more delight in, becauſe of the goodneſs we receive by them; ſo there are ſome that God delights to honour, becauſe of their Excellency.

1. *None is ſounded out ſo loftily with ſuch ſolemnity, and ſo frequently by Angels that ſtand before his Throne, as this.* Where do you find any other Attribute trebled in the Praiſes of it, as this? *Iſai.* 6. 3. *Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hoſts, the whole Earth is full of his Glory*; and *Rev.* 4. 8. The *four Beaſts reſt not day and night, ſaying, Holy, holy, holy Lord God, Almighty, &c.* His Power or Soveraignty, as *Lord of Hoſts*, is but once mention'd; but with a ternal repetition of his Holineſs. Do you hear in any Angelical Song any other Perfection of the Divine Nature thrice repeated? Where do we read of the crying out *Eternal, eternal, eternal*; or *Faithful, faithful, faithful Lord God of Hoſts?* Whatſoever other Attribute is left out, *this* God would have to fill the Mouths of Angels and Bleſſed Spirits for ever in Heaven.

2. *He ſingles it out to ſwear by.* Pſal. 89. 35. *Once have I ſworn by my Holineſs, that I will not lie unto David:* And *Amos* 4. 2. *The Lord will ſwear by his Holineſs:* He twice ſwears by his Holineſs; once by his Power, *Iſa.* 62. 8. once by all, when he ſwears by his Name, *Jer.* 44. 26. He lays here his Holineſs to pledge for the aſſurance of his Promiſe, as the Attribute moſt dear to him, moſt valued by him, as tho' no other could give an aſſurance parallel to it in this concern of an Everlaſting Redemption, which is there ſpoken of: He that ſwears, ſwears by a greater than himſelf; God having no greater than himſelf, ſwears by himſelf: And ſwearing here by his Holineſs, ſeems to equal that ſingle one to all his other Attributes; as if he were more concern'd in the Honour of it, than of all the reſt. 'Tis as if he ſhould have ſaid, ſince I have not a more excellent Perfection to ſwear by, than that of my Holineſs, I lay this to pawn for your ſecurity, and bind my ſelf by that which I will never part with, were it poſſible for me to be ſtript of all the reſt. 'Tis a tacit Imprecation of himſelf, If I lye unto *David*, let me never be counted *holy*, or thought righteous enough to be truſted by Angels or Men. This Attribute he makes moſt of.

3. *'Tis his glory and beauty.* Holineſs is the Honour of the Creature, *Sanctification and Honour* are link'd together, 1 *Theſſ.* 4. 4: much more is it the honour of God; 'tis the *Image* of God in the Creature *: When we take the Picture of a Man, we draw the moſt beautiful part, the Face, which is a Member of the greateſt Excellency. When God would be drawn to the Life, as much as can be in the Spirit of his Creatures, He is drawn in this Attribute, as being the moſt beautiful Perfection of God, and moſt valuable with him. *Power* is his Hand and Arm, *Omniſcience*, his Eye, *Mercy*, his Bowels; *Eternity*, his Duration; his *Holineſs* is his Beauty; 2 *Chron.* 20. 21. — *ſhould praiſe the Beauty of Holineſs.* In the 27th *Pſalm* and the 4th *Verſe*, *David* deſires *to behold the Beauty of the Lord, and enquire in his holy Temple*; that is, the Holineſs of God manifeſted in his hatred of Sin in the daily Sacrifices. *Holineſs* was the Beauty of the Temple, *Iſa.* 46. 11. *Holy* and *Beautiful Houſe* are joyn'd together; much more the Beauty of God that dwelt in the Sanctuary.

* Epheſ. 4. 24.

This renders him lovely to all his Innocent Creatures, tho' formidable to the Guilty ones. * A *Heathen Philoſopher* could call it, the *Beauty of the Divine Eſſence*, and ſay, That God was not ſo happy by an Eternity of Life, as by an Excellency of Virtue. And the *Angels* Song intimate it to be his glory, *Iſa.* 6. 3. *The whole Earth is full of thy Glory*; that is, of his Holineſs in his Laws, and in his Judgments againſt Sin; that being the Attribute applauded by them before.

* Plutarch. Eugubin. *de Perenni Phil.* lib. 6. cap. 6.

4. *'Tis his very Life.* So it is called, *Eph.* 4. 18. *Alienated from the Life of God*; that is, from the *Holineſs* of God; ſpeaking of the oppoſite to it, the *Uncleanneſs* and *Prophaneneſs* of the *Gentiles*. We are only alienated from that which we are bound to imitate; but this is the perfection, alway ſet out as the pattern of our actions, *Be you Holy, as I am Holy*; no other is propos'd as our Copy. Alienated from that *Purity of God*, which is as much as his *Life*, without which he could not live. If he were ſtript of this, he would be a dead God more, than by the want of any other Perfection. His Swearing by it intimates as much: He Swears often by his own Life, *As I live, ſaith the Lord*: ſo he Swears by his Holineſs, as if it were his Life, and more his Life than any other. *Let me not live*, or *Let me not be holy*, are all one in his Oath. His Deity could not outlive the Life of his Purity.

II. *As it ſeems to challenge an Excellency above all his other Perfections, ſo 'tis the glory of all the reſt.* As it is the glory of the Godhead, ſo 'tis the glory of every Perfection in the Godhead. As his *Power* is the Strength of them, ſo his *Holineſs* is the Beauty of them. As all would be weak without *Almightineſs* to back them; ſo all would be uncomely without *Holineſs* to adorn them. Should this be ſullied, all the reſt would loſe their Honour and their comfortable Efficacy. As at the ſame inſtant that the *Sun* ſhould loſe its Light, it would loſe its Heat, its Strength, its generative and quickning Vertue. As *Sincerity* is the luſtre of every Grace in a Chriſtian; ſo is *Purity* the ſplendor of every Attribute in the Godhead. His Juſtice is a holy Juſtice; his Wiſdom, a holy Wiſdom; his Arm of Power, a *Holy Arm*, *Pſal.* 98. 1. his Truth or Promiſe, a *Holy Promiſe*, Pſal. 105. 42. *Holy* and *True* go hand in hand, *Revel.* 6. 10. His *Name*, which ſignifies all his Attributes in conjunction, *is Holy*, Pſal. 103. 1. Yea, he is *Righteous in all his ways, and Holy in all his works*, Pſal. 145. 17. 'Tis the Rule of all his Acts, the Source of all his Puniſhments. If every Attribute of the Deity were a diſtinct Member, *Purity* would be the Form, the Soul, the Spirit to animate them. Without it his *Patience* would be an Indulgence to Sin, his *Mercy* a Fondneſs, his *Wrath* a Madneſs, his *Power* a Tyranny, his *Wiſdom* an unworthy Subtility. This gives a *Decorum* to all. His *Mercy* is not exerciſed without it, ſince he pardons none but thoſe that have an Intereſt, by Union in the Obedience of a *Mediator*, which was ſo delightful to his Infinite Purity. His *Juſtice*, which Guilty Man is apt to tax with Cruelty and Violence in the exerciſe of it, is not acted out of the compaſs of this Rule. In Acts of Man's vindictive Juſtice there is ſomething of Impurity, Perturbation, Paſſion, ſome mixture of Cruelty; but none of theſe fall upon God in the

ſevereſt Acts of Wrath. When God appears to *Ezekiel* in the reſemblance of *Fire*, to ſignifie his Anger againſt the *Houſe of Judah*, for their Idolatry, *from his Loins downward* there was *the appearance of Fire*; but *from the Loins upward, the appearance of Brightneſs, as the colour of Amber*, Ezek. 8. 2. His Heart is clear in his moſt terrible acts of Vengeance, it is a *pure Flame* wherewith he ſcorcheth and burns his Enemies: He is *Holy* in the moſt fiery appearance.

This Attribute therefore is never ſo much applauded, as when his Sword hath been drawn, and he hath manifeſted the greateſt fierceneſs againſt his Enemies. The Magnificent and Triumphant expreſſion of it in the *Text*, follows juſt upon God's Miraculous defeat and ruine of the *Egyptian* Army, *The Sea covered them; they ſank as Lead in the mighty waters*: Then it follows, *Who is like unto thee, O Lord, glorious in Holineſs?* And when it was ſo celebrated by the *Seraphims*, *Iſa.* 6. 3. It was when the *Poſts moved*, and *the Houſe was filled with ſmoke*, v. 4. which are ſigns of Anger, *Pſal.* 18. 7, 8. And when he was about to ſend *Iſaiah* upon a Meſſage of Spiritual and Temporal Judgments, that he would make the *heart of that people fat, and their ears heavy, and their eyes ſhut; waſte their Cities without Inhabitant, and their Houſes without Man, and make the Land deſolate*, Verſes 9, 10, 11, 12. and the Angels which here applaud him for his Holineſs, are the Executioners of his Juſtice; and here called *Seraphims*, from *burning*, or *fiery Spirits*, as being the Miniſters of his Wrath. His *Juſtice* is part of his *Holineſs*, whereby he doth reduce into order thoſe things that are out of order. When he is conſuming Men by his Fury, he doth not diminiſh, but manifeſt Purity; *Zephany* 3. 5. *The juſt Lord is in the midſt of her, he will do no iniquity*. Every Action of his is free from all tincture of Evil. 'Tis alſo celebrated with praiſe by the *four Beaſts* about his *Throne*, when he appears in a Covenant Garb, with a *Rainbow about his Throne*, and yet with *Thundrings* and *Lightnings* ſhot out againſt his *Enemies*. Rev. 4. 8. compared with *Verſe* 3. 5. to ſhew, that all his Acts of *Mercy* as well as *Juſtice*, are clear from any ſtain.

This is the Crown of all his Attributes, the Life of all his Decrees, the Brightneſs of all his Actions: Nothing is Decreed by him, nothing is acted by him but what is worthy of the Dignity, and becoming the Honour of this Attribute.

For the better underſtanding this Attribute, obſerve,

1. *The Nature of this Holineſs.*
2. *The Demonſtration of it.*
3. *The Purity of his Nature in all his Acts about Sin.*
4. *The Uſe of all to our ſelves.*

First, *The Nature of Divine Holineſs.*

In General.

The *Holineſs of God Negatively*, is a *perfect and unpolluted freedom from all Evil*. As we call Gold pure that is not embaſed by any Droſs, and that Garment clean that is free from any Spot; ſo the Nature of God is eſtranged from all ſhadow of Evil, all imaginable contagion.

Poſitively, 'Tis the *Rectitude or Integrity of the Divine Nature, or that conformity of it in Affection and Action to the Divine Will, as to his Eternal Law, whereby he works with a becomingneſs to his own Excellency, and whereby he hath a delight and complacency in every thing agreeable to his Will, and an abhorrency of every thing contrary thereunto.*

As there is no Darkneſs in his Underſtanding, ſo there is no ſpot in his Will: As his Mind is poſſeſſed with all Truth, ſo there is no deviation in his Will from it. He loves all Truth and Goodneſs; He hates all Falſity and Evil. In regard of his Righteouſneſs, he loves Righteouſneſs; *Pſal.* 11. 7. *The righteous Lord loveth righteouſneſs, and hath no pleaſure in wickedneſs*, Pſal. 5. 4. He values Purity in his Creatures, and deteſts all Impurity, whether inward or outward. * We may indeed diſtinguiſh the *Holineſs* of God from his *Righteouſneſs* in our Conceptions: *Holineſs* is a Perfection abſolutely conſidered in the Nature of God; *Righteouſneſs*, a Perfection as referred to others in his Actions towards them and upon them.

*Martin. de Deo, p. 86.

In *Particular.*

This *Property* of the *Divine Nature* is,

First, *An eſſential and neceſſary Perfection*: He is eſſentially and neceſſarily Holy. 'Tis the eſſential Glory of his Nature: His Holineſs is as neceſſary as his Being; as neceſſary as his Omniſcience: As he cannot but know what is right, ſo he cannot but do what is juſt. His Underſtanding is not as Created Underſtandings, capable of Ignorance as well as Knowledge; ſo his Will is not as Created Wills, capable of Unrighteouſneſs, as well as Righteouſneſs. There can be no contradiction or contrariety in the Divine Nature, to know what is right, and to do what is wrong: If ſo, there would be a diminution of his Bleſſedneſs, he would not be a God alway bleſſed, *Bleſſed for ever*, as he is *. He is as neceſſarily Holy, as he is neceſſarily God; as neceſſarily without Sin, as without Change. As he was God from Eternity, ſo he was Holy from Eternity. † He was Gracious, Merciful, Juſt in his own Nature, and alſo Holy; though no Creature had been framed by him to exerciſe his Grace, Mercy, Juſtice, or Holineſs upon. If God had not created a World, he had in his own Nature been Almighty, and able to Create a World. If there never had been any thing but himſelf, yet he had been *Omniſcient*, knowing every thing that was within the verge and compaſs of his Infinite Power; ſo he was Pure in his own Nature, though he never had brought forth any Rational Creature whereby to manifeſt this Purity. Theſe Perfections are ſo neceſſary, that the Nature of God could not ſubſiſt without them. And the acts of thoſe *ad intra*, or within himſelf, are neceſſary; for being *Omniſcient* in Nature, there muſt be an act of Knowledge of Himſelf and his own Nature. Being Infinitely Holy, an act of *Holineſs* in Infinitely loving himſelf, muſt neceſſarily flow from this Perfection ‖. As the Divine Will cannot but be perfect; ſo it cannot be wanting to render the higheſt Love to it ſelf, to its Goodneſs, to the Divine Nature, which is due to him. Indeed, the acts of thoſe *ad extra* are not neceſſary, but upon a Condition. To love Righteouſneſs without himſelf, or to deteſt Sin, or inflict Puniſhment for the committing of it, could not have been, had there been no Righteous Creature for him to love, no Sinning Creature for him to loath, and to exerciſe his Juſtice upon as the Object of Puniſhment.

*Rom. 9. 5.

†Turretin. *de Satisfact. p.* 28.

‖ Ochino, *prædic. part* 3. *Bodic.* 51. *p.* 347, 348.

Some Attributes require a Condition to make the Acts of them neceſſary. As it is at God's liberty, whether he will create a Rational Creature, or no: But when he decrees to make either Angel or Man, 'tis neceſſary from the Perfection of his Nature to make them Righteous. 'Tis at God's liberty whether he will ſpeak to Man, or no; but if he doth, 'tis impoſſible for him to ſpeak that which is falſe, becauſe of its Infinite Perfection of Veracity. 'Tis at his liberty whether he will permit a Creature to ſin; but if he ſees good to ſuffer it, 'tis impoſſible but that he ſhould deteſt that Creature that goes croſs to his Righteous Nature. His Holineſs is not ſolely

ſolely an Act of his Will, for then he might be Unholy as well as Holy; he might love Iniquity and hate Righteouſneſs; he might then command that which is good, and afterwards command that which is bad and unworthy: For what is only an act of his Will, and not belonging to his Nature, is indifferent to him. As the poſitive Law he gave to *Adam*, of not eating the *Forbidden Fruit*, was a pure Act of his Will; he might have given him liberty to eat of it, if he had pleaſed, as well as prohibited him. But what is moral and good in its own Nature, is neceſſarily willed by God, and cannot be changed by him, becauſe of the tranſcendent eminency of his Nature, and righteouſneſs of his Will. As it is impoſſible for God to command his Creature to hate him, or to diſpence with a Creature for not loving him; for this would be to command a thing intrinſecally Evil, the higheſt Ingratitude, the very Spirit of all Wickedneſs, which conſiſts in the hating God. Yet though God be thus neceſſarily Holy, he is not ſo by a bare and ſimple neceſſity, as the *Sun* ſhines, or the *Fire* burns; but by a free neceſſity, not compelled thereunto, but inclined from the fulneſs of the Perfection of his own Nature and Will; ſo as by no means he can be Unholy, becauſe he will not be Unholy; 'tis againſt his Nature to be ſo.

1 Sam. 2. 2. 2. *God is only abſolutely Holy. There is none Holy as the Lord.* 'Tis the peculiar glory of his Nature. As there is none good but God, ſo none Holy but God. No creature can be eſſentially Holy, becauſe mutable: *Holineſs* is the Subſtance of God; but a Quality and Accident in a Creature. God is Infinitely Holy, Creatures Finitely Holy. He is holy from Himſelf, Creatures are holy by derivation from him. He is not only Holy, but Holineſs: *Holineſs*, in the higheſt degree, is his ſole Prerogative. As the higheſt Heaven is called the *Heaven of Heavens*, becauſe it embraceth in its Circle all the Heavens, and contains the magnitude of them, and hath a greater vaſtneſs above all that it incloſeth; ſo is God the *Holy of Holies*, He contains the Holineſs of all Creatures put together, and infinitely more. As all the Wiſdom, Excellency, and Power of the Creatures, if compared with the Wiſdom, Excellency, and Power of God, is but folly, vileneſs, and weakneſs; ſo the higheſt created Purity, if ſet in parallel with God, is but impurity and uncleanneſs, *Rev.* 15. 4. *Thou only art Holy*: 'Tis like the light of a *Glow-worm* to that of the *Sun* *; *The Heavens are not pure in his ſight, and his Angels he charged with folly*, Job 4. 18. Though God hath Crowned the Angels with an unſpotted Sanctity, and placed them in a habitation of Glory; yet as Illuſtrious as they are, they have an Unworthineſs in their own Nature to appear before the Throne of ſo Holy a God; Their Holineſs grows dim and pale in his Preſence. 'Tis but a weak ſhadow of that Divine Purity, whoſe Light is ſo glorious, that it makes them *cover their faces* out of weakneſs to behold it, and cover their Feet out of ſhame in themſelves. They are not *pure in his ſight*, becauſe though they love God (which is a Principle of Holineſs) as much as they can, yet not ſo much as he deſerves: They love him with the intenſeſt degree, according to their Power; but not with the intenſe degree, according to his own Amiableneſs: For they cannot infinitely love God, unleſs they were as Infinite as God, and had an underſtanding of his Perfections equal with himſelf, and as immenſe as his own Knowledge. God having an Infinite Knowledge of himſelf, can only have an Infinite love to himſelf, and conſequently an Infinite Holineſs without any defect; becauſe he loves himſelf according to the vaſtneſs of his own Amiableneſs, which no finite Being can. Therefore, though the Angels be exempt from Corruption and Soil, they cannot enter into compariſon with the Purity of God, without acknowledgment of a dimneſs in themſelves. Beſides, *He charges them with folly*, and *puts no truſt* in them; becauſe they have the power of ſinning, though not the act of ſinning: They have a poſſible folly in their own Nature to be charged with. *Holineſs* is a quality ſeparable from them, but it is inſeparable from God. Had they not at firſt a mutability in their Nature, none of them could have ſinned, there had been no *Devils*; but becauſe ſome of them ſinned, the reſt might have ſinned: And though the ſtanding Angels ſhall never be changed, yet they are ſtill changeable in their own Nature, and their ſtanding is due to Grace, not by Nature, and though they ſhall be for ever preſerved, yet they are not, nor ever can be Immutable in Nature. for then they ſhould ſtand upon the ſame bottom with God himſelf; but they are ſupported by Grace againſt that Changeableneſs of Nature which is eſſential to a Creature: The Creator *only hath Immortality*, that is Immutability †.

† 1 Tim. 3. 16.

'Tis as certain a Truth, that no Creature can be naturally Immutable and Impeccable, as that God cannot create any thing actually polluted and imperfect. 'Tis as poſſible that the higheſt Creature may ſin, as it is poſſible that it may be annihilated: It may become not holy, as it may become not a Creature, but Nothing. The Holineſs of a Creature may be reduc'd into Nothing, as well as his Subſtance: But the Holineſs of the Creator cannot be diminiſh'd, dimm'd, or overſhadowed; *James* 1. 17. *He is the Father of lights, with whom is no variableneſs or ſhadow of turning.* 'Tis as impoſſible his Holineſs ſhould be blotted, as that his Deity ſhould be extinguiſh'd: For whatſoever Creature hath eſſentially ſuch or ſuch qualities, cannot be ſtript of them, without being turn'd out of its Eſſence. As a Man is eſſentially Rational; and if he ceaſeth to be Rational, he ceaſeth to be Man. The Sun is eſſentially Luminous; if it ſhould become dark in its own Body, it would ceaſe to be the Sun. In regard of this abſolute and only Holineſs of God, 'tis thrice repeated by the *Seraphims*, Iſai. 6. 3. The *Threefold* Repetition of a word, notes the certainty or abſoluteneſs of the Thing, or the irreverſibleneſs of the Reſolve; as *Ezek.* 21. 27. *I will overturn, overturn, overturn*, notes the certainty of the Judgment; alſo *Rev.* 8. 8. *Woe, woe, woe*, Three times repeated, ſignifies the ſame. The *Holineſs* of God is ſo abſolutely peculiar to him, that it can no more be expreſt in Creatures, than his *Omnipotence*, whereby they may be able to create a World; or his *Omniſcience*, whereby they may be capable of knowing all things, and knowing God as he knows himſelf.

* Job 15. 15.

3. *God is ſo holy, that he cannot poſſibly approve of any Evil done by another, but doth perfectly abhor* it; it would not elſe be a *glorious* holineſs: *Pſal.* 5. 3. *He hath no pleaſure in wickedneſs.* He doth not only love that which is juſt, but abhor with a perfect hatred all things contrary to the Rule of Righteouſneſs. Holineſs can no more approve of ſin than it can commit it: To be delighted with the Evil in another's Act, contracts a Guilt, as well as the Commiſſion of it; for approbation of a thing is a conſent to it: Sometime the approbation of an Evil in another, is a more grievous Crime than the Act it ſelf, as appears in *Rom.* 1. 32. who knowing the Judgment of God, *not only do the ſame, but have pleaſure in them that do it*: Where the (*not only*) manifeſts it to be a greater Guilt to take pleaſure in them. Every ſin is aggravated by the delight in it; to take pleaſure in the evil of another's

Action,

Action, ſhews a more ardent affection and love to ſin, than the Committer himſelf may have. This therefore can as little fall upon God, as to do an evil act himſelf; yet as a Man may be delighted with the Conſequences of another's ſin, as it may occaſion ſome publick good, or private good to the guilty perſon; as ſometimes it may be an occaſion of his Repentance, when the horridneſs of a Fact ſtares him in the face, and occaſions a ſelf-reflection for that and other Crimes, which is attended with an indignation againſt them, and ſincere remorſe for them; ſo God is pleaſed with thoſe good things his Goodneſs and Wiſdom bring forth upon the occaſion of Sin. But in regard of his Holineſs, he cannot approve of the evil, whence his Infinite Wiſdom drew forth his own Glory, and his Creatures good: His Pleaſure is not in the ſinful act of the Creature, but in the act of his own Goodneſs and Skill, turning it to another end than what the Creature aim'd at.

1. *He abhors it neceſſarily.* Holineſs is the Glory of the Deity, therefore neceſſary. The Nature of God is ſo holy, that he cannot but hate it. *Habb.* 1. 13. *Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canſt not look on iniquity:* He is more oppoſite to it than Light to Darkneſs, and therefore it can expect no countenance from him: A love of Holineſs cannot be without a hatred of every thing that is contrary to it: As God neceſſarily loves himſelf ſo he muſt neceſſarily hate every thing that is againſt himſelf: And as he loves himſelf for his own Excellency and Holineſs, he muſt neceſſarily deteſt whatſoever is repugnant to his Holineſs, becauſe of the evil of it: Since he is infinitely good, he cannot but love goodneſs, as it is a reſemblance to himſelf; and cannot but abhor unrighteouſneſs, as being moſt diſtant from him, and contrary to him. If he have any eſteem for his own Perfections, he muſt needs have an implacable averſion to all that is ſo repugnant to him, that would, if it were poſſible, deſtroy him, and is a point directed not only againſt his Glory, but againſt his Life. If he did not hate it, he would hate himſelf: for ſince Righteouſneſs is his Image, and Sin would deface his Image; if he did not love his Image, and loath what is againſt his Image, he would loath himſelf, he would be an Enemy to his own Nature: * Nay, if it were poſſible for him to love it, it were poſſible for him not to be Holy, it were poſſible then for him to deny himſelf, and will that he were no God, which is a palpable contradiction. Yet this neceſſity in God of hating Sin, is not a brutiſh neceſſity, ſuch as is in meer Animals, that avoid by a natural Inſtinct, not of choice, what is prejudicial to them; but moſt free, as well as neceſſary, ariſing from an infinite knowledge of his own Nature, and of the evil nature of Sin, and the contrariety of it to his own Excellency, and the order of his works.

† Turretin. *de ſatisfac.* p. 35, 36.

2. Therefore *intenſely.* Nothing do Men act for more than their glory. As he doth infinitely, and therefore perfectly know himſelf, ſo he infinitely, and therefore perfectly knows what is contrary to himſelf, and, as according to the manner and meaſure of his knowledge of himſelf, is his love to himſelf, as infinite as his knowledge, and therefore unexpreſſible and unconceivable by us: So from the perfection of his knowledge of the evil of Sin, which is infinitely above what any Creature can have, doth ariſe a diſpleaſure againſt it ſuitable to that knowledge. In Creatures the degrees of affection to, or averſion from a thing, are ſuited to the ſtrength of their apprehenſions of the good or evil in them. God knows not only the workers of wickedneſs, but the wickedneſs of their works, * for *he knows vain Men, he ſees Wickedneſs alſo.* The vehemency of this hatred is expreſt variouſly in *Scripture*; he loaths it ſo, that he is impatient of beholding it; the very ſight of it affects him with deteſtation, *Hab.* 1. 13. He hates the firſt ſpark of it in the *Imagination*, Zech. 8. 17. With what variety of expreſſions doth he repeat his indignation at their polluted Services? *Amos* 5. 21, 22. *I hate, I deteſt, I deſpiſe, I will not ſmell, I will not accept, I will not regard; take away from me the noiſe of thy Songs, I will not hear.* So, *Iſa.* 1. 14. *My Soul hates, they are a trouble to me, I am weary to bear them.* 'Tis the *abominable thing* that he *hates*, *Jer.* 44. 4. he is *vexed* and *fretted* at it, *Iſa.* 63. 10. *Ezek.* 16. 43. He abhors it ſo, that his hatred redounds upon the perſon that commits it, *Pſal.* 5. 5. He *hates all workers of Iniquity.* Sin is the only primary Object of his Diſpleaſure: He is not diſpleas'd with the nature of man as man, for that was derived from him; but with the Nature of man as ſinful, which is from the Sinner himſelf. When a man hath but one Object for the exerciſe of all his Anger, 'tis ſtronger than when diverted to many Objects: A mighty Torrent, when diverted into many Streams, is weaker than when it comes in a full Body upon one place only. The Infinite Anger and Hatred of God, which is as Infinite as his Love and Mercy, has no other Object, againſt which he directs the mighty force of it, but only Unrighteouſneſs. He hates no Perſon for all the Penal Evils upon him, tho' they were more by *Ten thouſand* times than *Job* was ſtruck with, but only for his Sin. Again, Sin being only evil, and an unmixt evil, there is nothing in it that can abate the deteſtation of God, or ballance his hatred of it; there is not the leaſt grain of goodneſs in it, to incline him to the leaſt affection to any part of it. This hatred cannot but be intenſe; for as the more any Creature is ſanctified, the more is he advanc'd in the abhorrence of that which is contrary to Holineſs; therefore God being the Higheſt, moſt Abſolute and Infinite Holineſs, doth infinitely, and therefore intenſly, hate unholineſs; being infinitely righteous, doth infinitely abhor unrighteouſneſs; being infinitely true, doth infinitely abhor falſity, as it is the greateſt and moſt deformed evil. As it is from the righteouſneſs of his Nature, that he hath a content and ſatisfaction in Righteouſneſs, *Pſal.* 11. 7. *The righteous Lord loveth righteouſneſs*; ſo it is from the ſame righteouſneſs of his Nature that he deteſts whatſoever is morally evil: As his Nature therefore is infinite, ſo muſt his Abhorrence be.

* Job 11. 11.

3. *Therefore univerſally, becauſe neceſſarily and intenſly,* He doth not hate it in one, and indulge it in another, but loaths it where-ever he finds it; not one worker of Iniquity is exempt from it: *Pſal.* 5, 5. *Thou hateſt all workers of Iniquity:* For it is not Sin, as in this or that Perſon, or as great or little; but Sin, as Sin, is the Object of his hatred: And therefore let the Perſon be never ſo great, and have particular Characters of his Image upon him, it ſecures him not from God's hatred of any evil action he ſhall commit. He is a *jealous God*, jealous of his Glory *; a Metaphor taken from jealous Husbands, who will not endure the leaſt Adultery in their Wives, nor God the leaſt defection of man from his Law. Every act of Sin is a ſpiritual Adultery, denying God to be the chief Good, and giving that Prerogative by that Act to ſome vile thing. He loves it no more in his own People than he doth in his Enemies; he frees them not from his Rod, the teſtimony of his loathing their Crimes: Whoſoever ſows Iniquity ſhall reap Affliction. It might be thought that he affected their Droſs, if he did not refine them; and loved their Filth, if he did not cleanſe them; becauſe of his deteſtation of their

* Exod. 20. 5.

ſin,

ſin, he will not ſpare them from the Furnace, tho' becauſe of love to their Perſons in Chriſt, he will exempt them from *Tophet*. How did the Sword ever and anon drop down upon *David*'s Family after his unworthy dealing in *Uriah*'s Caſe, and cut off ever and anon ſome of the Branches of it? He doth ſometimes puniſh it more ſeverely in this Life in his own People, than in others: Upon *Jonah*'s Diſobedience a Storm purſues him, and a Whale devours him, while the prophane World lived in their Luſts without controul. *Moſes*, for one act of unbelief, is excluded from *Canaan*, when greater Sinners attained that Happineſs. 'Tis not a light puniſhment, but a *Vengeance* he takes on their Inventions *, to manifeſt that he hates ſin as ſin, and not becauſe the worſt Perſons commit it. Perhaps had a prophane Man touched the Ark, the hand of God had not ſo ſuddenly reach'd him: But when *Uzzah*, a man zealous for him, as may be ſuppoſed by his care for the ſupport of the tottering Ark, would ſtep out of his place, he ſtrikes him down for his diſobedient Action, by the ſide of the Ark, which he would indirectly (as not being a *Levite*) ſuſtain †. Nor did our Saviour ſo ſharply reprove the *Phariſees*, and turn ſo ſhort from them as he did from *Peter*, when he gave a carnal advice, and contrary to that wherein was to be the greateſt manifeſtation of God's Holineſs, *viz.* the Death of Chriſt *. He calls him *Satan*, a Name ſharper than the Title of the Devil's Children, wherewith he marked the *Phariſees*, and given (beſides him) to none but *Judas*, who made a profeſſion of love to him, and was outwardly rank'd in the number of his Diſciples. A Gardener hates a Weed the more, for being in the Bed with the moſt precious Flowers. God's hatred is univerſally fixed againſt Sin, and he hates it as much in thoſe whoſe Perſons ſhall not fall under his Eternal Anger, as being ſecured in the arms of a Redeemer, by whom the guilt is wip'd off, and the filth ſhall be totally waſh'd away: Tho' he hates their ſin, and cannot but hate it, yet he loves their Perſons, as being united as Members to the Mediator and Myſtical Head. A Man may love a gangren'd Member, becauſe 'tis a Member of his own Body, or a Member of a dear Relation, but he loaths the Gangrene in it more than in thoſe wherein he is not ſo much concern'd.

*Pſal. 99. 8.

† 2 Sam. 6. 7.

* Mat. 16. 23.

Tho' God's hatred of Believers Perſons is remov'd by Faith in the ſatisfactory Death of Jeſus Chriſt; yet his Antipathy againſt ſin was not taken away by that Blood; nay, it was impoſſible it ſhould: It was never deſign'd, nor had it any capacity to alter the unchangeable Nature of God, but to manifeſt the unſpottedneſs of his Will, and his eternal Averſion to any thing that was contrary to the Purity of his Being, and the Righteouſneſs of his Laws.

4. *Perpetually:* This muſt neceſſarily follow upon the others. He can no more ceaſe to hate Impurity, than he can ceaſe to love Holineſs: If he ſhould in the leaſt inſtant approve of any thing that is filthy, in that moment he would diſapprove of his own Nature and Being; there would be an interruption in his love of himſelf, which is as Eternal as it is Infinite. How can he love any ſin, which is contrary to his Nature, but for one moment, without hating his own Nature, which is eſſentially contrary to ſin? Two Contraries cannot be loved at the ſame time; God muſt firſt begin to hate himſelf, before he can approve of any evil which is directly oppoſite to himſelf. We indeed are chang'd with a Temptation, ſometimes bear an affection to it, and ſometimes teſtifie an indignation againſt it; but God is always the ſame without any ſhadow of change, and *is angry with the wicked every day*, Pſal. 7. 11. that is uninterruptedly in the nature of his Anger, tho' not in the effects of it. God indeed may be reconcil'd to the Sinner, but never to the ſin; for then he ſhould renounce himſelf, deny his own Eſſence and his own Divinity, if his inclinations to the love of Goodneſs, and his averſion from Evil, could be changed; if he ſuffer'd the Contempt of the one, and encourag'd the Practice of the other.

4. *God is ſo holy, that he cannot but love Holineſs in others.* Not that he owes any thing to his Creature, but from the unſpeakable Holineſs of his Nature, whence affections to all things that bear a reſemblance of him do flow; as Light ſhoots out from the Sun, or any glittering Body: 'Tis eſſential to the Infinite Righteouſneſs of his Nature, to love Righteouſneſs where-ever he beholds it: *Pſal.* 11. 7. *The righteous Lord loveth righteouſneſs.* He cannot becauſe of his Nature, but love that which bears ſome agreement with his Nature, that which is the curious Draught of his own Wiſdom and Purity: He cannot but be delighted with a copy of Himſelf: He would not have a holy Nature, if he did not love Holineſs in every Nature: His own Nature would be denied by him, if he did not affect every thing that had a ſtamp of his own Nature upon it. There was indeed nothing without God, that could invite him to manifeſt ſuch Goodneſs to Man, as he did in Creation: But after he had ſtampt that Rational Nature with a Righteouſneſs convenient for it, it was impoſſible but that he ſhould ardently love that impreſſion of himſelf, becauſe he loves his own Deity, and conſequently all things which are any Sparks and Images of it: And were the Devils capable of an act of Righteouſneſs, the Holineſs of his Nature would incline him to love it, even in thoſe dark and revolted Spirits.

5. *God is ſo holy, that he cannot poſitively will or encourage Sin in any.* How can he give any encouragement to that, which he cannot in the leaſt approve of, or look upon without loathing, not only the Crime, but the Criminal? Light may ſooner be the cauſe of Darkneſs, than Holineſs it ſelf be the cauſe of Unholineſs, abſolutely contrary to it: 'Tis a Contradiction, that he that is the Fountain of Good ſhould be the ſource of Evil; as if the ſame Fountain ſhould bubble up both ſweet and bitter Streams; ſalt and freſh *. Since whatever Good is in man, acknowledges God for its Author, it follows, that men are evil by their own fault. There is no need for men to be incited to that, to which the Corruption of their own Nature doth ſo powerfully bend them. Water hath a forcible principle in its own Nature to carry it downward; it needs no force to haſten the motion: *God tempts no man, but every man is drawn away by his own Luſt*, Jam. 1. 13, 14. All the preparations for glory are from God, *Rom.* 9. 23. But men are ſaid to *be fitted to deſtruction*, ver. 22. but God is not ſaid to fit them; they by their Iniquities fit themſelves for ruine, and he by his long-ſuffering keeps the deſtruction from them for a while.

* Jam. 3. 11.

1. Firſt, *God cannot command any Unrighteouſneſs.* As all Virtue is ſumm'd up in a love to God, ſo all Iniquity is ſumm'd up in an enmity to God: Every wicked Work declares a man an Enemy to God: *Col.* 1. 21. *Enemies in your minds by wicked Works.* If he could command his Creature any thing which bears an enmity in its Nature to himſelf, he would then implicitly command the hatred of himſelf, and he would be in ſome meaſure a hater of himſelf: He that commands another to deprive him of his Life, cannot be ſaid to bear any love to his own Life. God can never hate himſelf, and therefore cannot command any thing that is hateful to him, and tends to a hating of him, and driving the Creature further from him. In that very

moment that God ſhould command ſuch a thing, he would ceaſe to be good. What can be more abſurd to imagine, than that infinite Goodneſs ſhould enjoyn a thing contrary to it ſelf, and contrary to the eſſential Duty of a Creature, and order him to do any thing that beſpeaks an enmity to the nature of the Creator, or a deflouring and diſparaging his Works? God cannot but love himſelf, and his own Goodneſs, he were not otherwiſe Good; and therefore cannot order the Creature to do any thing oppoſite to this Goodneſs, or any thing hurtful to the Creature it ſelf, as Unrighteouſneſs is.

2. *Nor can God ſecretly inſpire any Evil into us.* 'Tis as much againſt his Nature to incline the heart to ſin, as it is to command it: As it is impoſſible but that he ſhould love himſelf, and therefore impoſſible to enjoyn any thing that tends to a hatred of himſelf; by the ſame reaſon it is as impoſſible that he ſhould infuſe ſuch a Principle in the heart, that might carry a man out to any act of enmity againſt him. To enjoyn one thing, and incline to another, would be an Argument of ſuch inſincerity, unfaithfulneſs, contradiction to it ſelf, that it cannot be conceiv'd to fall within the compaſs of the Divine Nature *, who is *a God without iniquity*, becauſe *a God of truth* and ſincerity, *juſt and right is he.* To beſtow excellent Faculties upon Man in Creation, and incline him by a ſudden impulſion to things contrary to the true end of him, and induce an inevitable ruin upon that Work, which he had compoſed with ſo much Wiſdom and Goodneſs, and pronounced good with ſo much delight and pleaſure, is inconſiſtent with that love which God bears to the Creature of his own framing: To incline his Will to that which would render him the object of his hatred, the fuel for his Juſtice, and ſink him into deplorable Miſery, 'tis moſt abſurd and unchriſtian-like to imagine.

* Deut 32. 4.

3. *Nor can God neceſſitate man to ſin.* Indeed ſin cannot be committed by force; there is no ſin but is in ſome ſort voluntary: Voluntary in the root, or voluntary in the branch; voluntary by an immediate act of the Will, or voluntary by a general or natural inclination of the Will. That is not a Crime to which a man is violenc'd, without any concurrence of the Faculties of the Soul to that act; 'tis indeed not an act, but a paſſion; a man that is forced, is not an Agent, but a Patient under the force: But what neceſſity can there be upon Man from God, ſince he hath implanted ſuch a Principle in him, that he cannot deſire any thing but what is good, either really or apparently; and if a Man miſtakes the Object, 'tis his own fault; for God hath endow'd him with Reaſon to diſcern, and liberty of Will to chooſe upon that Judgment.

And tho' 'tis to be acknowledg'd, that God hath an Abſolute Soveraign Dominion over his Creature, without any limitation, and may do what he pleaſes, and diſpoſe of it according to his own Will, as a *Potter doth with his Veſſel*, Rom. 9. 21. according as the Church ſpeaks, *Iſa.* 64. 8. *We are the Clay, and thou our Potter; and we all are the work of thy hand:* Yet he cannot pollute any undefiled Creature by vertue of that Soveraign Power, which he hath to do what he will with it; becauſe ſuch an act would be contrary to the foundation and right of his Dominion, which conſiſts in the excellency of his Nature, his immenſe Wiſdom and unſpotted Purity: If God ſhould therefore do any ſuch act, he would expunge the right of his Dominion, by blotting out that nature which renders him fit for that Dominion, and the exerciſe of it *. Any Dominion which is exercis'd without the Rules of Goodneſs, is not a true Soveraignty, but an inſupportable Tyranny. God would ceaſe to be a righteful Soveraign, if he ceaſed to be good; and he would ceaſe to be good, if he did command, neceſſitate, or by any poſitive operation incline inwardly the heart of a Creature directly to that which were morally evil, and contrary to the eminency of his own Nature.

*Amyrald. *diſſert. p.* 103, 104.

But that we may the better conceive of this, let us trace Man in his *firſt Fall*, whereby he ſubjected himſelf, and all his Poſterity, to the Curſe of the Law and Hatred of God; we ſhall find no footſteps either of Precept, outward Force, or inward Impulſion *. The plain ſtory of Man's Apoſtacy diſchargeth God from any intereſt in the Crime as an encouragement, and excuſeth him from any appearance of ſuſpicion, when he ſhew'd him the Tree he had reſerv'd, as a mark of his Soveraignty, and forbad him to eat of the Fruit of it: He back'd the prohibition with the threatning the greateſt Evil, *viz. Death*; which could be underſtood to imply nothing leſs than the loſs of all his happineſs; and in that couch'd an aſſurance of the perpetuity of his Felicity, if he did not rebelliouſly reach forth his Hand to take and *eat of the Fruit* †. 'Tis true, God had given that Fruit an excellency, *a goodneſs for Food, and a pleaſantneſs to the Eye* ‖. He had given Man an Appetite, whereby he was capable of deſiring ſo pleaſant a Fruit; but God had by Creation rang'd it under the command of Reaſon, if Man would have kept it in its due Obedience; he had fixed a ſevere threatning to bar the unlawful Excurſions of it: He had allow'd him a multitude of other Fruits in the Garden, and given him liberty enough to ſatisfie his Curioſity in all except this only. Could there be any thing more obliging to Man, to let God have his reſerve of that one Tree, than the grant of all the reſt: and more deterring from any diſobedient Attempt than ſo ſtrict a Command, ſpirited with ſo dreadful a Penalty? God did not ſollicite him to rebel againſt him: A ſollicitation to it, and a command againſt it, were inconſiſtent. The *Devil* aſſaults him, and God permitted it, and ſtands as it were a Spectator of the iſſue of the Combat. There could be no neceſſity upon Man to liſten to and entertain the ſuggeſtions of the Serpent: He had a power to reſiſt him, and he had an Anſwer ready for all the *Devil*'s Arguments, had they been multiplied to more than they were; the oppoſing the Order of God had been a ſufficient Confutation of all the Devil's plauſible reaſonings: That Creator *who hath given me my being*, hath order'd me not to eat of it. Tho' the pleaſure of the Fruit might allure him, yet the force of his Reaſon might have quell'd the liquoriſhneſs of his ſenſe: The perpetual thinking of, and ſounding out the Command of God, had ſilenc'd both *Satan* and his own Appetite; had diſarm'd the Tempter, and preſerv'd his ſenſitive part in its due ſubjection. What Inclination can we ſuppoſe there could be from the Creator, when upon the very firſt offer of the Temptation, *Eve* oppoſes to the Tempter the Prohibition and Threatning of God, and ſtrains it to a *higher* peg than we find God had deliver'd it in? For in *Gen.* 2. 17. 'tis, *you ſhall not eat of it*; but ſhe adds, *Gen.* 3. 3. *Neither ſhall you touch it*: which was a Remark that might have had more influence to reſtrain her. Had our firſt Parents kept this fixed upon their *Underſtandings* and *Thoughts*, that God had forbidden any ſuch act as the Eating of the Fruit, and that he was true to execute the Threatning he had utter'd, of which Truth of God they could not but have a natural Notion; with what eaſe might they have withſtood the *Devil*'s attack, and defeated his Deſign? And it had been eaſie with them to have kept their *Underſtandings* by the force of *ſuch a Thought*, from entertaining any

*Amyrald. *defenſ. de Calvin. p.* 151, 152.

† Gen. 2. 16, 17.

‖ Gen. 3 6.

any contrary Imagination. There is no ground for any Jealouſie of any Encouragements, inward Impulſions, or neceſſity from God in this Affair. A diſcharge of God from this firſt Sin, will eaſily induce a freedom of him from all other Sins which follow upon it.

God doth not then Encourage, or Excite, or Incline to Sin. How can he excite to that, which when it is done, he will be ſure to condemn? How can he be a *Righteous Judge* to ſentence a Sinner to Miſery, for a Crime acted by a ſecret Inſpiration from himſelf? Iniquity would deſerve no reproof from him, if he were any way poſitively the Author of it. Were God the Author of it in us, what is the reaſon our own Conſciences accuſe us for it, and convince us of it? That, being God's Deputy, would not accuſe us of it, if the Soveraign Power by which it acts, did incline us to it: How can he be thought to excite to that which he hath enacted ſuch ſevere Laws to reſtrain, or incline Man to that which he hath ſo dreadfully puniſh'd in his Son, and which it is impoſſible but the excellency of his Nature muſt incline him eternally to hate? We may ſooner imagine that a pure Flame ſhall engender Cold, and Darkneſs be the Off-ſpring of a Sunbeam, as imagine ſuch a thing as this. *What ſhall we ſay? Is there Unrighteouſneſs with God? God forbid.* The *Apoſtle* execrates ſuch a thought, *Rom.* 9. 14.

6. God cannot act any Evil, in or by himſelf. If he cannot approve of Sin in others, nor excite any to Iniquity, which is leſs, he cannot commit Evil himſelf, which is greater: What he cannot poſitively will in another, can never be willed in himſelf; he cannot do evil thro' Ignorance, becauſe of his Infinite Knowledge; nor thro' Weakneſs, becauſe of his Infinite Power; nor thro' Malice, becauſe of his Infinite Rectitude. He cannot will any unjuſt thing, becauſe having an infinitely perfect Underſtanding, he cannot judge that to be true which is falſe; or that to be good, which is evil; his Will is regulated by his Wiſdom: If he could Will any unjuſt and irrational thing, his Will would be repugnant to his Underſtanding; there would be a diſagreement in God, Will againſt Mind, and Will againſt Wiſdom: He being the Higheſt Reaſon, the firſt Truth, cannot do an unreaſonable, falſe, defective Action. 'Tis not a defect in God that he cannot *do Evil*, but a fulneſs and excellency of Power: As it is not a weakneſs in the Light, but the perfection of it, that it is unable to produce Darkneſs: God is *the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableneſs*, Jam. 1. 17. Nothing pleaſes him, nothing is acted by him, but what is beſeeming the Infinite Excellency of his own Nature: The voluntary neceſſity whereby God cannot be unjuſt, renders him a *God bleſſed for ever*: He would hate himſelf as the chief Good, if in any of his Actions he ſhould diſagree with his Goodneſs. He cannot do any unworthy thing, not becauſe he wants an Infinite Power, but becauſe he is poſſeſſed of an Infinite Wiſdom, and adorn'd with an Infinite Purity; and being infinitely pure, cannot have the leaſt mixture of Impurity. As if you can ſuppoſe Fire infinitely hot, you cannot ſuppoſe it to have the leaſt mixture of Coldneſs: The better any thing is, the more unable it is to do evil: God being the only Goodneſs, can as little be changed in his Goodneſs, as in his Eſſence.

II. The Second thing.

2. The next Enquiry is, *The Proof that God is Holy, or the manifeſtation of it.* Purity is as requiſite to the Bleſſedneſs of God, as to the Being of God: As he could not be God without being Bleſſed, ſo he could not be Bleſſed without being Holy. He is called by the Title of *Bleſſed*, as well as by that of *Holy*, Mark 14. 61. *Art thou the Chriſt, the Son of the Bleſſed?* Unrighteouſneſs is a miſery and turbulency in any Spirit wherein it is: For it is a privation of an excellency which ought to be in every intellectual Being, and what can follow upon the privation of an Excellency but unquietneſs and grief, the Moth of Happineſs? An unrighteous Man, as an unrighteous Man, can never be bleſſed, tho' he were in a local Heaven. Had God the leaſt Spot upon his Purity, it would render him as Miſerable in the midſt of his Infinite Sufficiency, as Iniquity renders a man in the confluence of his earthly Enjoyments. The Holineſs and Felicity of God are inſeparable in him. The *Apoſtle* intimates, that the Heathen made an attempt to ſully his Bleſſedneſs, when they would liken him to corruptible, mutable, impure Man; *Rom.* 1. 23, 25. *They changed the Glory of the Incorruptible God into an Image made like to Corruptible Man:* And after he entitles God, a *God bleſſed for ever.* The Goſpel is therefore called, *The glorious Goſpel of the bleſſed God*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 11. In regard of the holineſs of the Goſpel Precepts, and in regard of the Declaration of the Holineſs of God in all the ſtreams and branches wherein his Purity, in which his Bleſſedneſs conſiſts, is as illuſtrious as any other Perfection of the Divine Being. God hath highly manifeſted this Attribute in the ſtate of Nature; in the Legal Adminiſtration; in the diſpenſation of the Goſpel. His Wiſdom, Goodneſs and Power, are declared in Creation; his Soveraign Authority in his Law; his Grace and Mercy in the Goſpel: and his Righteouſneſs in all. Suitable to this threefold ſtate, may be that ternal Repetition of his Holineſs in the Prophecy, *Iſa.* 6. 3. *holy*, as Creator and Benefactor; *holy*, as Law-giver and Judge; *holy*, as Reſtorer and Redeemer.

1. His Holineſs appears *as he is Creator, in framing Man in a perfect Uprightneſs.* Angels, as made by God, could not be evil; for God beheld *his* own Works with pleaſure, and could not have pronounced them all good, had ſome been created pure, and others impure: Two Moral Contrarieties could not be good. The Angels had a *firſt eſtate*, wherein they were happy *; and had they not left their own habitation and ſtate, they could not have been miſerable. But becauſe the *Scripture* ſpeaks only of the Creation of Man, we will conſider, that the Humane Nature was well ſtrung and tun'd by God, according to the Note of his own Holineſs: *Eccl.* 7. 29. God hath made Man *upright:* He had declared his Power in other Creatures, but would declare in his Rational Creature, what he moſt valu'd in himſelf; and therefore created him upright, with a Wiſdom which is the rectitude of the Mind, with a Purity which is the rectitude of the Will and Affections. He had declared a Purity in other Creatures, as much as they were capable of, *viz.* in the exact tuning them to anſwer one another. And that God, who ſo well tun'd and compos'd other Creatures, would not make Man a jarring Inſtrument, and place a crack'd Creature to be Lord of the reſt of his earthly Fabrick. God being holy, could not ſet his Seal upon any Rational Creature, but the Impreſſion would be like himſelf, pure and holy alſo; he could not be created with an error in his Underſtanding; that had been inconſiſtent with the Goodneſs of God to his Rational Creature; if ſo, the erroneous motion of the Will, which was to follow the Dictates of the Underſtanding, could not have been imputed to him as his Crime, becauſe it would have been, not a voluntary, but a neceſſary effect of his Nature; had there been an error in the firſt Wheel, the error of the next could not have been imputed to the Nature of that, but to the ir-

* Jude 6.

regular motion of the firſt Wheel in the Engine. The ſin of Men and Angels proceeded not from any natural defect in their Underſtandings, but from Inconſideration: He that was the Author of Harmony in his other Creatures, could not be the Author of Diſorder in the chief of his Works: Other Creatures were his Footſteps, but Man was his Image †; *Let us make Man in our image, after our likeneſs:* Which tho' it ſeems to imply no more in that place, than an Image of his Dominion over the Creatures, yet the *Apoſtle* raiſes it a peg higher, and gives us a larger Interpretation of it, *Col.* 3. 10. And *have put on the new man, which is renew'd in knowledge after the Image of him that created him*; making it to conſiſt in a reſemblance to his Righteouſneſs. *Image*, ſay ſome, notes the Form, as Man was a Spirit in regard of the Soul: *Likeneſs* notes the Quality implanted in his Spiritual Nature: The Image of God was drawn in him, both as he was a Rational, and as he was a holy Creature. The Creatures manifeſted the being of a Superiour Power, as their Cauſe, but the Righteouſneſs of the firſt Man evidenc'd not only a Soveraign Power, as the Donor of his Being, but a holy Power, as the Pattern of his Work: God appear'd to be a holy God in the Righteouſneſs of his Creature, as well as an Underſtanding God in the Reaſon of his Creature, while he form'd him with all neceſſary knowledge in his Mind, and all neceſſary uprightneſs in his Will: The Law of Love to God, with his *whole ſoul*, his *whole mind*, his *whole heart and ſtrength*, was originally writ upon his Nature: All the parts of his Nature were framed in a Moral Conformity with God, to anſwer this Law, and imitate God in his purity, which conſiſts in a love of himſelf, and his own Goodneſs and Excellency. Thus doth the clearneſs of the ſtream point us to the purer Fountain, and the brightneſs of the Beam evidence a greater ſplendor in the Sun which ſhot it out.

† Gen. 1. 26, 27.

2. *His Holineſs appears in his Laws, as he is a Law-giver and a Judge.* Since Man was bound to be ſubject to God, as a Creature, and had a capacity to be ruled by the Law, as an underſtanding and willing Creature, God gave him a Law taken from the depths of his holy Nature, and ſuited to the Original Faculties of Man. The Rules which God hath fixed in the World, are not the reſolvés of bare Will, but reſult particularly from the goodneſs of his Nature: They are nothing elſe but the Tranſcripts of his Infinite Deteſtation of ſin, as he is the unblemiſh'd Governor of the World. This being the moſt adorable Property of his Nature, he hath impreſs'd it upon that Law which he would have inviolably obſerv'd as a perpetual Rule for our Actions, that we may every moment think of this beautiful Perfection. God can command nothing, but what hath ſome ſimilitude with the rectitude of his own Nature: All his Laws, every Paragraph of them therefore ſcent of this, and glitter with it. *Deut.* 4. 8. *What Nation hath Statutes and Judgments ſo righteous as all this Law I ſet before you this day?* and therefore they are compar'd to *fine Gold*, that hath no ſpeck or droſs *.

* Pſal. 19. 10.

This *Parity* is evident,

1. *In the Moral Law, or Law of Nature.*
2. *In the Ceremonial Law.*
3. *In the Allurements annex'd to it for keeping it, and the Affrightments to reſtrain from the breaking of it.*
4. *In the Judgments inflicted for the Violation of it.*

1. *In the Moral Law:* Which is therefore dignified with the Title of *holy*, twice in one Verſe, *Rom.* 7. 12. *Wherefore the Law is holy, and the Commandment is holy, juſt, and good.* It being the expreſs Image of God's Will, as our Saviour was of his Perſon, and bearing a reſemblance to the Purity of his Nature. The Tables of this Law were put into the Ark, that as the *Mercy Seat* was to repreſent the Grace of God, ſo the *Law* was to repreſent the *Holineſs* of God *. The *Pſalmiſt*, after he had ſpoken of the Glory of God in the Heavens, wherein the Power of God is expos'd to our view, introduceth the Law, wherein the Purity of God is evidenc'd to our Minds †; *perfect, pure, clean, righteous*, are the titles given to it. 'Tis clearer in Holineſs, than the Sun is in Brightneſs; and more mighty in it ſelf to command the Conſcience, than the Sun is to run its Race. As the Holineſs of the Scripture demonſtrates the Divinity of its Author; ſo the Holineſs of the Law doth the Purity of the Lawgiver.

* Pſal. 19.

† Ver. 7, 8, &c.

1. The Purity of this *Law* is ſeen *in the Matter of it.* It preſcribes all that becomes a Creature towards God, and all that becomes one Creature towards another of his own rank and kind. The Image of God is compleat in the Holineſs of the *firſt* Table, and the Righteouſneſs of the *ſecond*; which is intimated by the Apoſtle, *Eph.* 4. 24. the one being the Rule of what we owe to God; the other being the Rule of what we owe to man: There is no Good but it enjoyns, and no Evil but it diſowns. 'Tis not ſickly and lame in any part of it; not a good action, but it gives it its due praiſe; and not an evil action, but it ſets a condemning mark upon. The Commands of it are frequently in Scripture call'd *Judgments*, becauſe they rightly judge of good and evil, and are a clear light to inform the Judgment of Man in the knowledge of both. By this was the Underſtanding of *David* enlightned to know every *falſe way*, and to *hate* it ‖. There is no Caſe can happen, but may meet with a Determination from it; it teaches Men the nobleſt manner of living a life like God himſelf; honourably for the Law-giver, and joyfully for the Subject. It directs us to the higheſt End; ſets us at a diſtance from all baſe and ſordid Practiſes; it propoſeth Light to the Underſtanding, and Goodneſs to the Will. It would tune all the Strings, ſet right all the Orders of Mankind: It cenſures the leaſt Mote, countenanceth not any ſtain in the Life. Not a *wanton Glance* can meet with any juſtification from it †: not a *raſh Anger*, but it frowns upon ‖. As the Law-giver wants nothing as an addition to his Bleſſedneſs; ſo his Law wants nothing as a ſupplement to its *Perfection*, *Deut.* 4. 2. What our *Saviour* ſeems to add, is not an addition to mend any Defects; but a reſtoration of it from the corrupt Gloſſes, wherewith the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* had eclips'd the brightneſs of it: They had curtail'd it, and diminiſh'd part of its Authority, cutting off its Empire over the leaſt Evil, and left its power only to check the groſſer Practiſes. But Chriſt reſtores it to the due extent of its Soveraignty, and ſhews it in thoſe dimenſions in which the holy men of God conſider'd it, as *exceeding broad*, Pſal. 119. 96. reaching to all Actions, all Motions, all Circumſtances attending them; full of inexhauſtible Treaſures of Righteouſneſs. And tho' this Law, ſince the *Fall*, doth irritate Sin, 'tis no diſparagement, but a Teſtimony to the Righteouſneſs of it; which the *Apoſtle* manifeſts by his *Wherefore*, Rom. 7. 8. *Sin taking occaſion by the Commandment, wrought in me all manner of Concupiſcence*; and repeating the ſame ſenſe, *ver.* 11. ſubjoyns a *Wherefore*, ver. 22. *Wherefore the Law is holy.* The riſing of Mens ſinful hearts againſt the Law of God, when it ſtrikes with its Perceptive and Minatory parts upon their Conſciences, evidenceth the Holineſs of the Law and the Law-giver.

‖ Pſal. 119. 104.

† Matt. 5. 28.

‖ Matt. 5. 22.

In

In its own nature it is a Directing Rule, but the malignant nature of Sin is exaſperated by it; as an hoſtile quality in a Creature, will awaken it ſelf at the appearance of its Enemy. The Purity of this Beam, and Tranſcript of God, bears witneſs to a greater clearneſs and beauty in the *Sun* and Original. Undefiled Streams manifeſt an untainted Fountain.

2. It is ſeen *in the manner of its Precepts.* As it preſcribes all Good, and forbids all Evil; ſo it doth enjoyn the one, and baniſh the other as ſuch. The Laws of Men command Virtuous things; not as Virtuous in themſelves, but as uſeful for Human Society; which the Magiſtrate is the Conſervator of, and the *Guardian of Juſtice* *. The Laws of Men contain not all the Precepts of Virtue, but only ſuch as are accommodated to their Cuſtoms, and are uſeful to preſerve the Ligaments of their Government. The deſign of them is not ſo much to render the Subjects good Men, as good Citizens: They order the Practice of thoſe Virtues that may ſtrengthen Civil Society, and diſcountenance thoſe Vices only which weaken the Sinews of it: But God, being the *Guardian of Univerſal Righteouſneſs*, doth not only enact the Obſervance of *all righteouſneſs*, but the obſervance of it *as Righteouſneſs*. He commands that which is Juſt in it ſelf; enjoyns *Virtues* as *Virtues*, and prohibits *Vices* as *Vices*; as they are profitable or injurious to our ſelves, as well as to others.

* Ames *de Conſc. lib. 5. cap. 1. queſt. 7.*

Men command Temperance and Juſtice; not as *Virtues* in themſelves, but as they prevent Diſorder and Confuſion in a *Common-wealth*: And forbid Adultery and Theft; not as *Vices* in themſelves, but as they are Intrenchments upon Property: Not as hurtful to the Perſon that commits them, but as hurtful to the Perſon againſt whoſe Right they are committed. Upon this account perhaps *Paul* applauds the *Holineſs* of the Law of God, in regard of its own Nature, as conſider'd in it ſelf, more than he doth the Juſtice of it in regard of Man, and the goodneſs and conveniency of it to the World; *Rom.* 7. 12. the Law is *Holy* twice, and *Juſt and Good* but once.

3. *In the Spiritual extent of it.* The moſt *Righteous Powers* of the World do not ſo much regard in their Laws what the *Inward Affections* of their Subjects are: The *External Acts* are only the Objects of their Decrees, either to encourage them if they be uſeful, or diſcourage them if they be hurtful to the Community. And indeed they can do no other, for they have no Power proportion'd to Inward Affections, ſince the Inward Diſpoſition falls not under their Cenſure; and it would be fooliſh for any Legiſlative Power to make ſuch Laws, which it is impoſſible for it to put in Execution. They can prohibit the Outward Acts of Theft and Murder, but they cannot command the *Love of God*, the *Hatred of Sin*, the *Contempt of the World*; they cannot prohibit *Unclean Thoughts*, and the *Atheiſm* of the *Heart*. But the Law of God ſurmounts in *Righteouſneſs* all the Laws of the beſt regulated *Commonwealths* in the World: It reſtrains the licentious Heart, as well as the violent Hand; it damps the very firſt bubblings of corrupt Nature, orders a Purity in the Spring; commands a clean Fountain, clean Streams, clean Veſſels. It would frame the Heart to an inward, as well as the Life to an outward Righteouſneſs, and make the inſide purer than the outſide. It forbids the firſt belchings of a Murderous or Adulterous intention: It obligeth Man as a Rational Creature, and therefore exacts a conformity of every Rational Faculty, and of whatſoever is under the Command of them. It commands the Private Cloſet to be free from the leaſt Cobweb, as well as the outward Porch to be clean from Mire and Dirt. It frowns upon all ſtains and pollutions of the moſt retired thoughts: Hence the *Apoſtle* calls it, *a Spiritual Law*, Rom. 7. 14. as not Political, but extending its force further than the Frontiers of the Man; placing its Enſigns in the *Metropolis* of the Heart and Mind, and curbing with its Scepter the inward motions of the Spirit, and commanding over the ſecrets of every Man's Breaſt.

4. In regard of *the perpetuity of it.* The purity and perpetuity of it are link'd together by the *Pſalmiſt*, Pſal. 19. 9. *The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever*; the fear of the Lord, that is, that Law which commands the fear and worſhip of God, and is the Rule of it. And indeed, God values it at ſuch a rate, that rather than part with a tittle, or let the honour of it lie in the duſt, he would not only let *Heaven and Earth paſs away*, but expoſe his Son to death for the reparation of the wrong it had ſuſtain'd. So holy it is, that the *Holineſs* and *Righteouſneſs* of God cannot diſpenſe with it, cannot abrogate it, without deſpoiling himſelf of his own Being: 'Tis a Copy of the Eternal Law. Can he ever abrogate the command of Love to himſelf, without ſhewing ſome contempt of his own Excellency and very Being? Before he can enjoyn a Creature not to love him, he muſt make himſelf unworthy of Love, and worthy of Hatred; this would be the higheſt *Unrighteouſneſs*, to order us to hate that which is only worthy of our higheſt Affections. * So God cannot change the firſt Command, and order us to worſhip *many Gods*; this would be againſt the Excellency and Unity of God: For God cannot conſtitute another God, or make any thing worthy of an Honour equal with himſelf. Thoſe things that are good, only becauſe they are commanded, are alterable by God: Thoſe things that are intrinſecally and eſſentially good, and therefore commanded, are unalterable as long as the *Holineſs* and *Righteouſneſs* of God ſtand firm. The intrinſick Goodneſs of the Moral Law, the concern God hath for it; the perpetuity of the Precepts of the *firſt Table*, and the care he hath had to imprint the Precepts of the *Second* upon the Minds and Conſciences of Men, as the Author of Nature for the preſervation of the World, manifeſts the *Holineſs* of the Law-maker and Governor.

* Suarez.

2. His *Holineſs* appears *in the Ceremonial Law.* In the variety of Sacrifices for Sin, wherein he writ his deteſtation of *Unrighteouſneſs* in bloody Characters. His *Holineſs* was more conſtantly expreſt in the continual Sacrifices, than in thoſe rarer ſprinklings of Judgments now and then upon the world, which often reach'd not the worſt, but the moſt moderate Sinners, and were the occaſions of the queſtioning of the Righteouſneſs of his Providence both by *Jews* and *Gentiles*. In Judgments his Purity was only now and then manifeſt: By his long Patience, he might be imagin'd by ſome reconcil'd to their Crimes, or not much concern'd in them; but by the Morning and Evening Sacrifice he witneſs'd a perpetual and uninterrupted Abhorrence of whatſoever was evil.

Beſides thoſe, the occaſional Waſhings and Sprinklings upon *Ceremonial Defilements*, which polluted only the Body, gave an evidence, that every thing that had a reſemblance to Evil, was loathſom to him. Add alſo the Prohibitions of eating ſuch and ſuch Creatures that were filthy; as the *Swine* that wallow'd in the Mire, a fit Emblem for the prophane and brutiſh Sinner; which had a Moral ſignification, both of the loathſomneſs of Sin to God, and the averſion themſelves ought to have to every thing that was filthy.

3. His

3. His *Holineſs* appears *in the Allurements annex'd to the Law for keeping it; and the Affrightments to reſtrain from the breaking of it.* Both Promiſes and Threatnings have their Fundamental Root in the *Holineſs of God*, and are both Branches of this peculiar Perfection. As they reſpect the Nature of God, they are Declarations of his hatred of Sin, and his love of Righteouſneſs; the one belong to his Threatnings, the other to his Promiſes; both joyn together to repreſent this Divine Perfection to the Creature, and to excite to an imitation in the Creature. In the one, God would render Sin odious, becauſe dangerous; and curb the practice of Evil, which would otherwiſe be licentious: In the other, he would commend *Righteouſneſs*, and excite a love of it, which would otherwiſe be cold. By theſe God ſutes the *two* great Affections of Men, *Fear* and *Hope*; both the branches of Self-love in Man: The *Promiſes* and *Threatnings* are both the Branches of Holineſs in God. The end of the Promiſes is the ſame with the Exhortation the *Apoſtle* concludes from them, 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. *Having theſe Promiſes, let us cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſs of Fleſh and Spirit, perfecting Holineſs in the fear of God.* As the end of Precepts is to direct, the end of Threatnings is to deter from Iniquity; ſo that of the Promiſes, is to allure to Obedience. Thus God breaths out his Love to *Righteouſneſs* in every Promiſe, his Hatred of *Sin* in every Threatning. The Rewards offer'd in the one, are the Smiles of *pleaſed Holineſs*; and the Curſes thunder'd in the other, are the Sparklings of *enraged Righteouſneſs*.

4. His *Holineſs* appears *in the Judgments inflicted for the violation of this Law.* Divine Holineſs is the Root of Divine Juſtice, and Divine Juſtice is the Triumph of Divine Holineſs. Hence both are expreſſed in Scripture by one word of *Righteouſneſs*, which ſometimes ſignifies the rectitude of the Divine Nature, and ſometimes the vindicative ſtroke of his Arm; *Pſal.* 103. 6. *The Lord executeth Righteouſneſs and Judgment for all that are oppreſſed.* So *Dan.* 9. 7. *Righteouſneſs* (that is, Juſtice) *belongs to thee.* The Vials of his Wrath are filled from his implacable averſion to Iniquity. All Penal Evils ſhowr'd down upon the heads of wicked Men, ſpread their root in, and branch out from this Perfection. All the dreadful Storms and Tempeſts in the World are blown up by it. Why doth he *rain Snares, Fire and Brimſtone, and a horrible Tempeſt?* becauſe *the righteous Lord loveth Righteouſneſs*, Pſal. 11. 6, 7. And (as was obſerv'd before) when he was going about the dreadful'ſt Work that ever was in the World; the overturning the *Jewiſh* ſtate, hardening the Hearts of that Unbelieving People, and caſhiering a Nation (once dear to him) from the honour of his Protection; His *Holineſs*, as the Spring of all this, is applauded by the *Seraphims*, *Iſa.* 6. 3. compar'd with *verſ.* 9, 10, 11, *&c.* Impunity argues the approbation of a Crime, and Puniſhment the abhorrency of it. The greatneſs of the Crime, and the Righteouſneſs of the Judge, are the firſt Natural Sentiments that ariſe in the minds of Men upon the appearance of Divine Judgments in the World, by thoſe that are near them *. As when Men ſee Gibbets erected, Scaffolds prepared, Inſtruments of Death and Torture provided, and grievous Puniſhments inflicted; the firſt reflection in the Spectators, is the Malignity of the Crime, and the deteſtation the Governors are poſſeſſed with.

*Amiraut. *Moral. tom.* 5. *p.* 388.

2. *How ſeverely hath he puniſh'd his moſt noble Creatures for it?* The once glorious Angels, upon whom he had been at greater coſt than upon other Creatures, and drawn more lively Lineaments of his own Excellency, upon the Tranſgreſſion of his Law, are thrown into the Furnace of Juſtice without any *Mercy* to pity them, *Jude* 6. And tho' there were but one ſort of Creatures upon the Earth that bore his Image, and were only fit to publiſh and keep up his Honour below the Heavens; yet upon their Apoſtacy (tho' upon a Temptation from a ſubtile and inſinuating Spirit) the *Man*, with all his Poſterity, is ſentenc'd to miſery in Life, and Death at laſt; and the *Woman*, with all her Sex, have ſtanding Puniſhments inflicted on them; which as they begun in their Perſons, were to reach as far as the laſt Member of their ſucceſſive Generations. So *Holy* is God, that he will not endure a Spot in his choiceſt Work. Men indeed, when there is a crack in an excellent piece of Work, or a ſtain upon a rich Garment, do not caſt it away; they value it for the remaining Excellency, more than hate it for the contracted Spot: But God ſaw no Excellency in his Creature worthy regarding, after the Image of that which he moſt eſteem'd in himſelf, was defaced.

2. *How deteſtable to him are the very Inſtruments of Sin?* For the ill uſe, the *Serpent* (an Irrational Creature) was put to death by the *Devil*, as an Inſtrument in the *Fall of Man*, the whole brood of thoſe Animals are Curſt, *Gen.* 3. 14. *Curſed above all Cattel, and above every Beaſt of the Field.* Not only the *Devil*'s Head is threatned to be for ever *bruiſed*, and (as ſome think) render'd irrecoverable upon this further Teſtimony of his Malice in the Seduction of Man; who perhaps without this new Act, might have been admitted into the Arms of Mercy, notwithſtanding his firſt Sin; [tho' the *Scripture* gives us no account of this, only this is the only Sentence we read of pronounc'd againſt the *Devil*, which puts him into an irrecoverable ſtate by a mortal *bruiſing* of his *Head.*] But, I ſay, He is not only puniſh'd, but the Organ whereby he blew in his Temptation, is put into a worſe condition than it was before. Thus God hated the Spunge, whereby the *Devil* deform'd his beautiful Image: Thus God, to manifeſt his deteſtation of Sin, order'd the *Beaſt* whereby any Man was ſlain, to be ſlain as well as the Malefactor, *Levit.* 20. 15. The *Gold* and *Silver* that had been abuſed to Idolatry, and were the Ornaments of Images; tho' good in themſelves, and uncapable of a Criminal Nature, were not to be brought into their Houſes, but deteſted and abhorred by them, becauſe they were curſed, and an *abomination to the Lord.* See with what loathing Expreſſions this Law is enjoyn'd to them, *Deut.* 7. 25, 26. So contrary is the holy Nature of God to every Sin, that it curſeth every thing that is Inſtrumental in it.

3. *How deteſtable is every thing to him that is in the Sinner's poſſeſſion?* The very Earth, which God had made *Adam* the Proprietor of, was *Curſed for his ſake*, Gen. 3. 17, 18. It loſt its Beauty, and lies languiſhing to this day; and notwithſtanding the Redemption by Chriſt, hath not recover'd its health, nor is it like to do, till the compleating the Fruits of it upon the *Children of God*, Rom. 8. 20, 21, 22. The whole Lower Creation was made *ſubject to vanity*, and put into Pangs upon the Sin of Man, by the *Righteouſneſs* of God deteſting his Offence. How often hath his implacable averſion from Sin been ſhewn; not only in his Judgments upon the Offender's Perſon, but by wrapping up in the ſame Judgment thoſe which ſtood in a near relation to them? *Achan*, with his Children and Cattel, are overwhelmed with *Stones*, and burned togethet, *Joſh.* 7. 24, 25. In the deſtruction of *Sodom*; not only the grown Malefactors, but the young Spawn, the Infants (at preſent uncapable of the ſame Wickedneſs) and their Cattel were burnt up by the ſame *Fire from Heaven*; and the place where their Ha-

bitations ſtood, is at this day partly a heap of *Aſhes*, and partly an Infectious *Lake*, that choaks any Fiſh that ſwim into it from *Jordan*, and ſtifles (as is related) by its vapor, any Bird that attempts to fly over it. Oh, how deteſtable is *Sin* to God, that cauſes him to turn a pleaſant Land, as the *Garden of the Lord* (as it is ſtiled *Gen.* 13. 10.) into a Lake of Sulphur; to make it both in his Word and Works, as a laſting Monument of his abhorrence of Evil!

4. *What Deſign hath God in all theſe Acts of Severity and Vindictive Juſtice, but to ſet off the luſtre of his Holineſs?* He teſtifies himſelf concern'd for thoſe Laws, which he hath ſet as Hedges and Limits to the *Luſts* of Men; and therefore when he breaths forth his fiery Indignation againſt a People, he is ſaid to get himſelf *Honor*: As when he intended the *Red Sea* ſhould ſwallow up the *Egyptian* Army, *Exod.* 14. 17, 18. which *Moſes* in his triumphant Song ecchoes back again, *Exod.* 15. 1. *Thou haſt triumphed glorioufly*; glorioufly in his *Holineſs*, which is the glory of his Nature; as *Moſes* himſelf interprets it in the *Text*. When Men will not own the *Holineſs* of God in a way of Duty, God will vindicate it in a way of Juſtice and Puniſhment. In the deſtruction of *Aaron*'s Sons, that were Will-worſhippers, and would take ſtrange Fire, *Sanctified* and *Glorified* are coupled, *Lev.* x. 3. He glorified himſelf in that Act, in vindicating his *Holineſs* before all the People, declaring, that he will not endure Sin and Diſobedience. He doth therefore in this Life more ſeverely puniſh the Sins of his People, when they preſume upon any act of Diſobedience; for a Teſtimony, that the nearneſs and dearneſs of any Perſon to him, ſhall not make him unconcern'd in his *Holineſs*, or be a Plea for Impurity. The end of all his Judgments, is to witneſs to the World his abominating of Sin. To puniſh and witneſs againſt Men, are one and the ſame thing, *Micah* 1. 2. *The Lord ſhall witneſs againſt you*; and it is the Witneſs of God's *Holineſs*, *Hoſ.* 5. 5. *And the pride of Iſrael doth teſtifie to his face*: One renders it, *the excellency of Iſrael*, and underſtands it of *God*; the word גאון which is here in our tranſlation *Pride*, is render'd *Excellency*, Amos 8. 7. *The Lord God hath ſworn by his Excellency*; which is interpreted *Holineſs*, Amos 4. 2. *The Lord God hath ſworn by his Holineſs*. What is the iſſue or end of this ſwearing by *Holineſs*, and of his *Excellency* teſtifying againſt them? In all thoſe places you will find them to be ſweeping Judgments: In one, *Iſrael* and *Ephraim ſhall fall in their Iniquity*; in another, *He will take them away with hooks*, and *their Poſterity with fiſh-hooks*; and in another, *He would never forget any of their Works*. He that puniſheth wickedneſs in thoſe he before us'd with the greateſt Tenderneſs, furniſheth the World with an undeniable evidence of the deteſtableneſs of it to him. Were not Judgments ſometimes poured out upon the World, it would be believ'd, that God were rather an approver, than an enemy to Sin.

To *Conclude*, Since God hath made a ſtricter Law to guide Men; annex'd Promiſes above the merit of Obedience, to allure them; and Threatnings, dreadful enough to affright Men from Diſobedience. He cannot be the cauſe of Sin, nor a lover of it. How can he be the Author of that which he ſo ſeverely forbids; or love that which he delights to puniſh; or be fondly indulgent to any evil, when he hates the ignorant Inſtruments in the Offences of his reaſonable Creatures?

III. The *Holineſs* of God appears *in our Reſtoration*. 'Tis in the Glaſs of the *Goſpel* we behold the *Glory of the Lord**, that is, the Glory of the Lord, into whoſe Image we are changed; but we are changed into nothing, as the Image of God, but into *Holineſs*: We bore not upon us by Creation, nor by Regeneration, the Image of any other Perfection: We cannot be chang'd into his *Omnipotence*, *Omniſcience*, *&c.* but into the Image of his *Righteouſneſs*. This is the pleaſing and glorious ſight the Goſpel *Mirror* darts in our Eyes. The whole Scene of *Redemption* is nothing elſe but a diſcovery of Judgment and Righteouſneſs, *Iſaiah* 1. 27. *Zion ſhall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteouſneſs.*

* 2 Cor. 3. 18.

1. This *Holineſs* of God appears *in the manner of our Reſtoration*, viz. *by the death of Chriſt*. Not all the Vials of Judgments, that have, or ſhall be poured out upon the wicked World, nor the flaming Furnace of a Sinner's Conſcience, nor the irreverſible Sentence pronounc'd againſt the rebellious *Devils*, nor the groans of the *damned Creatures*, give ſuch a demonſtration of God's hatred of Sin, as the Wrath of God let looſe upon his *Son*. Never did Divine Holineſs appear more beautiful and lovely, than at the time our *Saviour*'s Countenance was moſt marr'd in the midſt of his dying Groans. This himſelf acknowledges in that Prophetical *Pſalm*, *Pſal.* 22. 1, 2. when God had turn'd his ſmiling Face from him, and thruſt his ſharp Knife into his Heart, which forced that terrible cry from him, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* He adores this perfection of *Holineſs*, ver. 3. *But thou art holy*: Thy *Holineſs* is the Spring of this ſharp Agony, and for this thou *inhabiteſt*, and ſhalt for ever inhabit the *Praiſes* of all thy *Iſrael*. *Holineſs* drew the Veil between God's Countenance and our Saviour's Soul. *Juſtice* indeed gave the ſtroke, but *Holineſs* order'd it. In this his Purity did ſparkle, and his irreverſible Juſtice manifeſted, that all thoſe that *commit Sin are worthy of Death*; this was the perfect Index of his *Righteouſneſs* *, that is, of his *Holineſs* and *Truth*; then it was that God that is *Holy*, was *ſanctified in Righteouſneſs*, Iſa. 5. 16. * Rom. 3. 29.

It appears the more, if you conſider,

1. *The Dignity of the Redeemer's Perſon.* One that had been from Eternity; had laid the *Foundations of the World*; had been the Object of the Divine Delight: He that was *God bleſſed for ever*, becomes a *Curſe*: He who was bleſſed by *Angels*, and by whom God bleſſed the World, muſt be ſeiz'd with Horror: The *Son of Eternity* muſt bleed to death. Where did ever Sin appear ſo irreconcilable to God? Where did God ever break out ſo furiouſly in his deteſtation of Iniquity? The Father would have the moſt Excellent Perſon, one next in order to himſelf, and *equal to him* in all the glorious Perfections of his Nature *, Dye on a diſgraceful *Croſs*, and be expos'd to the flames of Divine Wrath, rather than Sin ſhould live, and his *Holineſs* remain for ever diſparag'd by the Violations of his Law. * Phil. 2. 6.

2. *The near relation he ſtood in to the Father.* He was his *own Son that he delivered up*, Rom. 8. 32. His Eſſential Image, as dearly beloved by him as himſelf; yet he would abate nothing of his hatred of thoſe Sins imputed to one ſo dear to him, and who never had done any thing contrary to his Will. The *ſtrong Cries* utter'd by him, could not cauſe him to cut off the leaſt Fringe of this Royal Garment, nor part with a Thread the Robe of his *Holineſs* was woven with. The torrent of Wrath is open'd upon him, and the Father's Heart beats not in the leaſt notice of tenderneſs to Sin, in the midſt of his Son's Agonies. * God ſeems to lay aſide the Bowels of a Father, and put on the Garb of an irreconcileable Enemy. Upon which account, probably, our Saviour in the midſt of his Paſſion gives him * Lingend. *Tom.* 3. *p.* 699, 700.

him the Title of *God*; not of *Father*, the Title he uſually before Addreſt to him with, *Matth.* 27. 46. *My God, my God*; not, My Father, my Father, *why haſt thou forſaken me?* He ſeems to hang upon the *Croſs* like a diſinherited Son, while he appear'd in the garb and rank of a Sinner. Then was his head loaded with *Curſes*, when he ſtood under that Sentence of, *Curſed is every one that hangs upon a tree*, Gal. 3. 13. and look'd as one forlorn and rejected by the Divine Purity and Tenderneſs. God dealt not with him, as if he had been one in ſo near a relation to him. He left him not the Will only of the Inſtruments of his Death, he would have the chiefeſt blow himſelf of bruiſing him, *Iſa.* 53. 10. *It pleaſed the Lord to bruiſe him:* the *Lord*, becauſe the power of Creatures could not ſtrike a blow ſtrong enough, to ſatisfie and ſecure the Rights of Infinite *Holineſs*. It was therefore a Cup temper'd and put into his hands by his Father; a Cup given him to drink. In other Judgments he lets out his Wrath againſt his Creatures; in this he lets out his Wrath (as it were) againſt Himſelf, againſt his Son, One as dear to him as himſelf. As in his making Creatures, his Power over Nothing to bring it into Being appear'd; but in pardoning Sin he hath power over himſelf; ſo in puniſhing Creatures, his *Holineſs* appears in his Wrath againſt Creatures, againſt Sinners by inherency: But by puniſhing Sin in his *Son*, his Holineſs ſharpens his Wrath againſt him who was his Equal, and only a reputed Sinner: As if his Affection to his own *Holineſs*, ſurmounted his Affection to his *Son*: For he choſe to ſuſpend the breakings out of his Affections to his Son, and ſee him plung'd in a ſharp and ignominious Miſery, without giving him any viſible Token of his Love, rather than ſee his *Holineſs* lie groaning under the Injuries of a Tranſgreſſing World.

3. The Value he puts upon his *Holineſs* appears further, *in the advancement of this Redeeming Perſon after his death.* Our Saviour was advanc'd, not barely for his Dying, but for the reſpect he had in his Death to this Attribute of God. *Heb.* 1. 9. *Thou haſt loved Righteouſneſs, and hated Iniquity: therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oyl of gladneſs*, &c. By *Righteouſneſs* is meant this Perfection, becauſe of the oppoſition of it to *Iniquity*. Some think [*Therefore*] to be the final Cauſe; as if this were the ſenſe, *Thou art anointed with the oyl of gladneſs, that thou mighteſt love righteouſneſs and hate iniquity.* But the Holy Ghoſt ſeeming to ſpeak in this Chapter, not only of the Godhead of Chriſt, but of his Exaltation; the Doctrine whereof he had begun in Verſe 3. and proſecutes in the following Verſes; I would rather underſtand [*Therefore*] *For this cauſe, or reaſon, hath God anointed thee*; not, *to this end.* Chriſt indeed had an Unction of Grace, whereby he was fitted for his Mediatory work; He had alſo an Unction of Glory, whereby he was rewarded for it. In the *firſt* regard, it was a qualifying him for his Office; in the *ſecond* regard, it was a ſolemn inaugurating him in his Royal Authority. And the Reaſon of his being ſetled upon a *Throne for ever and ever*, is, *becauſe he loved Righteouſneſs.* He ſuffer'd himſelf to be pierced to death, that *Sin*, the Enemy of God's Purity, *might be deſtroy'd*; and the Honour of the Law, the Image of God's *Holineſs*, might be repair'd and fulfill'd in the Fallen Creature. He reſtor'd the credit of Divine Holineſs in the World, in manifeſting by his Death, God, an irreconcileable Enemy to all Sin; in aboliſhing the Empire of Sin, ſo hateful to God, and reſtoring the rectitude of Nature, and new framing the Image of God in his choſen ones.

And God ſo valued this Vindication of his *Holineſs*, that he confers upon him; in his Human Nature, an Eternal Royalty and Empire over Angels and Men. *Holineſs* was the great Attribute reſpected by Chriſt in his dying, and manifeſted in his death; and for his love to this, God would beſtow an Honour upon his Perſon, in that Nature wherein he did vindicate the Honour of ſo dear a Perfection. In the death of Chriſt, he ſhew'd his Reſolution to preſerve its Rights. In the exaltation of Chriſt, he evidenc'd his mighty pleaſure for the vindication of it. In both, the Infinite value he had for it, as dear to him as his Life and Glory.

4. It may be further conſider'd, that *in this way of Redemption, his Holineſs in the hatred of Sin ſeems to be valued above any other Attribute.* He proclaims the value of it above the Perſon of his Son; ſince the Divine Nature of the Redeemer is diſguis'd, obſcur'd and veil'd, in order to the reſtoring the Honour of it. And Chriſt ſeems to value it above his own Perſon, ſince he ſubmitted himſelf to the Reproaches of Men, to clear this perfection of the Divine Nature, and make it Illuſtrious in the Eyes of the World. You heard before, at the beginning of the handling this Argument; It was the Beauty of the Deity, the Luſtre of his Nature, the Link of all his Attributes, his very Life; he values it equal with Himſelf, ſince he ſwears by it, as well as by his Life. And none of his Attributes would have a due *decorum* without it: 'Tis the glory of Power, Mercy, Juſtice, Wiſdom, that they are all holy. So that tho' God had an infinite tenderneſs and compaſſion to the fallen Creature, yet it ſhould not extend it ſelf in his relief to the prejudice of the Rights of his Purity: He would have this triumph in the tenderneſs of his Mercy, as well as the ſeverities of his Juſtice. His Mercy had not appear'd in its true colours, nor attain'd a regular End, without Vengeance on Sin. It would have been a Compaſſion, that would (in ſparing the Sinner) have encourag'd the Sin, and affronted Holineſs in the Iſſues of it: Had he diſperſed his Compaſſions about the World without the regard to his hatred of Sin, his Mercy had been too cheap, and his Holineſs had been contemn'd. His Mercy would not have triumph'd in his own Nature, whilſt his Holineſs had ſuffer'd: He had exercis'd a Mercy with the impairing his own Glory.

But now, in this way of Redemption, the Rights of both are ſecur'd, both have their due luſtre: The odiouſneſs of Sin is equally diſcover'd with the greateſt of his Compaſſions; an infinite abhorrence of Sin, and an infinite love to the World march hand in hand together: Never was ſo much of the irreconcileableneſs of Sin to him, ſet forth, as in the moment he was opening his Bowels in the reconciliation of the Sinner. *Sin* is made the chiefeſt mark of his Diſpleaſure, while the poor Creature is made the higheſt object of Divine Pity. There could have been no motion of Mercy, with the leaſt injury to Purity and Holineſs. In this way *Mercy* and *Truth*, *Mercy* to the miſery of the Creature, and *Truth* to the purity of the Law, *have met together*; the Righteouſneſs of God, and the Peace of the Sinner, *have kiſſed each other*, Pſal. 85. 10.

II. The *Holineſs* of God in his hatred of Sin, appears *in our Juſtification, and the conditions he requires of all that would enjoy the benefit of Redemption.* His Wiſdom hath ſo temper'd all the Conditions of it, that the honour of his *Holineſs* is as much preſerv'd, as the ſweetneſs of his *Mercy* is experimented by us. All the conditions are Records of his exact Purity, as well as of his condeſcending Grace. Our *Juſtification* is not by the imperfect Works of Creatures, but by an exact and infinite Righteouſneſs, as great as that of the Deity, which had

had been offended: It being the *Righteouſneſs* of a Divine Perſon, upon which account it is call'd the *Righteouſneſs of God*; not only in regard of God's appointing it, and God's accepting it, but as it is a *Righteouſneſs* of that Perſon that was God, and is God. *Faith* is the Condition God requires to Juſtification; but *not a dead*, but an active Faith, ſuch *a Faith as purifies the Heart* *. He calls for *Repentance*, which is a Moral retracting our Offences, and an approbation of contemn'd Righteouſneſs and a violated Law; an endeavour to regain what is loſt, and to pluck out the heart of that Sin we have committed. He requires *Mortification*, which is called *Crucifying*; whereby a Man would ſtrike as full and deadly a blow at his Luſts, as was ſtruck at *Chriſt* upon the *Croſs*, and make them as certainly die, as the *Redeemer* did.

* James 2. 20. Acts 15. 9.

Our own Righteouſneſs muſt be condemn'd by us, as impure and imperfect: We muſt diſown every thing that is *our own*, as to Righteouſneſs, in reverence to the *Holineſs* of God, and the valuation of the *Righteouſneſs* of Chriſt. He hath reſolv'd, not to beſtow the Inheritance of Glory, without the Root of Grace. None are partakers of the Divine Bleſſedneſs, that are not partakers of the Divine Nature: There muſt be a renewing of his Image, before there be a *viſion of his Face* *. He will not have Men brought only into a Relative ſtate of Happineſs by Juſtification, without a Real ſtate of Grace by Sanctification. And ſo reſolved he is in it, that there is no admittance into Heaven of a ſtarting, but a perſevering Holineſs; *Rom.* 2. 7. *a patient continuance in well-doing*: Patient under the ſharpneſs of Affliction, and continuing under the pleaſures of Proſperity. Hence it is that the Goſpel, the reſtoring Doctrine, hath not only the motives of Rewards to allure us to Good, and the danger of Puniſhments to ſcare us from Evil, as the Law had; but they are ſet forth in a higher ſtrain, in a way of ſtronger Engagement, the Rewards are Heavenly, and the Puniſhments Eternal: And more powerful Motives beſides, from the choicer Expreſſions of God's Love in the Death of his Son. The whole Deſign of it is to re-inſtate us in a reſemblance to this Divine Perfection; whereby he ſhews what an Affection he hath to this Excellency of his Nature, and what a deteſtation he hath of Evil, which is contrary to it.

* Heb. 12. 14.

3. It appears *in the actual Regeneration of the Redeemed Souls, and a carrying it on to a full perfection.* As Election is the effect of God's Soveraignty, our Pardon the fruit of his Mercy, our Knowledge a ſtream from his Wiſdom, our Strength an impreſſion of his Power; ſo our Purity is a Beam from his Holineſs. The whole Work of Sanctification, and the preſervation of it, our Saviour begs for his Diſciples of his Father, under this Title, *John* 17. 11, 17. *Holy Father, keep them through thy own name*, and *ſanctifie them through thy truth*, as the proper ſource whence Holineſs was to flow to the Creature: As the Sun is the proper Fountain whence Light is derived, both to the Stars above, and Bodies here below. Whence He is not only called Holy, but the *Holy one of Iſrael*, Iſai. 43. 15. *I am the Lord your Holy One, the Creator of Iſrael*: Diſplaying his Holineſs in them, by a new Creation of them as his *Iſrael*. As the rectitude of the Creature at the firſt Creation was the effect of his Holineſs; ſo the Purity of the Creature by a New Creation, is a draught of the ſame Perfection. He is called the *Holy One of Iſrael* more in *Iſaiah*, that Evangelical Prophet, in erecting *Zion*, and forming a People for himſelf, than in the whole Scripture beſides. As he ſent *Jeſus Chriſt* to ſatisfie his Juſtice for the Expiation of the Guilt of Sin, ſo he ſends the *Holy Ghoſt* for the cleanſing the Filth of Sin, and over-maſtering the Power of it: Himſelf is the Fountain, the Son is the Pattern, and the Holy Ghoſt the immediate Imprinter of this ſtamp of Holineſs upon the Creature. God hath ſuch a value for this Attribute, that he deſigns the glory of this in the renewing the Creature, more than the happineſs of the Creature; tho' the one doth neceſſarily follow upon the other, yet the one is the principal Deſign, and the other the conſequent of the former: Whence our Salvation is more frequently ſet forth, in Scripture, by a Redemption from Sin, and Sanctification of the Soul, than by a poſſeſſion of Heaven *.

* Tit. 2. 11, 12, 13, 14. *and many other places.*

Indeed, as God could not create a Rational Creature, without intereſting this Attribute in a ſpecial manner; ſo he cannot reſtore the Fallen Creature without it. As in creating a Rational Creature, there muſt be *Holineſs* to adorn it, as well as *Wiſdom* to form the deſign, and *Power* to effect it; ſo in the reſtoration of the Creature, as he could not make a Reaſonable Creature unholy; ſo he cannot reſtore a Fallen Creature, and put him in a meet poſture to take pleaſure in him, without communicating to him a Reſemblance of himſelf. As God cannot be bleſſed in himſelf without this perfection of *Purity*; ſo neither can a Creature be bleſſed without it. As God would be Unlovely to Himſelf without this Attribute; ſo would the Creature be unlovely to God, without a ſtamp and mark of it upon his Nature. So much is this Perfection one with God, valued by him, and intereſted in all his Works and Ways.

The *third Thing* I am to do, is to lay down *ſome Propoſitions in the defence of God's holineſs in all his acts, about or concerning ſin.* It was a prudent and pious advice of *Camero*; Not to be too buſie and raſh in Inquiries and Concluſions about the reaſon of God's Providence in the matter of Sin. The *Scripture* hath put a Bar in the way of ſuch Curioſity, by telling us, That the *ways* of God's Wiſdom and Righteouſneſs in his Judgments are *unſearchable* *: Much more the ways of God's Holineſs, as he ſtands in relation to Sin, as a Governour of the World; we cannot conſider thoſe things without danger of ſlipping: Our Eyes are too weak to look upon the *Sun* without being dazled: Too much Curioſity met with a juſt Check in our firſt Parent. To be deſirous to know the reaſon of all God's proceedings in the matter of Sin, is to ſecond the Ambition of *Adam*, to be as wiſe as God, and know the reaſon of his actings equally with himſelf. 'Tis more eaſie, as the ſame *Author* ſaith, to give an account of God's Providence ſince the Revolt of Man, and the Poyſon that hath univerſally ſeiz'd upon Human Nature, than to make gueſſes at the manner of the Fall of the firſt Man. The *Scripture* hath given us but a ſhort account of the manner of it, to diſcourage too curious Inquiries into it.

* Rom. 11. 33.

'Tis certain that God made Man *upright*; and when Man ſinned in *Paradice*, God was active in ſuſtaining the ſubſtantial nature and act of the Sinner while he was ſinning, tho' not in ſupporting the ſinfulneſs of the act. He was permiſſive in ſuffering it: He was [illegible]ve in withholding that Grace which might certainly have prevented his Crime, and conſequently his Ruin; though he withheld nothing that was ſufficient for his reſiſtance of that Temptation wherewith he was aſſaulted. And ſince the Fall of Man, God, as a wiſe Governour, is directive of the Events of the Tranſgreſſion, and draws the choiceſt Good out of the blackeſt Evil, and limits the ſins of Men, that they creep not ſo far as the evil Nature of Men would urge them to; and as a righteous Judge, he takes away the Talent

from idle Servants, and the Light from wicked ones, whereby they ſtumble and fall into Crimes, by the inclinations and proneneſs of their own corrupt Natures, leaves them to the byaſs of their own vicious Habits, denies that Grace which they have forfeited, and have no right to challenge; and turns their ſinful actions into Puniſhments, both to the committers of them, and others.

1. Propoſition. *God's Holineſs is not chargeable with any blemiſh for his creating man in a mutable ſtate.* 'Tis true, Angels and Men were created with a changeable Nature; and though there was a rich and glorious ſtamp upon them by the hand of God, yet their Natures were not uncapable of a baſe and vile ſtamp from ſome other Principle. As the Silver which bears upon it the Image of a great Prince, is capable of being melted down, and imprinted with no better an Image than that of ſome vile and monſtrous Beaſt. Though God made Man upright, yet he was capable of ſeeking *many inventions*, Eccl. 7. 29. yet the hand of God was not defiled by Forming Man with ſuch a Nature. It was ſuitable to the Wiſdom of God to give the Rational Creature, whom he had furniſh'd with a power of acting Righteouſly, the liberty of Choice, and not fix him in an unchangeable State, without a trial of him in his natural; that if he did obey, his Obedience might be the more valuable; and if he did freely offend, his Offence might be more inexcuſable.

1. *No Creature can be capable of immutability by Nature.* Mutability is ſo eſſential to a Creature, that a Creature cannot be ſuppoſed without it: You muſt ſuppoſe it a Creator, not a Creature, if you allow it to be of an Immutable Nature. Immutability is the property of the Supream Being. God *only hath immortality*, 1 Tim. 6. 16. Immortality, as oppoſed not only to a natural, but to a ſinful death; the word *only* appropriates every ſort of Immortality to God, and excludes every Creature, whether Angel or Man, from a Partnerſhip with God in this by Nature. Every Creature therefore is capable of a Death in Sin. *None* is *good but God*, and none is naturally free from change but God; which excludes every Creature from the ſame Prerogative; and certainly if one Angel ſinned, all might have ſinned, becauſe there was the ſame root of Mutability in one as well as another. 'Tis as poſſible for a Creature to be Creator, as for a Creature to have naturally an incommunicable property of the Creator. All things, whether Angels or Men, are made of nothing, and therefore capable of defection *; becauſe a Creature being made of nothing, cannot be good *per eſſentiam*, or eſſentially good, but by participation from another. Again, every rational Creature, being made of nothing, hath a Superiour which created him and governs him, and is capable of a Precept; and conſequently capable of Diſobedience as well as Obedience to the Precept, to tranſgreſs it as well as obey it. God cannot ſin, becauſe he can have no Superiour to impoſe a Precept on him. A Rational Creature, with a liberty of W[illegible] and Power of Choice, cannot be made by Na[illegible] of ſuch a mould and temper, but he muſt be as [illegible]pable of chuſing wrong, as of chuſing right; [illegible] therefore the ſtanding Angels, and glorified Saints, though they are immutable, 'tis not by Nature they are ſo, but by Grace, and the good pleaſure of God; for tho' they are in Heaven, they have ſtill in their nature a remote power of ſinning, but it ſhall never be brought into act, becauſe God will always incline their wills to love him, and never concur with their wills to any evil act. Since therefore Mutability is eſſential to a Crea[illegible]ure, as a Creature, this changeableneſs cannot properly be charged upon God as the *Author* of it; for it was not the term of God's creating act, but did neceſſarily reſult from the nature of the Creature, as unchangeableneſs doth reſult from the Eſſence of God. The brittleneſs of a Glaſs is no blame to the Art of him that blew up the Glaſs into ſuch a faſhion; that imperfection of brittleneſs is not from the Workman, but the Matter: So tho' changeableneſs be an imperfection, yet it is ſo neceſſary a one, that no Creature can be naturally without it: Beſides, tho' Angels and Men were mutable by Creation, and capable to exerciſe their Wills, yet they were not neceſſitated to evil; and this mutability did not infer a neceſſity that they ſhould fall; becauſe ſome Angels, which had the ſame root of changeableneſs in their Natures with thoſe that fell, did not fall, which they would have done, if capableneſs of changing, and neceſſity of changing were one and the ſame thing.

2. *Though God made the Creature mutable, yet he made him not evil.* There could be nothing of evil in him that God created after his own Image, and pronounced *good*, *Gen.* 1. 27, 31. Man had an ability to ſtand, as well as a capacity to fall: He was created with a principle of acting freely, whereby he was capable of loving God as his chief Good, and moving to him as his laſt end; there was a beam of Light in Man's Underſtanding to know the Rule he was to conform to, a harmony between his Reaſon and his Affections, an original Righteouſneſs: So that it ſeem'd more eaſie for him to determine his Will to continue in Obedience to the Precept, then to ſwerve from it; to adhere to God as his chief Good, than to liſten to the Charms of *Satan*. God created him with thoſe advantages, that he might with more facility have kept his eyes fix'd upon the Divine Beauty, than turn his back upon it; and with greater eaſe have kept the Precept God gave him, than have broken it. The very firſt thought darted, or impreſſion made by God upon the Angelical or Human Nature, was the knowledge of himſelf as their Author, and could be no other than ſuch whereby both Angels and Men might be excited to a love of that adorable Being that had framed them ſo glorioufly out of nothing: And if they turned their Wills and Affections to another Object, it was not by the direction of God, but contrary to the impreſſion God had made upon them, or the firſt thought he flaſh'd into them: They turn'd themſelves to the admiring their own Excellency, or affecting an advantage diſtinct from that which they were to look for only from God. 1 *Tim.* 3. 6. *Pride* was the Cauſe of the Condemnation of the Devil. Tho' the Wills of Angels and Men were created mutable, and ſo were imperfect, yet they were not created evil. Tho' they might ſin, yet they might not ſin, and therefore were not evil in their own nature. What reflection then could this mutability of their Nature be upon God? So far is it from any, that he is fully cleared, by ſtoring up in the Nature of Man ſufficient proviſion againſt his departure from him. God was ſo far from creating him evil, that he fortified him with a knowledge in his Underſtanding, and a ſtrength in his Nature to withſtand any Invaſion. The Knowledge was exerciſed by *Eve* in the very moment of the Serpent's aſſaulting her; *Gen.* 3. 3. *Eve ſaid to the Serpent, God hath ſaid, ye ſhall not eat of it*: And had her thoughts been intent upon this *God hath ſaid*, and not diverted to the motions of the Senſitive Appetite and Liquoriſh Palate, it had been ſufficient to put by all the paſſes the Devil did, or could have made at her. So that you ſee, though God made the Creature mutable, yet he made him not evil. This clears the Holineſs of God,

3. There-

* Suarez. *Vol.* 2. *p.* 548.

3. Therefore it follows, *That tho' God created Man changeable, yet he was not the cauſe of his change by his fall.* Tho' Man was created defectible, yet he was not determin'd by God, influencing his Will by any poſitive act to that change and apoſtacy. God placed him in a free poſture, ſet Life and Happineſs before him on the one Hand, Miſery and Death on the other: As he did not draw him into the Arms of perpetual Bleſſedneſs, ſo he did not drive him into the Gulph of his Miſery *: He did not incline him to Evil. It was repugnant to the Goodneſs of God to corrupt the Righteouſneſs of thoſe Faculties he had ſo lately beautified him with. It was not likely he ſhould deface the beauty of that Work he had compos'd with ſo much Wiſdom and Skill. Would he by any Act of his own make that bad, which but a little before he had acquieſced in as good? Angels and Men were left to their liberty and conduct of their Natural Faculties; and if God inſpir'd them with any motions, they could not but be motions to Good, and ſuted to that righteous Nature he had endued them with. But it is moſt probable that God did not in a Supernatural way act inwardly upon the Mind of Man, but left him wholly to that power which he had in Creation furniſh'd him with. The Scripture frees God fully from any blame in this, and lays it wholly upon *Satan* as the Tempter, and upon Man as the Determiner of his own Will. *Gen. 3. 6. Eve took of the Fruit, and did eat; and* Adam *took from her of the Fruit, and did eat.* And *Solomon*, *Eccl. 7. 29.* diſtinguiſheth God's Work in the Creation of Man *upright*, from Man's Work in ſeeking out thoſe ruining *inventions*. God created Man in a righteous ſtate, and Man caſt himſelf into a forlorn ſtate. As he was a mutable Creature, he was from God; as he was a changed and corrupted Creature, it was from the Devil ſeducing, and his own pliableneſs in admitting. As Silver, and Gold, and other Metals, were created by God in ſuch a form and figure, yet capable of receiving other forms by the induſtrious Art of Man: When the Image of a Man is put upon a piece of Metal, God is not ſaid to create that Image, tho' he created the Subſtance with ſuch a Property, that it was capable of receiving it: This Capacity is from the nature of the Metal by God's Creation of it, but the carving the Figure of this or that Man, is not the act of God, but the act of Man. As *Images* in *Scripture* are called the Work of Mens hands, in regard of the Imagery, tho' the Matter, Wood or Stone, upon which the Image was carv'd, was a Work of God's Creative Power. When an Artificer frames an excellent Inſtrument, and a Muſician exactly tunes it, and it comes out of their Hands without a blemiſh, but capable to be untun'd by ſome rude Hand, or receive a crack by a ſuddain fall, if it meet with a Diſaſter; is either the Workman or Muſician to be blam'd? The ruin of a Houſe, cauſed by the waſtfulneſs or careleſsneſs of the Tenant, is not to be imputed to the Workman that built it ſtrong, and left it in a good poſture.

* Amyral. *Moral. tom.* 1. *p.* 615, 616.

2. Propoſition. *God's Holineſs is not blemiſh'd by enjoyning Man a Law, which he knew he would not obſerve.*

1. *The Law was not above his ſtrength.* Had the Law been impoſſible to be obſerved, no Crime could have been imputed to the Subject, the fault had lain wholly upon the Governour; the Non-obſervance of it had been from a want of ſtrength, and not from a want of will. Had God commanded *Adam* to fly up to the Sun, when he had not given him Wings, *Adam* might have a will to obey it, but his power would be too ſhort to perform it. But the Law ſet him for a Rule, had nothing of impoſſibility in it; it was eaſie to be obſerved; the Command was rather below, than above his ſtrength; and the ſanction of it was more apt to reſtrain and ſcare him from the breach of it, than encourage any daring attempts againſt it: He had as much power, or rather more, to conform to it, than to warp from it; and greater Arguments and Intereſt to be obſervant of it, than to violate it; his All was ſecured by the one, and his Ruin aſcertained by the other. * The Commands of God are not *grievous*; from the firſt to the laſt Command, there is nothing impoſſible, nothing hard to the original and created Nature of Man, which were all ſum'd up in a love to God, which was the pleaſure and delight of Man, as well as his Duty, if he had not by inconſiderateneſs neglected the dictates and reſolves of his own Underſtanding. The Law was ſuted to the ſtrength of Man, and fitted for the Improvement and Perfection of his Nature: In which reſpect the *Apoſtle* calls it *good*, as it refers to Man, as well as *holy*, as it refers to God †. Now ſince God created Man a Creature capable to be governed by a Law, and as a rational Creature endued with Underſtanding and Will, not to be govern'd according to his Nature without a Law; was it congruous to the Wiſdom of God to reſpect only the future ſtate of Man, which from the depth of his Infinite Knowledge, he did infallibly foreſee would be miſerable, by the wilful defection of Man from the Rule? Had it been agreeable to the Wiſdom of God to reſpect only this future ſtate, and not the preſent ſtate of the Creature; and therefore leave him lawleſs, becauſe he knew he would violate the Law? Should God forbear to act like a wiſe Governour, becauſe he foreſaw that Man would ceaſe to act like an obedient Subject? Shall a righteous Magiſtrate forbear to make juſt and good Laws, becauſe he foreſees, either from the diſpoſitions of his Subjects, their ill humor, or ſome Circumſtances which will intervene, that Multitudes of them will incline to break thoſe Laws, and fall under the Penalty of them? No blame can be upon that Magiſtrate who minds the Rule of Righteouſneſs, and the neceſſary Duty of his Government, ſince he is not the Cauſe of thoſe turbulent Affections in Men, which he wiſely foreſees will riſe up againſt his juſt Edicts.

* 1 John 5. 3.

† Rom 7. 12.

2. *Though the Law now be above the ſtrength of Man, yet is not the holineſs of God blemiſh'd by keeping it up.* 'Tis true, God hath been graciouſly pleaſed to mitigate the ſeverity and rigour of the Law by the entrance of the Goſpel; yet where Men refuſe the terms of the Goſpel, they continue themſelves under the Condemnation of the Law, and are juſtly guilty of the breach of it, though they have no ſtrength to obſerve it. The Law, as I ſaid before, was not above Mans ſtrength, when he was poſſeſſed of Original Righteouſneſs, tho' it be above Man's ſtrength, ſince he was ſtript of Original Righteouſneſs. The Command was dated before Man had contracted his Impotency, when he had a power to keep it as well as to break it. Had it been enjoyned to Man only after the Fall, and not before, he might have had a better pretence to excuſe himſelf, becauſe of the impoſſibility of it; yet he would not have had ſufficient excuſe, ſince the impoſſibility did not reſult from the Nature of the Law, but from the corrupted Nature of the Creature. It was *weak through the fleſh*, Rom. 8. 3. but it was promulg'd when Man had a ſtrength proportion'd to the Commands of it. And now ſince Man hath unhappily made himſelf uncapable of obeying it, muſt God's Holineſs in his Law be blemiſh'd for enjoyning it? Muſt he abrogate thoſe

Commands, and prohibit what before he enjoyned, for the Satisfaction of the corrupted Creature? would not this be his *ceasing to be holy*, that his Creature might be unblameably unrighteous? Must God strip himself of his Holiness, because Man will not discharge his Iniquity? He cannot be the cause of sin, by keeping up the Law, who would be the cause of all the unrighteousness of Men, by removing the Authority of it. Some things in the Law that are intrinsecally good in their own nature are indispensable, and it is repugnant to the Nature of God not to command them. If he were not the Guardian of his indispensable Law, he would be the cause and countenancer of the Creatures Iniquity. So little reason have Men to charge God with being the cause of their sin, by not repealing his Law to gratifie their Impotence, that he would be unholy if he did. God must not lose his Purity, because Man hath lost his, and cast away the right of his Soveraignty, because Man hath cast away his Power of Obedience.

3. *God's foreknowledge that his Law would not be observ'd, lays no blame upon him.* Tho' the foreknowledge of God be infallible, yet it doth not necessitate the Creature in acting. It was certain from Eternity, that *Adam* would fall, that Men would do such and such Actions, that *Judas* would betray our Saviour; God foreknew all those things from Eternity; but it is as certain that this foreknowledge did not necessitate the Will of *Adam*, or any other Branch of his Posterity, in the doing those Actions that were so foreseen by God; they voluntarily run into such Courses, not by any impulsion. God's Knowledge was not suspended between certainty and uncertainty: He certainly foreknew that his Law would be broken by *Adam*; he foreknew it in his own Decree of not hindering him, by giving *Adam* the efficacious Grace which would infallibly have prevented it; yet *Adam* did freely break this Law, and never imagin'd that the foreknowledge of God did necessitate him to it: He could find no cause of his own sin, but the liberty of his own will: He charges the occasion of his sin upon the *woman*, and consequently upon God in giving the woman to him *. He could not be so ignorant of the Nature of God, as to imagine him without a foresight of future things, since his knowledge of what was to be known of God by Creation, was greater than any man's since, in all probability. But however, if he were not acquainted with the Notion of God's foreknowledge, he could not be ignorant of his own act; there could not have been any necessity upon him, any kind of constraint of him in his action that could have been unknown to him; and he would not have omitted a Plea of so strong a nature, when he was upon his trial for Life or Death; especially when he urgeth so weak an Argument to impute his Crime to God, as the gift of the Woman; as if that which was design'd him for a help, were intended for his ruine. If God's prescience takes away the liberty of the Creature, there is no such thing as a free action in the World, for there is nothing done but is foreknown to God, else we render God of a limited understanding, nor ever was, no not by God himself *ad extra*. For whatsoever he hath done in Creation, whatsoever he hath done since the Creation, was foreknown by him; he resolved to do it, and therefore foreknew that he would do it: Did God do it therefore necessarily, as necessity is oppos'd to liberty? As he freely decrees what he will do, so he effects what he freely decreed. Foreknowledge is so far from intrenching upon the liberty of the will, that predetermination, which in the notion of it speaks something more, doth not dissolve it. God did not only foreknow, but *determine* the Suffering of Christ †. It was *necessary* therefore that Christ should suffer, that God might not be mistaken in his foreknowledge, or come short of his determinate decree: But did this take away the liberty of Christ in Suffering? *Eph.* 5. 2. *Who offered himself up to God*; that is, by a voluntary act, as well as design'd to do it by a determinate Counsel. It did infallibly secure the event, but did not annihilate the liberty of the Action, either in Christ's willingness to suffer, or the Crime of the *Jews* that made him suffer. God's prescience is God's prevision of things arising from their proper Causes. As a Gardiner foresees in his Plants the Leaves and the Flowers that will arise from them in the Spring, because he knows the strength and nature of their several Roots which lye under ground, but his foresight of these things is not the cause of the rise and appearance of those Flowers. If any of us see a Ship moving towards such a Rock or Quick-sand, and know it to be govern'd by a negligent Pilot, we shall certainly foresee that the Ship will be torn in pieces by the Rock, or swallowed up by the Sands; but is this foresight of ours from the Causes, any cause of the Effect, or can we from hence be said to be the Authors of the Miscarriage of the Ship, and the loss of the Passengers and Goods? The fall of *Adam* was foreseen by God to come to pass by the consent of his Freewill in the choice of the proposed Temptation: God foreknew *Adam* would sin, and if *Adam* would not have sinned, God would have foreknown that he would not sin. *Adam* might easily have detected the Serpent's fraud, and made a better Election; God foresaw that he would not do it; God's foreknowledge did not make *Adam* guilty or innocent; whether God had foreknown it or no, he was guilty by a free choice, and a willing neglect of his own Duty. *Adam* knew that God foreknew that he might eat of the Fruit, and fall and dye, because God had forbidden him; the foreknowledge that he would do it, was no more a cause of his Action, than the foreknowledge that he might do it. *Judas* certainly knew that his Master foreknew that he should betray him, for Christ had acquainted him with it, *John* 13. 21. 26. yet he never charg'd this foreknowledge of Christ with any guilt of his Treachery.

*Gen. 3. 12

† Acts 4. 27, 28.

3. The third Proposition. *The Holiness of God is not blemish'd by decreeing the eternal Rejection of some Men.* Reprobation in its first Notion is an act of preterition, or passing by. A Man is not made wicked by the act of God, but it supposeth him wicked, and so 'tis nothing else but God's leaving a Man in that guilt and filth wherein he beholds him. In its second Notion 'tis an Ordination not to a Crime, but to a Punishment, *Jude* 4. *An ordaining to condemnation.* And tho' it be an eternal act of God, yet in order of Nature it follows upon the foresight of the Transgression of Man, and supposeth the Crime. God considers *Adam*'s Revolt, and views the whole mass of his corrupted Posterity, and chuses some to reduce to himself by his Grace, and leaves others to lye sinking in their Ruins. Since all Mankind fell by the Fall of *Adam*, and have Corruption conveyed to them successively by that Root whereof they are Branches: All Men might justly be left wallowing in that miserable Condition to which they were reduced by the Apostacy of their common Head; and God might have passed by the whole Race of Man, as well as he did the fallen Angels, without any hope of Redemption. He was no more bound to restore Man, than to restore Devils, nor bound to repair the Nature of any one Son of *Adam*; and had he dealt with Men as he dealt with the Devils, they had

had

had all of them as little just ground to complain of God; for all Men deserved to be left to themselves, for *all were concluded under sin*: But God calls out some to make Monuments of his Grace, which is an act of the Soveraign Mercy of that Dominion whereby *he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy*, Rom. 9. 18. Others he passes by, and leaves them remaining in that Corruption of Nature wherein they were born. If Men have a power to dispose of their own Goods, without any unrighteousness, why should not God dispose of his own Grace, and bestow it upon whom he pleases; since it is a Debt to none, but a free Gift to any that enjoy it? * God is not the cause of sin in this, because his operation about this is Negative; 'tis not an action, but a denial of action, and therefore cannot be the cause of the evil actions of Men. God acts nothing, but withholds his Power; he doth not enlighten their Minds, nor encline their Wills so powerfully, as to expel their darkness, and root out those evil habits which possess them by Nature. God could, if he would, savingly enlighten the Minds of all Men in the World, and quicken their Hearts with a new Life by an invincible Grace; but in not doing it, there is no positive act of God, but a cessation of Action: We may with as much reason say, that God is the cause of all the sinful Actions that are committed by the Corporation of Devils, since their first Rebellion, because he leaves them to themselves, and bestows not a new Grace upon them: As say God is the Cause of the sins of those that he overlooks and leaves in that state of guilt wherein he found them. God did not pass by any without the consideration of sin; so that this act of God is not repugnant to his Holiness, but conformable to his Justice.

*Amyrald. defens. de Calv. p. 145

4. Proposition. *The Holiness of God is not blemished by his secret will to suffer sin to enter into the world.* God never willed sin by his preceptive Will. It was never founded upon, or produced by any Word of his, as the Creation was. He never said, Let there be sin under the Heaven, as he said, *Let there be Water under the Heaven.* Nor doth he Will it by infusing any Habit of it, or stirring up Inclinations to it; no, *God tempts to Man*, James 1. 13. Nor doth he Will it by his approving Will; 'tis detestable to him, nor ever can be otherwise: He cannot approve it either before Commission or after.

1. *The Will of God is in some sort concurrent with sin.* He doth not properly Will it, but he Wills not to hinder it, to which by his Omnipotence he could put a bar. If he did positively Will it, it might be wrought by himself, and so could not be evil. If he did in no sort Will it, it would not be committed by his Creature: Sin entred into the World, either God willing the permission of it, or not willing the permission of it. The latter cannot be said; for then the Creature is more powerful than God, and can do that which God will not permit. God can, if he be pleased, banish all sin in a moment out of the World: He could have prevented the Revolt of Angels, and the Fall of Man; they did not sin whether he would or no; He might by his Grace have kept in the first moment, and made a special impression upon them of the Happiness they already possessed, and the Misery they would incur by any wicked attempt. He could as well have prevented the sin of the fallen Angels, and confirmed them in Grace, as of those that continued in their happy state. He might have appeared to Man, informed him of the Issue of his Design, and made secret Impressions upon his Heart, since he was acquainted with every avenue to his Will. God could have kept all sin out of the World, as well as all Creatures from breathing in it; he was as well able to bar sin for ever out of the World, as to let Creatures lye in the Womb of nothing, wherein they were first wrapped. To say God doth will sin as he doth other things, is to deny his Holiness; to say it entred without any thing of his Will, is to deny his Omnipotence. If he did necessitate *Adam* to fall, what shall we think of his Purity? If *Adam* did fall without any concern of God's Will in it, what shall we say of his Soveraignty? The one taints his Holiness, and the other clips his Power. If it came without any thing of his Will in it, and he did not foresee it, where is his Omniscience? If it entred whether he would or no, where is his Omnipotence? *Rom. 9. 19. Who hath resisted his Will?* There cannot be a lustful act in *Abimelech*, if God will withhold his Power; *Gen. 20. 6. I withheld thee*: Nor a cursing word in *Balaam's* Mouth, unless God give power to speak it, Numb. 22. 38. *Have I now any power at all to say any thing? The Word that God puts in my mouth, that shall I speak.* As no Action could be sinful if God had not forbidden it; so no sin could be committed, if God did not will to give way to it.

2. *God doth not will sin directly, and by an efficacious Will.* He doth not directly will it, because he hath prohibited it by his Law, which is a discovery of his Will: So that if he should directly will sin, and directly prohibit it, he would will good and evil in the same manner, and there would be Contradictions in God's Will: To will sin absolutely, is to work it; *Psal.* 115. 3. *God hath done what soever he pleased.* God cannot absolutely will it, because he cannot work it. * God wills good by a positive Decree, because he hath decreed not to give that Grace which would certainly prevent it. † God doth not will sin simply, for that were to approve it; but he wills it, in order to that Good his Wisdom will bring forth from it. He wills not sin for it self, but for the event. To will sin as sin, or as purely evil, is not in the capacity of a Creature, neither of Man nor Devil. The Will of a Rational Creature cannot will any thing but under the appearance of good, of some good in the sin it self, or some good in the issue of it. Much more is this far from God, ‖ who being infinitely good, cannot will evil as evil; and being infinitely knowing, can not will that for good which is evil. Infinite Wisdom can be under no Error or Mistake: To will sin as sin, would be an unanswerable blemish on God; but to will to suffer it in order to good, is the glory of his Wisdom: It could never have peep'd up its head, unless there had been some Decree of God concerning it. And there had been no Decree of God concerning it, had he not intended to bring Good and Glory out of it. If God did directly will the Discovery of his Grace and Mercy to the World, he did in some sort will sin, as that without which there could not have been any appearance of Mercy in the World: For an Innocent Creature is not the Object of Mercy, but a Miserable Creature, and no Rational Creature but must be sinful before it be miserable.

* Rispolis.

† Bradward. *lib.* 1. *cap.* 34. *God wills it* secundum quid.

‖ Aquin. *Cont. Gent. l.* 1. *c.* 95.

3. *God Wills the permission of sin.* He doth not positively will Sin, but he positively wills to permit it. And though he doth not approve of sin, yet he approves of that act of his Will, whereby he permits it. For since that sin could not enter into the World without some concern of God's Will about it, that act of his Will that gave way to it, could not be displeasing to him: God could never be displeased with his own act: *He is not a man, that he should repent*, 1 Sam. 15. 29. What God cannot repent of, he cannot but approve of: 'Tis contrary to the Blessedness of God to disapprove of,

of, and be diſpleaſed with any act of his own Will. If he hated any act of his own Will, he would hate himſelf, he would be under a torture: Every one that hates his own acts, is under ſome diſturbance and torment for them. That which is permitted by him, is in it ſelf, and in regard of the evil of it, hateful to him: But as the proſpect of that good which he aims at in the permiſſion of it is pleaſing to him; ſo that act of his Will whereby he permits it, is uſhered in by an approving act of his Underſtanding. Either God approved of the permiſſion, or not; if he did not approve his own act of permiſſion, he could not have decreed an act of permiſſion. 'Tis unconceivable that God ſhould decree ſuch an act which he deteſted, and poſitively will that which he hated. Tho' God hated ſin, as being againſt his Holineſs, yet he did not hate the permiſſion of ſin, as being ſubſervient by the immenſity of his Wiſdom to his own Glory. He could never be diſpleaſed with that which was the reſult of his Eternal Counſel, as this decree of permitting ſin was, as well as any other Decree reſolved upon in his own Breaſt. For as God acts nothing in Time, but what he Decreed from Eternity, ſo he permits nothing in Time, but what he Decreed from Eternity to permit. To ſpeak properly therefore, God doth not will ſin, but he Wills the permiſſion of it, and this Will to permit is Active and Poſitive in God.

4. *This act of permiſſion is not a meer and naked permiſſion, but ſuch an one as is attended with a certainty of the event.* The Decrees of God to make uſe of the ſin of Man for the glory of his Grace in the Miſſion and Paſſion of his Son, hung upon this entrance of ſin. Would it conſiſt with the Wiſdom of God to Decree ſuch great and ſtupendious things, the event whereof ſhould depend upon an uncertain Foundation which he might be miſtaken in? God would have ſat in Council from Eternity to no purpoſe, if he had only permitted thoſe things to be done, without any knowledge of the event of this permiſſion: God would not have made ſuch proviſion for Redemption to no purpoſe, or an uncertain purpoſe, which would have been, if Man had not fallen; or if it had been an uncertainty with God whether he would fall or no. Tho' the Will of God about ſin was permiſſive, yet the Will of God about that Glory he would promote by the defect of the Creature, was poſitive; and therefore he would not ſuffer ſo many poſitive acts of his Will to hang upon an uncertain Event; and therefore he did wiſely and righteouſly order all things to the accompliſhment of his great and gracious Purpoſes.

5. *This act of permiſſion doth not taint the holineſs of God.* That there is ſuch an act as permiſſion, is clear in Scripture, *Acts* 14.16. *Who in times paſt ſuffered all Nations to walk in their own ways.* But that it doth not blemiſh the Holineſs of God will appear.

1. *From the nature of this permiſſion.*

1. *'Tis not a moral permiſſion, a giving liberty of toleration by any Law to commit ſin with impunity*; when what one Law did forbid, another Law doth leave indifferent to be done or not, as a Man ſees good in himſelf. As when there is a Law made among Men, That no Man ſhall go out of ſuch a City or Country without Licenſe; To go out without Licenſe is a Crime by the Law; but when that Law is repealed by another, that gives liberty for Men to go and come at their pleaſure: It doth not make their going or coming neceſſary, but leaves thoſe which were before bound, to do as they ſee good in themſelves. Such a permiſſion makes a Fact lawful, tho' not neceſſary; a Man is not obliged to do it, but he is left to his own diſcretion to do as he pleaſes, without being chargeable with a Crime for doing it. Such a permiſſion there was granted by God to *Adam* of eating of the Fruits of the Garden, to chuſe any of them for Food, except the Tree of *Knowledge of Good and Evil.* It was a Precept to him, not to *eat of the Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*; but the other was a permiſſion, whereby it was lawful for him to feed upon any other that was moſt agreeable to his Appetite: But there is not ſuch a permiſſion in the caſe of Sin; this had been an Indulgence of it, which had freed Man from any Crime, and conſequently from Puniſhment; becauſe by ſuch a permiſſion by Law, he would have had authority to ſin, if he pleaſed. God did not remove the Law, which he had before placed as a Bar againſt Evil, nor ceas'd that Moral Impediment of his Threatning: Such a permiſſion as this, to make Sin lawful or indifferent, had been a Blot upon God's *Holineſs.*

2. But *this Permiſſion of God in the caſe of Sin, is no more than the not hindering a ſinful Action, which he could have prevented.* 'Tis not ſo much an Action of God, as a Suſpenſion of his Influence, which might have hindred an Evil Act, and a forbearing to reſtrain the Faculties of Man from Sin; 'tis properly the not exerting that Efficacy, which might change the Counſels that are taken, and prevent the Action intended. As when one Man ſees another ready to fall, and can preſerve him from falling by reaching out his hand; he permits him to fall, that is, he hinders him not from falling. So God deſcribes his Act about *Abimelech*, Gen. 20. 6. *I withheld thee from ſinning againſt me, therefore ſuffered I thee not to touch her.* If *Abimelech* had ſinned, he had ſinned by God's permiſſion; that is, by God's not hindring, or not reſtraining him, by making any Impreſſions upon him. So that Permiſſion is only a withholding that Help and Grace, which (if beſtowed) would have been an effectual Remedy to prevent a Crime: And it is rather a Suſpenſion or Ceſſation, then properly a permiſſion; and Sin may be ſaid to be committed not without God's permiſſion, rather than by his permiſſion.

Thus in the *Fall* of Man, God did not hold the Reins ſtrict upon *Satan* to reſtrain him from laying the Bait, nor reſtrain *Adam* from ſwallowing the Bait: He kept to himſelf that Efficacious Grace, which he might have darted out upon Man to prevent his Fall. God left *Satan* to his malice of Tempting, and *Adam* to his liberty of Reſiſting, and his own ſtrength, to uſe that ſufficient Grace he had furniſh'd him with, whereby he might have reſiſted and overcome the Temptation. As he did not drive Man to it, ſo he did not ſecretly reſtrain him from it. So in the *Jews* crucifying our Saviour; God did not imprint upon their Minds by his Spirit, a Conſideration of the greatneſs of the Crime, and the horror of his Juſtice due to it: And being without thoſe Impediments, they run furiouſly of their own accord to the commiſſion of that Evil. As when a Man lets a Wolf or Dog out upon his Prey, he takes off the Chain which held them, and they preſently act according to their Natures *. In the *Fall* of Angels and Men, God's Act was a leaving them to their own ſtrength: In ſins after the *Fall*, 'tis God's giving them up to their own Corruption. The firſt is a pure Suſpenſion of Grace; the other hath the nature of a Puniſhment, *Pſal.* 81. 12. *So I gave them up to their own hearts luſts.* The firſt Object of this permiſſive Will of God was, to leave Angels and Men to their own liberty, and the uſe of their Free-will, which was Natural to them †, not adding that Supernatural Grace which was

* Lawſon, pag. 64.

† Suarez. Vol. 4. p. 414

was neceſſary, not that they ſhould not at all ſin, but that they ſhould infallibly not ſin: They had a ſtrength ſufficient to avoid ſin, but not ſufficient infallibly to avoid ſin; a Grace ſufficient to preſerve them, but not ſufficient to confirm them.

3. *Now this permiſſion is not the cauſe of ſin, nor doth blemiſh the Holineſs of God.* It doth not intrench upon the Freedom of Men, but ſuppoſeth it, eſtabliſheth it, and leaves Man to it. God acted nothing, but only ceaſed to Act; and therefore could not be the efficient Cauſe of Man's ſin. As God is not the Author of good, but by willing and effecting it; ſo he is not the Author of evil, but by willing and effecting it: But he doth not poſitively Will evil, nor effect it by any Efficacy of his own. Permiſſion is no Action, nor the cauſe of that Action which is permitted; but the will of that Perſon who is permitted to do ſuch an Action, is the cauſe *. God can no more be ſaid to be the Cauſe of Sin, by ſuffering a Creature to act as it will: than he can be ſaid to be the Cauſe of the not Being of any Creature, by denying it Being, and letting it remain Nothing: 'Tis not from God that it is Nothing, 'tis Nothing in it ſelf. Tho' God be ſaid to be the Cauſe of Creation, yet he is never by any ſaid to be the Cauſe of that Nothing which was before Creation. This permiſſion of God is not the cauſe of Sin, but the cauſe of not hindring Sin. Man and Angels had a Phyſical Power of ſinning from God, as they were created with Free-will, and ſupported in their natural ſtrength; but the Moral power to ſin was not from God: He counſell'd them not to it, laid no Obligation upon them to uſe their natural power for ſuch an end, He only left them to their freedom, and not hinder'd them in their acting what he was reſolved to permit.

* Suarez. *de Legib.* l. 43.

2. The *Holineſs* of God is not tainted by this, *becauſe he was under no obligation to hinder their Commiſſion of Sin.* Ceaſing to act, whereby to prevent a Crime of Miſchief, brings not a Perſon permitting it, under guilt, unleſs where he is under an Obligation to prevent it: But God, in regard of his abſolute Dominion, cannot be charged with any ſuch Obligation. One Man that doth not hinder the Murder of another, when it is in his power, is guilty of the Murder in part; but it is to be conſidered, that he is under a tye by Nature, as being of the ſame kind, and being the other's Brother by a Communion of Blood; alſo under an Obligation of the Law of Charity, enacted by the Common Soveraign of the World: But what tye was there upon God? ſince the Infinite Tranſcendency of his Nature, and his Soveraign Dominion frees him from any ſuch Obligation; *Job* 9. 12. *If he takes away, who ſhall ſay, What doſt thou?* God might have prevented the *Fall* of Men and Angels, he might have confirm'd them all in a ſtate of perpetual Innocency; but where is the Obligation? He had made the Creature a Debtor to himſelf, but he ow'd nothing to the Creature. Before God can be charged with any guilt in this caſe, it muſt be proved, not only that he could, but that he was bound to hinder it. No Perſon can be juſtly charged with anothers Fault, meerly for not preventing it, unleſs he be bound to prevent it; elſe not only the Firſt ſin of Angels and Man would be imputed to God, as the Author, but all the ſins of Men. He could not be obliged by any Law, becauſe he had no Superiour to impoſe any Law upon him; and it will be hard to prove, that he was obliged from his own Nature to prevent the entrance of Sin, which he would uſe as an occaſion to declare his own *Holineſs* ſo tranſcendent a Perfection of his Nature, more than ever it could have been manifeſted by a total excluſion of it, *viz.* in the Death of Chriſt. He is no more bound in his own Nature, to preſerve by Supernatural Grace his Creature from Falliug, after he had framed him with a ſufficient ſtrength to ſtand; than he was obliged in his own Nature to bring his Creature into Being, when it was Nothing. He is not bound to create a Rational Creature, much leſs bound to create him with Supernatural Gifts; tho' ſince God would make a Rational Creature, he could not but make him with a Natural Uprightneſs and Rectitude.

God did as much for Angels and Men, as became a Wiſe Governour. He had publiſh'd his Law, back'd it with ſevere Penalties, and the Creature wanted not a Natural ſtrength to obſerve and obey it. Had not Man a power to obey all the Precepts of the Law, as well as one? How was God bound to give him more Grace, ſince what he had already was enough to ſhield him, and keep up his Reſiſtance againſt all the power of Hell? It had been enough to have pointed his Will againſt the Temptation, and he had kept off the force of it. Was there any Promiſe paſt to *Adam* of any further Grace, which he could plead as a tye upon God? No ſuch voluntary Limit upon God's Supream Dominion appears upon Record. Was any thing due to Man, which he had not? Any thing promis'd him, which was not perform'd? What Action of Debt then can the Creature bring againſt God? Indeed, when Man began to neglect the light of his own Reaſon, and became Inconſiderate of the Precept, God might have enlightned his Underſtanding by a ſpecial Flaſh, a ſupernatural Beam, and Imprinted upon him a particular conſideration of the neceſſity of his Obedience, the Miſery he was approaching to by his Sin, the folly of any ſuch apprehenſion of an equality in Knowledge; he might have convinc'd him of the falſity of the *Serpent's* Arguments, and uncas'd to him the Venom that lay under thoſe Baits. But how doth it appear that God was bound to thoſe Additional Acts, when he had already lighted up in him a *Spirit, which was the Candle of the Lord*, Prov. 20. 27. whereby he was able to diſcern all, if he had attended to it. It was enough that God did not neceſſitate Man to ſin, did not counſel him to it; that he had given him ſufficient warning in the Threatning, and ſufficient ſtrength in his Faculties, to fortifie him againſt Temptation. He gave him what was due to him as a Creature of his own framing; he withdrew no help from him, that was due to him as a Creature, and what was not due he was not bound to impart. Man did not beg preſerving Grace of God, and God was not bound to offer it, when he was not petition'd for it eſpecially: Yet if he had begg'd it, God having before furniſh'd him ſufficiently, might by the right of his Soveraign Dominion have denied it without any Impeachment of his *Holineſs* and *Righteouſneſs*. Tho' he would not in ſuch a caſe have dealt ſo bountifully with his Creature, as he might have done; yet he could not have been impleaded, as dealing unrighteouſly with his Creature. The ſingle word that God had already utter'd, when he gave him his Precept, was enough to oppoſe againſt all the *Devils* wiles, which tended to invalidate that Word: The Underſtanding of Man could not imagine, that the Word of God was vainly ſpoken; and the very ſuggeſtion of the *Devil*, as if the Creator ſhould envy his Creature, would have appear'd ridiculous, if he had attended to the voice of his own Reaſon. God had done enough for him, and was obliged to do no more, and dealt not Unrighteouſly in leaving him to act according to the Principles of his Nature.

To *Conclude*, If God's permiſſion of Sin were enough to charge it upon God, or if God had been

obliged

obliged to give *Adam* Supernatural Grace: *Adam*, that had ſo capacious a Brain, could not be without that Plea in his Mouth, *Lord, thou mighteſt have prevented it; the commiſſion of it by me could not have been without thy permiſſion of it*: Or, *Thou haſt been wanting to me, as the Author of my Nature.* No ſuch Plea is brought by *Adam* into the Court, when God Tried and Caſt him: No ſuch Pleas can have any ſtrength in them. *Adam* had reaſon enough to know, that there was ſufficient Reaſon to over-rule ſuch a Plea.

Since the Permiſſion of Sin caſts no Dirt upon the *Holineſs* of God, as I think hath been clear'd, we may under this Head conſider Two things more.

1. That *God's Permiſſion of Sin is not ſo much as his Reſtraint or Limitation of it.* Since the entrance of the *Firſt Sin* into the World by *Adam*, God is more a hinderer than a permitter of it. If he hath permitted that which he could have prevented, he prevents a World more, that he might, if he pleas'd, permit: The Hedges about Sin are larger than the Outlets; they are but a few Streams that glide about the World, in compariſon of that mighty Torrent he dams up both in Men and Devils. He that underſtands, what a Lake of *Sodom* is in every Man's Nature, ſince the univerſal Infection of Human Nature, as the *Apoſtle* deſcribes it, *Rom.* 3. 9, 10, *&c.* muſt acknowledge, That if God ſhould caſt the Reins upon the Necks of ſinful Men, they would run into Thouſands of abominable Crimes more than they do: The Impreſſion of all Natural Laws would be raz'd out, the World would be a publick Stew, and a more bloody Slaughter-houſe; Human Society would ſink into a *Chaos*; no Star-light of commendable Morality would be ſeen in it; the World would be no longer an Earth, but an Hell, and have lain deeper in Wickedneſs than it doth. If God did not limit Sin, as he doth the Sea, and put Bars to the Waves of the Heart, as well as thoſe of the Waters, and ſay of them, *Hitherto you ſhall go, and no further*; Man hath ſuch a furious Ocean in him, as would overflow the Banks; and where it makes a breach in one place, it would in a thouſand, if God ſhould ſuffer it to act according to its impetuous Current.

As the *Devil* hath Luſt enough to deſtroy all Mankind, if God did not bridle him; deal with every man as he did with *Job*, ruine their Comforts, and deform their Bodies with *Scabs*; infect Religion with a Thouſand more Errors; fling Diſorders into Commonwealths, and make them as a Fiery Furnace, full of nothing but Flame. If he were not Chain'd by that Powerful Arm, that might let him looſe to fulfil his malicious Fury; what Rapines, Murders, Thefts, would be committed, if he did not ſtint him? *Abimelech* would not only luſt after *Sarah*, but deflower her; *Laban* not only purſue *Jacob*, but rifle him; *Saul* not only hate *David*, but murder him; *David* not only threaten *Nabal*, but root him up, and his Family, did not God *girdle* in the *wrath of Man* *: A greater remainder of Wrath is pent in, than flames out, which yet ſwells for an Outlet. God may be concluded more Holy in preventing Mens Sins, than the Author of Sin in permitting ſome; ſince were it not for his reſtraints by the pull-back of Conſcience, and infus'd Motions and outward Impediments, the World would ſwarm more with this Curſed Brood.

* Pſal. 76. 10. *as the word* Reſtrain *ſignifies.*

2. *His Permiſſion of Sin is in order to his own Glory, and a greater Good.* 'Tis no reflection upon the Divine Goodneſs to leave Man to his own Conduct, whereby ſuch a Deformity as *Sin* ſets foot in the World; ſince he makes his Wiſdom illuſtrious in bringing Good out of Evil, and a Good greater than that Evil he ſuffer'd to ſpring up *. God did not permit Sin, as Sin, or permit it barely for it ſelf. As Sin is not lovely in its own Nature, ſo neither is the permiſſion of Sin intrinſecally good or amiable for it ſelf, but for thoſe ends aim'd at in the permiſſion of it. God permitted Sin, but approv'd not of the Object of that permiſſion, *Sin*; becauſe, that conſider'd in its own nature, is ſolely Evil: Nor can we think that God could approve of the Act of Permiſſion, conſider'd only in it ſelf as an Act; but as it reſpected that Event which his Wiſdom would order by it. We cannot ſuppoſe that God ſhould permit Sin, but for ſome great and glorious End: for it is the manifeſtation of his own glorious Perfections he intends in all the Acts of his Will. *Prov.* 16. 4. *The Lord hath made all things for himſelf*; 'הפעל hath *wrought* all things; which is not only his act of Creation, but Ordination: [*For Himſelf*] that is, for the diſcovery of the Excellency of his Nature, and the communication of himſelf to his Creature. Sin indeed in its own nature hath no tendency to a good End, the Womb of it teems with nothing but Monſters; 'tis a ſpurn at God's Soveraignty, and a ſlight of his Goodneſs: It both deforms and torments the Perſon that acts it; 'tis black and abominable, and hath not a mite of Goodneſs in the Nature of it. If it ends in any good, 'tis only from that Infinite Tranſcendency of Skill, that can bring Good out of Evil, as well as Light out of Darkneſs.

* Majus bonum, *ſaith* Bradward.

Therefore God did not permit it as Sin, but as it was an occaſion for the manifeſtation of his own Glory. Though the *Goodneſs* of God would have appear'd in the preſervation of the World, as well as it did in the Creation of it; yet his *Mercy* could not have appear'd without the entrance of Sin, becauſe the Object of Mercy is a *Miſerable Creature*; but Man could not be Miſerable as long as he remain'd Innocent. The Reign of *Sin* open'd a door for the Reign and Triumph of *Grace*, *Rom.* 5. 21. *As ſin hath reigned unto death, ſo might grace reign through righteouſneſs to eternal life*: Without it, the Bowels of *Mercy* had never ſounded, and the raviſhing Muſick of *Divine Grace* could never have been heard by the Creature. *Mercy*, which renders God ſo amiable, could never elſe have beam'd out to the World. Angels and Men upon this occaſion beheld the ſtirrings of Divine Grace, and the tenderneſs of Divine Nature, and the glory of the Divine Perſons in their ſeveral Functions about the Redemption of Man, which had elſe been a Spring ſhut up, and a Fountain ſealed; the Song of *Glory to God, and Good-will to Men*, in a way of Redemption had never been ſung by them. It appears in his dealings with *Adam*, that he permitted his Fall, not only to ſhew his Juſtice in puniſhing, but principally his Mercy in reſcuing; ſince he proclaims to him firſt the Promiſe of a Redeemer, to *bruiſe the Serpent's head*, before he ſetled the Puniſhment he ſhould ſmart under in the World * And what fairer proſpect could the Creature have of the *Holineſs* of God, and his *hatred* of Sin, than in the edge of that Sword of *Juſtice*, which puniſh'd it in the Sinner; but glitter'd more in the Puniſhment of a Surety ſo near ally'd to him. Had not Man been Criminal, he could not have been Puniſhable, nor any been puniſhable for him: And the Pulſe of *Divine Holineſs* could not have beaten ſo quick, and been ſo viſible, without an exerciſe of his Vindicative Juſtice. He left Man's mutable Nature, to fall under *Unrighteouſneſs*, that thereby he might commend the *Righteouſneſs* of his own Nature †. *Adam*'s Sin in its Nature tended to the ruine of the World, and God takes an occaſion from it for the glory of his Grace in the Redemption of the World: He brings forth thereby

* Gen. 3. 15, 16, 17.

† Rom. 3. 7.

thereby a new Scene of Wonders from Heaven, and a ſurprizing knowledge on Earth; as the *Sun* breaks out more ſtrongly after a Night of Darkneſs and Tempeſt. As God in Creation fram'd a *Chaos* by his Power, to manifeſt his Wiſdom in bringing Order out of Diſorder, Light out of Darkneſs, Beauty out of Confuſion and Deformity; when he was able by a word to have made all Creatures ſtand up in their Beauty, without the precedency of a *Chaos*: So God permitted a Moral *Chaos*, to manifeſt a greater Wiſdom in the repairing a broken Image, and reſtoring a deplorable Creature, and bringing out thoſe Perfections of his Nature, which had elſe been wrapt up in a perpetual Silence in his own Boſom *. It was therefore very congruous to the *Holineſs* of God, to permit that which he could make ſubſervient for his own Glory, and particularly for the manifeſtation of this Attribute of *Holineſs*, which ſeems to be in oppoſition to ſuch a permiſſion.

*But of the Wiſdom of God in the permitting Sin in order to Redemption, I have handled in the Attribute of Wiſdom.

5. Propoſition: *The Holineſs of God is not blemiſh'd by his concurrence with the Creature in the material part of a ſinful Act.* Some, to free God from having any hand in Sin, deny his concurrence to the Actions of the Creature; becauſe if he concurs to a ſinful Action, he concurs to the Sin alſo: Not underſtanding how there can be a diſtinction between the Act, and the ſinfulneſs or viciouſneſs of it; and how God can concur to a *Natural Action*, without being ſtain'd by that *Moral Evil* which cleaves to it.

For the underſtanding of this, obſerve,

1. *There is a concurrence of God to all the acts of the Creature*, Acts 17. 21. *In him we live, and move, and have our being*, We depend upon God in our Acting, as well as in our Being: There is as much an efficacy of God in our Motion, as in our Production; as none have Life without his Power in producing it, ſo none have any Operation without his Providence concurring with it. *In him*, or *by him*, that is, by his Virtue preſerving and governing our Motions, as well as by his Power bringing us into Being. Hence Man is compar'd to an *Ax*, Iſa. 10. 15. an Inſtrument that hath no action, without the co-operation of a ſuperior Agent handling it: And the Actions of the Second Cauſes are aſcrib'd to God; the *Graſs*, that is the product of the Sun, Rain, and Earth, he is ſaid to make to *grow upon the mountains*, Pſal. 147. 8. and the *skin* and *fleſh*, which is by natural generation, he is ſaid to *cloath us with*, Job 10. 5. in regard of his co-working with *Second Cauſes*, according to their Natures. As nothing can exiſt, ſo nothing can operate without him; let his concurrence be removed, and the Being and Action of the Creature ceaſe: Remove the *Sun* from the Horizon, or a *Candle* from a Room, and the Light which flowed from either of them ceaſeth. Without God's preſerving and concurring Power, the courſe of Nature would ſink, and the Creation be in vain. * All Created things depend upon God as Agents, as well as Beings, and are ſubordinate to him in a way of Action, as well as in a way of Exiſting. If God ſuſpend his Influence from their Action, they would ceaſe to Act, (as the *Fire* did from *burning the three Children*) as well as if God ſuſpend his Influence from their Being, they would ceaſe to be. God ſupports the Nature whereby Actions are wrought, the Mind where Actions are conſulted, and the Will where Actions are determin'd, and the Motive Power whereby Actions are produced. The Mind could not contrive, nor the Hand act a Wickedneſs, if God did not ſupport the Power of the one in deſigning, and the Strength of the other in executing a wicked Intention. Every faculty in its Being, and every faculty in its Motion, hath a dependance upon the Influence of God. To make the Creature Independent upon God in any thing which ſpeaks Perfection, as Action conſider'd as Action is, is to make a Creature a Soveraign Being. Indeed we cannot imagine the Concurrence of God to the *good Actions* of *Men* ſince the Fall, without granting a concurrence of God to *evil Actions*; becauſe there is no Action ſo purely Good, but hath a mixture of Evil in it, tho' it takes its denomination of *Good* from the better part, *Eccleſ.* 7. 20. *There is no man that doth good and ſins not.*

*Suarez, *Metaph. par.* 1, *p.* 552.

2. *Tho' the Natural Virtue of doing a ſinful Action be from God, and ſupported by him, yet this doth not blemiſh the Holineſs of God; while God concurs with them in the Act, he inſtils no evil into Men.*

1. *No Act, in regard of the ſubſtance of it, is Evil.* Moſt of the Actions of our Faculties, as they are Actions, might have been in the ſtate of Innocency. Eating is an Act *Adam* would have uſed, if he had ſtood firm, but not Eating to exceſs. Worſhip was an act that ſhould have been perform'd to God in Innocence, but not hypocritically. Every Action is good by a phyſical goodneſs, as it is an act of the mind or hand, which have a Natural goodneſs by Creation; but every Action is not Morally good: The *Phyſical Goodneſs* of the Action depends on God, the *Moral Evil* on the Creature *. There is no Action, as a Corporeal Action, is prohibited by the Law of God; but as it ſprings from an Evil diſpoſition, and is tainted by a venomous temper of mind. There is no Action ſo bad, as attended with ſuch Objects and Circumſtances; but if the Objects and Circumſtances were chang'd, might be a brave and commendable Action: So that the *Moral Goodneſs* or *Badneſs* of an Act is not to be eſteem'd from the ſubſtance of the Act, which hath always a *Phyſical Goodneſs*; but from the Objects, Circumſtances, and Conſtitution of the Mind in the doing of it. Worſhip is an act good in it ſelf, but the Worſhip of an Image is bad in regard of the Object. Were that act of Worſhip directed to God that is paid to a Statue, and offer'd up to him with a ſincere frame of Mind, it would be morally good. The act, in regard of the ſubſtance, is the ſame in both, and conſider'd as ſeparated from the Object to which the Worſhip is directed, hath the ſame real goodneſs in regard of its ſubſtance; but when you conſider this Action in relation to the different Objects, the one hath a *Moral Goodneſs*, and the other a *Moral Evil.* So in Speaking; *Speaking* being a motion of the Tongue in the forming of words, is an excellency belonging to a reaſonable Creature; an Endowment beſtow'd, continu'd, and ſupported by God. Now, if the ſame Tongue forms words whereby it curſeth God this minute, and forms words whereby it bleſſes and praiſes God the next minute; the faculty of Speaking is the ſame, the motion of the Tongue is the ſame in pronouncing the Name of God either in a way of Curſing or Bleſſing, *Jam.* 3. 9, 10. *'Tis the ſame mouth that bleſſeth and curſeth*; and the motion of it is *naturally good*, in regard of the ſubſtance of the Act in both; 'tis the uſe of an excellent Power God hath given, and which God preſerves in the uſe of it. But the eſtimation of the *Moral Goodneſs* or *Evil* is not from the act it ſelf, but from the diſpoſition of the Mind. Once more, *Killing*, as an Act, is good; nor is it unlawful as an Act: for, if ſo, God would never have commanded his People *Iſrael* to wage any War, and Juſtice could not be done upon Malefactors by the Magiſtrate. A Man were bound to ſacrifice his Life to the fury of an Invader, rather than ſecure it by diſpatching that of an Enemy. But killing an Innocent, or killing without Authority, or out of revenge, is bad. 'Tis not the material part of the *Act*, but the *Object*, *Manner*, and *Circumſtance* that makes it *good* or *evil.* 'Tis no blemiſh to God's

*Amyrald. *de libero arbit.* p. 98, 99.

Holineſs to concur to the ſubſtance of an *Action*, without having any hand in the Immorality of it, becauſe whatſoever is real in the ſubſtance of the *Action*, might be done without Evil. 'Tis not Evil as it is an *Act*, as it is a motion of the Tongue or Hand, for then every motion of the Tongue or Hand would be Evil.

2. Hence it follows, that *an Act as an Act is one thing, and the Viciouſneſs another.* †The *Action* is the efficacy of the *Faculty*, extending it ſelf to ſome *outward Object*; but the Sinfulneſs of an *Act* conſiſts in a privation of that Comlineſs and Righteouſneſs, which ought to be in an *Action*; in a want of conformity of the act with the Law of God, either written in Nature, or revealed in the Word. Now the Sinfulneſs of an Action is not the Act it ſelf, but is conſider'd in it as it is related to the Law, and is a deviation from it; and ſo it is ſomething cleaving to the Action, and therefore to be diſtinguiſh'd from the Act it ſelf, which is the Subject of the Sinfulneſs. When we ſay, ſuch an Action is ſinful, the Action is the Subject, and the Sinfulneſs of the Action is that which adheres to it. The Action is not the Sinfulneſs, nor the Sinfulneſs the Action; they are diſtinguiſh'd as the Member, and a Diſeaſe in the Member, the Arm and the Palſie in it: The Arm is not the Palſie, nor is the Palſie the Arm; but the Palſie is a Diſeaſe that cleaves to the Arm: So Sinfulneſs is a deformity that cleaves to an Action.

*Amyrald. p. 321, 322.

The *Evil* of an Action is not the *Effect* of an Action, nor attends it as it is an Action, but as it is an Action ſo circumſtantiated, and converſant about this or that Object; for the ſame Action done by two ſeveral Perſons, may be good in one, and bad in the other. As when *two Judges* are in joynt Commiſſion for the Trial of a *Malefactor*, both upon the appearance of his Guilt condemn him. This Action in both, conſider'd *as an Action*, is good: for it is an adjudging a Man to death, whoſe Crime deſerves ſuch a Puniſhment. But this ſame Act, which is but one joynt Act of both, may be *morally good* in one Judge, and *morally evil* in the other: *Morally good* in him that condemns him out of an unbyaſs'd conſideration of the Demerit of his Fact, Obedience to the Law, and Conſcience of the Duty of his place; and *Morally evil* in the other, who hath no reſpect to thoſe Conſiderations, but joyns in the act of Condemnation, principally moved by ſome private Animoſity againſt the Priſoner, and deſire of Revenge for ſome Injury he hath really receiv'd, or imagines that he hath receiv'd from him. The Act in it ſelf is the ſame materially in both; but in one it is an Act of Juſtice, and in the other an Act of Murder, as it reſpects the Principles and Motives of it in the two Judges; take away the reſpect of private Revenge, and the Action in the ill Judge had been as laudable as the Action of the other. The ſubſtance of an Act, and the ſinfulneſs of an Act, are ſeparable and diſtinguiſhable; and God may concur with the ſubſtance of an *Act*, without concurring with the ſinfulneſs of the *Act*: As the good Judge, that condemn'd the Priſoner out of Conſcience, concurr'd with the evil Judge, who condemn'd the Priſoner out of private Revenge; not in the Principle and Motive of Condemnation, but in the *Material* part of Condemnation. So God aſſiſts in that *Action* of a Man wherein Sin is placed, but not in that which is the *Formal Reaſon* of Sin, which is a privation of ſome Perfection the *Action* ought morally to have.

3. It will appear further in this, that *hence it follows, that the Action and the viciouſneſs of the Action may have two diſtinct Cauſes.* That may be a cauſe of the one, that is not the cauſe of the other, and hath no hand in the producing of it. God concurs to the *Act* of the Mind as it Counſels, and to the external *Action* upon that Counſel, as he preſerves the Faculty, and gives ſtrength to the Mind to conſult, and the other parts to execute; yet he is not in the leaſt tainted with the viciouſneſs of the *Action*. Tho' the *Action* be from God as a concurrent Cauſe, yet the ill quality of the *Action* is ſolely from the Creature with whom God concurs. The *Sun* and the *Earth* concur to the production of all the Plants that are formed in the womb of the one, and Midwif'd by the other: The *Sun* diſtributes Heat, and the *Earth* communicates Sap; 'tis the ſame Heat diſpers'd by the one, and the ſame Juice beſtow'd by the other: It hath not a ſweet Juice for one, and a ſoure Juice for another. This general Influx of the *Sun* and *Earth* is not the immediate cauſe that one Plant is poyſonous, and another wholſome; but the Sap of the Earth is turned by the nature and quality of each Plant: If there were not ſuch an Influx of the *Sun* and *Earth*, no Plant could exert that Poyſon which is in its Nature; but yet the *Sun* and *Earth* are not the cauſe of that poyſon which is in the Nature of the Plant. If God did not concur to the Motions of Men, there could be no ſinful Action, becauſe there could be no Action at all; yet this Concurrence is not the cauſe of that Venom that is in the Action, which ariſeth from the Corrupt Nature of the Creature, no more than the *Sun* and *Earth* are the cauſe of the Poyſon of the Plant, which is purely the effect of its own Nature upon that general Influx of the *Sun* and *Earth*. The Influence of God pierceth through all Subjects; but the Action of Man done by that Influence is vitiated according to the Nature of its own Corruption. As the Sun equally ſhines through all the Quarrels in the Window; if the Glaſs be bright and clear, there is a pure ſplendor; if it be red or green, the ſplendor is from the Sun, but the diſcolouring of that Light upon the Wall, is from the quality of the Glaſs. * But to be yet plainer; the Soul is the Image of God, and by the Acts of the Soul, we may come to the knowledge of the Acts of God; the Soul gives motion to the Body, and every Member of it, and no Member could move without a concurrent virtue of the Soul; if a Member be Paralitick or Gouty, whatſoever motion that Gouty Member hath, is derived to it from the Soul; but the Goutineſs of the Member was not the Act of the Soul, but the fruit of Ill Humors in the Body; the lameneſs of the Member, and the motion of the Member, have two diſtinct cauſes, the motion is from one Cauſe, and the Ill motion from another. As the Member could not move irregularly without ſome Ill humor or cauſe of that Diſtemper; ſo it could not move at all without the activity of the Soul: So tho' God concur to the act of Underſtanding, Willing, and Execution, why can he not be as free from the Irregularity in all thoſe, as the Soul is free from the Irregularity of the motion of the Body, while it is the cauſe of the motion it ſelf? There are two Illuſtrations generally uſed in this caſe, that are not unfit; the motion of the *Pen* in writing is from the hand that holds it, but the Blurs by the Pen are from ſome fault in the Pen it ſelf: And the Muſick of the *Inſtrument* is from the hand that touches it, but the jarring from the faultineſs of the Strings; both are the cauſes of the motion of the *Pen* and *Strings*, but not the *blurs* or *jarrings*.

* Zanch. *Tom. 2. lib. 3. cap. 4. qu. 4. p.* 226.

4. *'Tis very congruous to the Wiſdom of God, to move his Creatures according to their particular Natures; but this Motion makes him not the cauſe of Sin.* Had our Innocent Nature continued, God had moved us according to that Innocent Nature; but when the ſtate was chang'd for a Corrupt one, God muſt either forbear all concourſe, and ſo annihilate the World, or move us according to that Nature he finds

finds in us. If he had overthrown the World upon the entrance of Sin, and created another upon the ſame terms, Sin might have as ſoon defac'd his *ſecond* Work, as it did the *firſt*; and then it would follow, that God would have been alway building and demoliſhing. It was not fit for God to ceaſe from acting as a Wiſe Governour of his Creature, becauſe Man did ceaſe from his Loyalty as a Subject. Is it not more agreeable to God's Wiſdom as a Governour, to concur with his Creature according to his Nature, than to deny his concurrence upon every evil determination of the Creature? God concurr'd with *Adam*'s mutable Nature in his firſt act of Sin; he concurr'd to the act, and left him to his Mutability. If *Adam* had put out his hand to eat of any other unforbidden Fruit, God would have ſupported his Natural faculty then, and concurr'd with him in his motion.

When *Adam* would put out his hand to take the Forbidden Fruit, God concurr'd to that Natural Action, but left him to the choice of the Object, and to the uſe of his mutable Nature: And when Man became apoſtate, God concurs with him according to that condition wherein he found him, and cannot move him otherwiſe, unleſs he ſhould alter that Nature Man had contracted. God moving the Creature as he found him, is no cauſe of the ill motion of the Creature: As when a Wheel is broken the ſpace of a Foot, it cannot but move ill in that part till it be mended. He that moves it, uſes the ſame motion (as it is his *Act*) which he would have done had the Wheel been ſound, the motion is good in the Mover, but bad in the Subject: 'Tis not the fault of him that moves it, but the fault of that Wheel that is moved, whoſe breaches came by ſome other cauſe. A Man doth not uſe to lay aſide his Watch for ſome Irregularity, as long as it is capable of motion, but winds it up: Why ſhould God ceaſe from concurring with his Creature in its vital Operations and other Actions of his Will, becauſe there was a flaw contracted in that Nature, that came right and true out of his hand? And as he that winds up his diſorder'd Watch is in the ſame manner the cauſe of its motion then, as he was when it was regular; yet by that *act* of his, he is not the cauſe of the falſe motion of it, but that is from the deficiency of ſome part of the Watch it ſelf: So, tho' God concurs to that *action* of the Creature, whereby the Wickedneſs of the Heart is drawn out, yet is not God therefore as Unholy as the Heart.

5. *God hath one End in his concurrence, and Man another in his Action.* So that there is a righteous, and often a gracious End in God, when there is a baſe and unworthy End in Man. God concurs to the ſubſtance of the *Act*; Man produceth the circumſtance of the *Act*, whereby it is evil. God orders both the *Action* wherein he concurs, and the Sinfulneſs over which he preſides, as a *Governour*, to his own Ends. In *Joſeph*'s caſe, Man was ſinful, and God merciful; his *Brethren* acted *Envy*, and *God* deſign'd *Mercy*, *Gen.* 45. 4, 5. They would be rid of him as an Eyeſore, and God concurr'd with their *Action* to make him their Preſerver, *Gen.* 50. 20. *Ye thought evil againſt me, but God meant it unto good.* God concurr'd to *Judas*'s *Action* of betraying our *Saviour*; he ſupported his Nature while he contracted with the Prieſts, and ſupported his Members while he was their Guide to apprehend him; God's End was the manifeſtation of his choiceſt love to Man, and *Judas*'s End was the gratification of his own Covetouſneſs. The *Aſſyrian* did a divine work againſt *Hieruſalem*, but not with a divine End *: He had a mind to enlarge his *Empire*, enrich his *Coffers* with the Spoil, and gain the Title of a *Conqueror*; he is deſirous to Invade his Neighbors, and God imploys him to puniſh his Rebels; but *he means not ſo, nor doth his heart think ſo*: He intended not as God intended. The *Ax* doth not think what the Carpenter intends to do with it. But God uſed the Rapine of an ambitious Natufe as an Inſtrument of his Juſtice: As the expoſing Malefactors to wild Beaſts was an ancient Puniſhment, whereby the Magiſtrate intended the execution of Juſtice, and to that purpoſe uſed the natural fierceneſs of the Beaſts to an end different from what thoſe ravaging Creatures aim'd at. God concurr'd with *Satan* in ſpoiling *Job* of his *Goods*, and ſcarrifying his Body; God gave *Satan* licenſe to do it, and *Job* acknowledges it to be God's act: But their ends were different; God concurr'd with *Satan* for the clearing the Integrity of his Servant, when *Satan* aim'd at nothing but the provoking him to Curſe his Creator. The *Phyſician* applies Leeches to ſuck the ſuperfluous Blood, but the Leeches ſuck to glut themſelves, without any regard to the intention of the Phyſician, and the welfare of the Patient. In the ſame act where Men intend to hurt, God intends to correct; ſo that his concurrence is in a holy manner, while men commit unrighteous actions. A Judge commands the Executioner to execute the Sentence of Death which he hath juſtly pronounc'd againſt a Malefactor, and admoniſheth him to do it out of love to Juſtice; the Executioner hath the Authority of the Judge for his Commiſſion, and the Protection of the Judge for his Security: The Judge ſtands by to countenance and ſecure him in the doing of it; but if the Executioner hath not the ſame intention as the Judge, *viz.* a love to Juſtice in the performance of his Office, but a private hatred to the Offender; the Judge, tho' he commanded the Fact of the Executioner, yet did not command this Error of his in it; and tho' he protects him in the Fact, yet he owns not this corrupt diſpoſition in him in the doing of what was enjoyn'd him, as any act of his own.

Job 1. 12, 21.

To *Conclude* this. Since the Creature cannot act without God, cannot lift up a Hand, or move his Tongue, without God's preſerving and upholding the Faculty, and preſerving the power of Action, and preſerving every Member of the Body in its actual Motion, and in every circumſtance of its Motion, we muſt neceſſarily ſuppoſe God to have ſuch a way of concurrence as doth not intrench upon his Holineſs. We muſt not equal the Creature to God, by denying its dependence on him: Nor muſt we imagine ſuch a concurrence to the ſinfulneſs of an act, as ſtains the Divine Purity, which is, I think, ſufficiently ſalv'd, by diſtinguiſhing the *matter* of the act from the *evil* adhering to it: For ſince all evil is founded in ſome good, the evil is diſtinguiſhable from the good, and the *deformity* of the action from the *action it ſelf*, which, as it is a *created act*, hath a dependence on the Will and Influence of God: And as it is a *ſinful act*, is the product of the Will of the Creature.

6. Propoſition. *The Holineſs of God is not blemiſht by propoſing Objects to a man, which he makes uſe of to ſin.* There is no Object propos'd to man, but is directed by the Providence of God, which influenceth all motions in the World; and there is no Object propos'd to Man, but his active Nature may, according to the goodneſs or badneſs of his diſpoſition, make a good or an ill uſe of. That *two men*, one of a charitable, the other of a hard-hearted diſpoſition, meet with an indigent and neceſſitous Object, is from the Providence of God, yet this indigent perſon is relieved by the one, and neglected by the other. There could be no *Action* in the World, but about ſome *Object*; there could be no *Object* offer'd

* Iſa. 10. 5, 6, 7.

to do us by Divine Providence; the active Nature of Man would be in vain, if there were not Objects about which it might be exercis'd. Nothing could preſent it ſelf to Man as an Object, either to excite his Grace, or awaken his Corruption, but by the conduct of the Governour of the World. That *David* ſhould walk upon the Battlements of his Palace, and *Bathſheba* be in the Bath at the ſame time, was from the Divine Providence which orders all the affairs of the World*; and ſo ſome underſtand *Jer.* 6. 21. *Thus ſaith the Lord, I will lay ſtumbling blocks before this People, and the Fathers and Sons together ſhall fall upon them.* Since they have offered Sacrifices without thoſe due qualifications in their hearts, which were neceſſary to render them acceptable to me, I will lay in their way ſuch Objects, which their Corruption will uſe ill to their further ſin and ruin; ſo *Pſal.*105.25. *He turned their heart to hate his people*; that is, by the multiplying his People, he gave occaſion to the *Egyptians* of hating them, inſtead of careſſing them as they had formerly done.

* 2 Sam. 11.7.

But God's Holineſs is not blemiſht by this; for

1. *This propoſing or preſenting of Objects invades not the liberty of any man:* The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil ſet in the midſt of the Garden of *Eden*, had no violent influence on Man to force him to eat of it, his liberty to eat of it, or not, was reſerved intire to himſelf; no ſuch Charge can be brought againſt any Object whatſoever. If a Man meet accidentally at a Table with Meat that is grateful to his Palate, but hurtful to the preſent temper of his Body; doth the preſenting this ſort of Food to him ſtrip him of his liberty to decline it, as well as to feed of it? Can the Food have any internal Influence upon his Will, and lay the freedom of it aſleep whether he will or no? Is there any Charm in that, more than in other ſorts of Diet? No, but it is the habit of love which he hath to that particular Diſh, the curioſity of his Fancy, and the ſtrength of his own Appetite, whereby he is brought into a kind of ſlavery to that particular Meat, and not any thing in the food it ſelf. When the Word is propoſed to two Perſons, 'tis embrac'd by the one, rejected by the other; is it from the Word it ſelf, which is the Object that theſe two perſons perform different acts? The Object is the ſame to both, but the manner of acting about the Object is not the ſame: Is there any invaſion of their liberty by it? Is the one forced by the word to receive it, and the other forced by the word to reject it? Two ſuch contrary effects cannot proceed from one and the ſame Cauſe: Outward things have only an *objective* influence, not an inward: * If the meer propoſal of things did ſuſpend or ſtrike down the liberty of Man, no Angels in Heaven, no Man upon Earth, no not our Saviour himſelf, could do any thing freely, but by force: Objects that are ill uſed are of God's Creation, and tho' they have allurements in them, yet they have no compulſive power over the Will. The Fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil was pleaſing to the ſight; it had a quality to allure, there had not elſe needed a Prohibition to bar the eating of it; but it could not have ſo much power to allure as the Divine threatning to deter.

* Amyral. *de libero arbit.* p.224.

2. *The Objects are good in themſelves, but the ill uſe of them is from Man's corruption.* *Bathſheba* was by God's Providence preſented to *David*'s ſight, but it was *David*'s diſpoſition moved him to ſo evil an act: What if God knew that he would uſe that Object ill? yet he knew he had given him a power to refrain from any ill uſe of it: The *Objects* are innocent, but our Corruption poiſons them. The ſame Object hath been uſed by one to holy purpoſes and holy improvements, that hath been uſed by another to ſinful ends; when a charitable Object is preſented to a good Man and a cruel Man, one relieves him, the other reviles him: The Object was rather an occaſion to draw out the Charity of one, as well as the other; but the refuſing to reach out a helping hand, was not from the Perſon in Calamity, but the diſpoſition of the Refuſer to whom he was preſented: 'Tis not from the nature of the Object that Men do good or evil, but from the diſpoſition of the Perſon; what is good in it ſelf, is made bad by our Corruption. As the ſame Meat which nouriſhes and ſtrengthens a ſound Conſtitution, cheriſheth the Diſeaſe of another that eats at the ſame Table, not from any unwholſome quality in the Food, but the vicious quality of the Humours lodging in the Stomach, which turn the Diet into fuel for themſelves, which in its own nature was apt to engender a wholſome juice. Some are perfected by the ſame things whereby others are ruin'd. Riches are uſed by ſome, not only for their own, but the advantage of others in the World; by others only for themſelves, and ſcarcely ſo much as their Neceſſities require. Is this the fault of the Wealth, or the diſpoſitions of the Perſons who are covetous inſtead of being generous? 'Tis a Calumny therefore upon God to charge him with the ſin of Man upon this account: The Rain that drops from the Clouds upon the Plants, is ſweet in it ſelf; but when it moiſtens the root of any venomous Plant, 'tis turn'd into the Juice of the Plant, and becomes venomous with it. The Miracles that our Saviour wrought, were applauded by ſome, and envied by the *Phariſees*; the ſin aroſe not from the nature of the Miracles, but the Malice of their Spirits: The Miracles were fitter in their own nature, to have induced them to an Adoration of our Saviour, than to excite ſo vile a Paſſion againſt one that had ſo many marks from Heaven to dignifie him, and proclaim him worthy of their reſpect. The Perſon of Chriſt was an Object propoſed to the *Jews*; ſome worſhip him, others condemn and crucifie him, and according to their ſeveral vices and baſe ends they uſe this object. *Judas* to content his Covetouſneſs, the *Phariſees* to glut their revenge, *Pilate* for his Ambition, to preſerve himſelf in his Government, and avoid the Articles the People might charge him with of Countenancing an Enemy to *Cæſar*. * God at that time put into their minds a rational and true Propoſition which they apply to ill purpoſes. *Caiphas* ſaid, that *it was expedient for one man to die for the people*, which *he ſpake not of himſelf*, Joh. 11. 50, 51. God put it into his mind, but he might have applied it better than he did, and conſidered, tho' the Maxim was commendable, whether it might juſtly be applied to Chriſt, or whether there was ſuch a neceſſity that he muſt dye, or the Nation be deſtroy'd by the *Romans*: The Maxim was ſound and holy, decreed by God; but what an ill uſe did the High Prieſt make of it to put Chriſt to death as a ſeditious Perſon, to ſave the Nation from the *Roman* Fury?

* Amyrald. *Ironic.* p.337.

3. *Since the natural Corruption of men will uſe ſuch Objects ill, may not God, without tainting himſelf, preſent ſuch Objects to them in ſubſerviency to his gracious Decrees?* Whatſoever God ſhould preſent to Men in that ſtate, they would make an ill uſe of; hath not God then the Soveraign Prerogative to preſent what he pleaſes, and ſuppreſs others? To offer that to them which may ſerve his holy purpoſe, and hide other things from them which are not ſo conducing to his gracious ends, which would be as much the occaſions of exciting their

their ſin, as the others which he doth bring forth to their view? The *Jews* at the time of Chriſt, were of a turbulent and ſeditious humour, they expected a *Meſſiah*, a Temporal King, and would readily have embraced any occaſion to have been up in Arms to have delivered themſelves from the *Roman* yoke; to this purpoſe the People attempted once to make him King: And probably the expectation they had that he had ſuch a Deſign to head them, might be one reaſon of their *Hoſanna*'s, becauſe without ſome ſuch conceit it was not probable they ſhould ſo ſoon change their note, and vote him to the Croſs in ſo ſhort a time, after they had applauded him as if he had been upon a Throne; but their being defeated of ſtrong expectations, uſually ended in a more ardent Fury. This turbulent and ſeditious humour God directs in another Chanel, ſuppreſſeth all Occurrences that might excite them to a Rebellion againſt the *Romans*, which if he had given way to, the crucifying Chriſt, which was God's deſign to bring about at that time, had not probably been effected, and the Salvation of Mankind been hindred or ſtood at a ſtay for a time. God therefore orders ſuch Objects and Occaſions, that might direct this ſeditious Humour to another Chanel, which would elſe have run out in other Actions, which had not been conducing to the great Deſign he had then in the World. Is it not the right of God, and without any blemiſh to his Holineſs, to uſe thoſe Corruptions which he finds ſown in the Nature of his Creature by the hand of *Satan*, and to propoſe ſuch Objects as may excite the exerciſe of them for his own Service? Sure God hath as much right to ſerve himſelf of the Creature of his own framing, and what Natures ſoever they are poſſeſſed with, and to preſent Objects to that purpoſe, as a Faulconer hath to offer this or that Bird to his Hawk to exerciſe his Courage, and excite his ravenouſneſs, without being termed the Author of that ravenouſneſs in the Creature. God planted not thoſe Corruptions in the *Jews*, but finds them in thoſe Perſons over whom he hath an abſolute Soveraignty in the right of a Creator, and that of a Judge for their ſins: And by the right of that Soveraignty may offer ſuch Objects and Occaſions, which, tho' innocent in themſelves, he knows they will make uſe of to ill purpoſes, but which by the ſame decree that he reſolves to preſent ſuch occaſions to them, he alſo reſolves to make uſe of them for his own Glory. * 'Tis not conceivable by us what way that Death of Chriſt, which was neceſſary for the ſatisfaction of Divine Juſtice, could be brought about without ordering the evil of ſome Mens hearts by ſpecial Occaſions to effect his purpoſe; we cannot ſuppoſe that Chriſt can be guilty of any Crime that deſerved Death by the *Jewiſh* Law; had he been ſo a Criminal, he could not have been a Redeemer: A perfect Innocence was neceſſary to the deſign of his coming. Had God himſelf put him to that Death, without uſing Inſtruments of Wickedneſs in it, by ſome remarkable hand from Heaven, the Innocence of his Nature had been for ever eclipſed, and the voluntarineſs of his Sacrifice had been obſcur'd: The ſtrangeneſs of ſuch a Judgment would have made his Innocence incredible; he could not reaſonably have been propos'd as an Object of Faith; What, to believe in one that was ſtruck dead by a Hand from Heaven? The propagation of the Doctrine of Redemption had wanted a Foundation; and tho' God might have raiſed him again, the certainty of his Death had been as queſtionable as his Innocence in dying, had he not been raiſed. But God orders every thing ſo, as to anſwer his own moſt wiſe and holy ends, and maintain his Truth, and the fulfilling the Predictions of the minuteſt Concerns about them, and all this by preſenting Occaſions innocent in themſelves; which the Corruptions of the *Jews* took hold of, and whereby God, unknown to them, brought about his own Decrees: And may not this be conceived without any taint upon God's Holineſs; for when there are Seeds of all ſin in Man's Nature, why may not God hinder the ſprouting up of this or that kind of Seed, and leave liberty to the growth of the other, and ſhut up other ways of ſinning, and reſtrain Men from them, and let them looſe to that Temptation which he intends to ſerve himſelf of, hiding from them thoſe Objects which were not ſo ſerviceable to his purpoſe, wherein they would have ſinned, and offer others, which he knew their Corruption would uſe ill, and were ſerviceable to his ends; ſince the depravation of their Natures would neceſſarily hurry them to evil without reſtraining Grace, as a Scale will neceſſarily riſe up when the weight in it, which kept it down, is taken away?

* *This I have ſpoken of before, but it is neceſſary now.*

7. Propoſition. *The Holineſs of God is not blemiſht by withdrawing his Grace from a ſinful Creature, whereby he falls into more ſin.* That God withdraws his Grace from Men, and gives them up ſometimes to the fury of their Luſts, is as clear in Scripture as any thing; *Deut.* 29. 4. *Yet the Lord hath not given you a heart to perceive, and eyes to ſee, and ears to hear*, &c. *Judas* was delivered to *Satan* after the Sop, and put into his power for deſpiſing former Admonitions. He often leaves the Reins to the Devil, that he may uſe what efficacy he can in thoſe that have offended the Majeſty of God; he withholds further Influences of Grace, or withdraws what before he had granted them. Thus he withheld that Grace from the Sons of *Eli*, that might have made their Fathers pious Admonitions effectual to them, 1 *Sam.* 2. 25. *They hearkned not to the voice of their Father, becauſe the Lord would ſlay them.* He gave Grace to *Eli* to reprove them, and withheld that Grace from them, which might have enabled them againſt their natural Corruption and Obſtinacy to receive that Reproof.

But the *Holineſs* of God is not blemiſht by this.

1. *Becauſe the act of God in this is only negative* *. Thus God is ſaid to *harden* Men: not by poſitive hardning, or working any thing in the Creature, but by not working, not ſoftning, leaving a Man to the hardneſs of his own heart, whereby it is unavoidable by the depravation of Man's Nature, and the Fury of his Paſſions, but that he ſhould be further hardned, and *increaſe unto more ungodlineſs*, as the Expreſſion is 2 *Tim.* 2. 16. As a Man is ſaid to give another his Life, when he doth not take it away when it lay at his Mercy; ſo God is ſaid to *harden* a Man, when he doth not mollifie him when it was in his power, and inwardly quicken him with that Grace, whereby he might infallibly avoid any further provoking of him. God is ſaid to harden Men, when he removes not from them the Incentives to ſin, curbs not thoſe Principles, which are ready to comply with thoſe Incentives, withdraws the common aſſiſtances of his Grace, concurs not with counſels and admonitions to make them effectual, flaſheth not in the convincing light which he darted upon them before. If hardneſs follows upon God's withholding his ſoftening Grace, 'tis not by any poſitive act of God, but from the natural hardneſs of Man. If you put Fire near to Wax or Roſin, both will melt, but when that fire is removed, they return to their natural quality of hardneſs and brittleneſs; the poſitive act of the Fire is to melt and ſoften, and the ſoftneſs of the Roſin is to be aſcribed to that, but the hardneſs is from the Roſin it ſelf, wherein the Fire hath no influence,

* Teſtard. *de natur. & grat. Theſ.* 150, 151. Amy *on diverſ Texts.* p. 311.

fluence, but only a negative act by a removal of it: So when God hardens a Man, he only leaves him to that ſtony heart which he derived from *Adam*, and brought with him into the World. All Mens underſtandings being blinded, and their wills perverted in *Adam*, God's withdrawing his Grace, is but a leaving them to their natural pravity, which is the cauſe of their further ſinning, and not God's removal of that ſpecial light he before afforded them, or reſtraint he held over them. As when God withdraws his preſerving Power from the Creature, he is not the *efficient*, but *deficient* cauſe of the Creatures deſtruction; ſo in this caſe, God only ceaſeth to bind and dam up that ſin which elſe would break out.

2. *The whole poſitive cauſe of this hardneſs is from man's corruption.* God infuſeth not any ſin into his Creatures, but forbears to infuſe his Grace and reſtrain their Luſts, which upon the removal of his Grace work impetuouſly: God only gives them up to that, which he knows will work ſtrongly in their hearts. And therefore the *Apoſtle* wipes off from God any poſitive act in that uncleanneſs the *Heathens* were given up to (*Rom.* 1.24. *Wherefore God gave them up to uncleanneſs, through the luſts of their own hearts:* And *verſe* 26. God gave them up to *vile affections*; but they were their own affections, none of God's inſpiring) by adding *through the luſts of their own hearts:* God's giving them up was the Logical cauſe, or a cauſe by way of *Argument*; their own Luſts were the true and *natural* cauſe; their own they were, before they were given up to them; and belonging to none as the Author, but themſelves after they were given up to them. The Luſt in the Heart, and the temptation without, eaſily cloſe and mix intereſts with one another: As the Fire in a Cole-pit will with the Fuel, if the ſtreams derived into it for the quenching it, be damp'd up: The natural Paſſions will run to a temptation, as the Waters of a River tumble towards the Sea. When a Man that hath bridled in a high-metled Horſe from running out, gives him the Reins; or a Huntſman takes off the ſtring that held the Dog, and lets him run after the Hare; are they the immediate cauſe of the motion of the one, or the other? no, but the mettle and ſtrength of the Horſe, and the natural inclination of the Hound, both which are left to their own motions to purſue their own natural inſtincts. Man doth as naturally tend to ſin as a ſtone to the Center, or as a weighty thing inclines to a motion to the Earth: 'Tis from the propenſion of Man's Nature that he *drinks up iniquity like water*; and God doth no more when he leaves a Man to ſin, by taking away the Hedge which ſtopt him, but leave him to his natural Inclination. As a Man that breaks up a damm he hath placed, leaves the ſtream to run in its natural Chanel; or one that takes away a prop from a Stone to let it fall, leaves it only to that nature which inclines it to a deſcent; both have their motion from their own Nature, and Man his Sin from his own Corruption. *The withdrawing the Sun-beams is not the cauſe of Darkneſs, but the Shadineſs of the Earth; nor is the departure of the Sun the cauſe of Winter, but the coldneſs of the Air and Earth, which was temper'd and beaten back into the bowels of the Earth by the vigor of the Sun, upon whoſe departure they return to their natural ſtate: The Sun only leaves the Earth and Air as it found them at the beginning of the Spring, or the beginning of the Day. If God do not give a Man Grace to melt him, yet he cannot be ſaid to communicate to him that Nature which hardens him, which Man hath from himſelf. As God was not the cauſe of the firſt ſin of *Adam*, which was the root of all other, ſo he is not the cauſe of the following ſins, which as branches ſpring from that root; Man's Free-will was the cauſe of the firſt ſin, and the corruption of his Nature by it the cauſe of all ſucceeding ſins. God doth not immediately harden any Man, but doth propoſe thoſe things, from whence the natural Vice of Man takes an occaſion to ſtrengthen and nouriſh it ſelf: Hence God is ſaid to *harden Pharaoh's heart* *, by concurring with the *Magicians* in turning their Rods into Serpents, which ſtiffned his Heart againſt *Moſes*, conceiving him by reaſon of that to have no more power than other Men, and was an occaſion of his further hardening: And *Pharaoh* is ſaid to *harden himſelf* †, that is, in regard of his own natural Paſſion.

3. *God is holy and righteous, becauſe he doth not withdraw from man, till man deſerts him:* To ſay that God withdrew that Grace from *Adam*, which he had afforded him in Creation, or any thing that was due to him, till he had abuſed the Gifts of God, and turned them to an end contrary to that of Creation, would be a reflection upon the Divine Holineſs: God was firſt deſerted by Man before Man was deſerted by God; and Man doth firſt contemn and abuſe the common Grace of God, and thoſe reliques of natural light that *enlighten every man that comes into the World* *, before God leaves him to the hurry of his own Paſſions. *Ephraim was* firſt *joyned to Idols*, before God pronounced the fatal ſentence, *Let him alone* †: And the *Heathens* firſt *changed the glory of the incorruptible God*, before God withdrew his common Grace from the corrupted Creature ‖; and they firſt *ſerved the Creature more than the Creator*, before the Creator gave them up to the ſlaviſh Chains of their vile affections *. *Iſrael* firſt caſt off God before God caſt off them, but then *he gave them up to their own hearts luſts, and they walked in their own Counſels, Pſal.* 81. 11, 12. Since ſin entred into the World by the fall of *Adam*, and the Blood of all his Poſterity was tainted, Man cannot do any thing that is formally good; not for want of faculties, but for the want of a righteous habit in thoſe faculties, eſpecially in the Will; yet God diſcovers himſelf to Man in the works of his hands; he hath left in him footſteps of natural reaſon, he doth attend him with common motions of his Spirit, corrects him for his faults with gentle Chaſtiſements. He is near unto all in ſome kind of Inſtructions: He puts many times providential bars in their way of ſinning; but when they will ruſh into it as the *Horſe into the battle*, when they will rebel againſt the light, God doth often leave them to their own courſe, ſentence him that is *filthy to be filthy ſtill* †, which is a righteous act of God, as he is Rector and Governour of the World. Man's not receiving, or not improving what God gives, is the cauſe of God's not giving further, or taking away his own, which before he had beſtowed. This is ſo far from being repugnant to the Holineſs and Righteouſneſs of God, that it is rather a commendable act of his Holineſs and Righteouſneſs, as the Rector of the World, not to let thoſe gifts continue in the hand of a Man who abuſes them contrary to his glory. Who will blame a Father, that after all the good Counſels he hath given his Son to reclaim him, all the Corrections he hath inflicted on him for his irregular practice, leaves him to his own courſes, and withdraws thoſe aſſiſtances which he ſcoft at, and turned the deaf Ear unto? Or who will blame the *Phyſician* for deſerting the Patient, who rejects his Counſel, will not follow his Preſcriptions, but daſheth his Phyſick againſt the Wall? No Man will blame him, no Man will ſay that he is the

* Exod. 7. 13.

† Exod. 8.32.

* Joh. 1.9.

† Hoſ. 4.17.

‖ Rom. 1. 23, 24.

* Verſ. 25, 26.

† Rev. 22. 11.

*Amyrald. *de prædeſt.* p.107.

cauſe

cauſe of the Patient's death, but the true cauſe is the fury of the Diſtemper, and the obſtinacy of the diſeaſed Perſon, to which the Phyſician left him. And who can juſtly blame God in this caſe, who yet never denied ſupplies of Grace to any that ſincerely ſought it at his hands; and what Man is there that lies under a hardneſs, but firſt was guilty of very provoking ſins? What unholineſs is it to deprive Men of thoſe aſſiſtances becauſe of their ſin, and afterwards to direct thoſe counſels and practiſes of theirs which he hath juſtly given them up unto, to ſerve the ends of his own glory in his own methods?

4. Which will appear further by conſidering, that *God is not oblig'd to continue his Grace to them.* It was at his liberty whether he would give any renewing Grace to *Adam* after his fall, or to any of his Poſterity: He was at his own liberty to withhold it or communicate it: But if he were under any Obligation then, ſurely he muſt be under leſs now, ſince the multiplication of Sin by his Creatures: But if the Obligation were none juſt after the fall, there is no pretence now to faſten any ſuch Obligation on God. That God had no Obligation at firſt hath been ſpoken to before: He is leſs obliged to continue his Grace after a repeated refuſal, and a peremptory abuſe, than he was bound to proffer it after the firſt Apoſtacy. God cannot be charg'd with unholineſs in withdrawing his Grace after we have received it, unleſs we can make it appear that his Grace was a thing due to us, as we are his Creatures, and as he is Governour of the World. What Prince looks upon himſelf as oblig'd to reſide in any particular place of his Kingdom? But ſuppoſe he be bound to inhabit in one particular City, yet after the City rebels againſt him, is he bound to continue his Court there, ſpend his Revenue among Rebels, endanger his own Honour and Security, enlarge their Charter, or maintain their Ancient Priviledges? Is it not moſt juſt and righteous for him to withdraw himſelf and leave them to their own Tumultuouſneſs and Sedition, whereby they ſhould eat the fruit of their own doings? If there be an Obligation on God as a Governour, it would rather lye on the ſide of Juſtice, to leave Man to the Power of the Devil whom he courted, and the prevalency of thoſe Luſts he hath ſo often careſſed, and wrap up in a Cloud all his common Illuminations, and leave him deſtitute of all common workings of his Spirit.

8. Propoſition. *God's Holineſs is not blemiſht, by his commanding thoſe things ſometimes which ſeem to be againſt Nature, or thwart ſome other of his Precepts.* As when God commanded *Abraham* with his own hand to Sacrifice his Son *, there was no thing of Unrighteouſneſs in it. God hath a *Soveraign Dominion* over the Lives and Beings of his Creatures, whereby as he creates one day, he might annihilate the next; and by the ſame right that he might demand the Life of *Iſaac*, as being his Creature, he might demand the Obedience of *Abraham* in a ready return of that to him, which he had ſo long enjoy'd by his grant. 'Tis true, killing is unjuſt when it is done without cauſe, and by a private Authority: But the Authority of God ſurmounts all private and publick Authority whatſoever. Our Lives are due to him when he calls for them, and they are more than once forfeit to him by reaſon of Tranſgreſſion. But howſoever the Caſe is, God commanded him to do it for the trial of his Grace, but ſuffered him not to do it in favour to his ready Obedience: But had *Iſaac* been actually ſlain and offer'd, how had it been unrighteous in God, who enacts Laws for the Regulation of his Creature, but never intended them to the prejudice of the Rights of his Soveraignty? Another Caſe is that of the *Iſraelites borrowing Jewels* of the *Egyptians* by the order of God †. Is not God Lord of Man's Goods, as well as their Lives? What have any, they have not received? and that not as Proprietors independent on God, but his Stewards, and may not he demand a portion of his Steward to beſtow upon his Favourite? He that had power to diſpoſe of the *Egyptians* Goods, had power to order the *Iſraelites* to ask them. Beſides, God acted the part of a *juſt Judge* in ordering them their Wages for their Service in this method, and making their Task-maſters give them ſome Recompence for their unjuſt oppreſſion ſo many years: It was a Command from God therefore, rather for the preſervation of Juſtice, (the Baſis of all thoſe Laws which link Human Society) than any infringement of it. It was a material Recompence in part, tho' not a formal one in the intention of the *Egyptians:* It was but in part a Recompence; It muſt needs come ſhort of the Damage the poor Captives had ſuſtained by the tyranny of their Maſters, who had inſlav'd them contrary to the Rules of Hoſpitality; and could not make amends for the Lives of the poor Infants of *Iſrael*, whom they had drowned in the River. He that might for the unjuſt Oppreſſion of his People have taken away all their Lives, deſtroy'd the whole Nation, and put the *Iſraelites* into the poſſeſſion of their Lands, could without any unrighteouſneſs diſpoſe of part of their Goods: And it was rather an Act of Clemency to leave them ſome part, who had doubly forfeited all. Again, the *Egyptians* were as ready to lend by God's influence, as the *Iſraelites* were to ask by God's order: And tho' it was a Loan, God as Soveraign of the World, and Lord of the Earth and the Fulneſs thereof, alienated the property by aſſuming them to the uſe of the Tabernacle, to which Service moſt, if not all of them, were afterwards dedicated. God who is Law-giver hath power to diſpence with his own Law, and make uſe of his own Goods, and diſpoſe of them as he pleaſes. 'Tis no unholineſs in God to diſpoſe of that which he hath a right unto. Indeed God cannot command that which is in its own Nature intrinſecally evil; as to command a Rational Creature not to love him, not to worſhip him, to call God to witneſs to a Lye; theſe are intrinſecally evil; but for the diſpoſing of the Lives and Goods of his Creatures, which they have from him in right, and not in abſolute propriety, is not evil in him, becauſe there is no Repugnancy in his own Nature to ſuch Acts, nor is it any thing inconſiſtent with the natural Duty of a Creature, and in ſuch caſes he may uſe what Inſtruments he pleaſes.

* Gen. 22. 2.

† Exod. 11.2,3. Exod. 12. 36.

The *Point* was, That *Holineſs is a glorious Perfection of the Nature of God.* We have ſhew'd the *Nature* of this Holineſs in God; what it is, and we have demonſtrated it, and proved that God is holy, and muſt needs be ſo; and alſo the *purity* of his Nature *in all his acts* about ſin: Let us now improve it by way of *Uſe.*

Is *Holineſs a tranſcendent Perfection belonging to the Nature of God?* The *firſt Uſe* ſhall be of *Inſtruction* and *Information.* *Uſe.*

1. *How great and how frequent is the contempt of this eminent Perfection in the Deity?* Since the Fall, this Attribute, which renders God moſt amiable in himſelf, renders him moſt hateful to his Apoſtate Creature. 'Tis impoſſible that he that loves Iniquity can affect that which is irreconcileably contrary to the Iniquity he loves. Nothing ſo contrary to the ſinfulneſs of man as the Holineſs of God, and nothing is thought of by the Sinner with ſo much deteſtation.

teſtation. How do Men account that which is the moſt glorious perfection of the Divinity, unworthy to be regarded as an accompliſhment of their own Souls? And when they are preſſed to an imitation of it, and a deteſtation of what is contrary to it, have the ſame Sentiments in their Heart which the Devil had in his Language to Chriſt, *Why art thou come to torment us before our time?* What an enmity the World naturally hath to this Perfection, I think is viſible in the practiſe of the Heathen, who among all their Heroes which they deified, elevated none to that dignity among them for this or that moral Virtue that came neareſt to it, but for their Valour, or ſome uſefulneſs in the concerns of this Life. *Æſculapius* was deified for his skill in the cure of Diſeaſes; *Bacchus* for the uſe of the Grape; *Vulcan* for his operations by Fire; *Hercules* for his deſtroying of Tyrants and Monſters; but none for their meer Virtue: As if any thing of Purity were unworthy their conſideration in the frame of a Deity, when it is the glory of all other Perfections: So eſſential it is, that when Men reject the imitation of this, God regards it as a total rejection of himſelf, tho' they own all the other Attributes of his Nature; *Pſal.* 81. 11, *Iſrael would none of me*; why? becauſe *they walked not in his ways*, Ver. 13. thoſe ways wherein the purity of the Divine Nature was moſt conſpicuous: They would own him in his Power, when they ſtood in need of a Deliverance; they would own him in his Mercy, when they were plung'd in Diſtreſs; but they would not imitate him in his Holineſs. This being the luſtre of the Divine Nature, the contempt of it is an obſcuring all his other Perfections, and a daſhing a blot upon his whole Scutcheon. To own all the reſt, and deny him this, is to frame him as an unbeautiful Monſter, a deform'd Power. Indeed, all Sin is againſt this Attribute; all Sin aims in general at the Being of God, but in particular at the Holineſs of his Being: All Sin is a violence to this Perfection: There is not an Iniquity in the World, but directs its venomous ſting againſt the Divine Purity: Some Sins are directed againſt his Omniſcience, as ſecret Wickedneſs; ſome againſt his Providence, as Diſtruſt; ſome againſt his Mercy, as Unbelief; ſome againſt his Wiſdom, as neglecting the means inſtituted by him, cenſuring his ways and actings; ſome againſt his Power, as truſting in means more than in God, and the immoderate fear of Men more than of God; ſome againſt his Truth, as diſtruſting his Promiſe, or not fearing his Threatning; but all agree together in their Enmity againſt this, which is the peculiar Glory of the Deity, every one of them is a receding from the Divine Image; and the blackneſs of every one is the deeper, by how much the diſtance of it from the Holineſs of God is the greater. This contrariety to the Holineſs of God is the cauſe of all the abſolute Atheiſm (if there be any ſuch) in the World; What was the reaſon *the fool hath ſaid in his heart there is no God?* but becauſe the Fool is *corrupt, and hath done abominable works* *. If they believe the being of a God, their own Reaſon will enforce them to imagine him holy: Therefore rather than fancy a holy God, they would fain fancy none at all.

* Pſal. 14. 1.

In particular,

I. *The Holineſs of God is injur'd in unworthy repreſentations of God, and imaginations of him in our own minds.* The Heathen fell under this guilt, and aſcrib'd to their Idols thoſe Vices which their own Senſuality inclin'd them to, unworthy of a man, much more unworthy of a God, that they might find a protection of their Crimes in the practiſe of their Idols. But is this only the notion of the Heathens? May there not be many among us, whoſe love to their Luſts, and deſires of ſinning without controul, move them to ſlander God in their Thoughts, rather than reform their Lives, and are ready to frame by the power of their imaginative faculty, a God not only winking, but ſmiling at their Impurities? I am ſure God charges the Impieties of Men upon this ſcore, in that *Pſalm*, (*Pſal.* 50. 21.) which ſeems to be a repreſentation of the Day of Judgment, as ſome gather from *Verſe* 6. when God ſums up all together, *Theſe things haſt thou done, and I kept ſilence, thou thoughteſt that I was altogether ſuch an one as thy ſelf*; not a deteſter, but approver of thy *Crimes*. And the *Pſalmiſt* ſeems to expreſs God's loathing of Sin in ſuch a manner, as intimates it to be contrary to the Ideas and Reſemblances Men make of him in their minds, *Pſal.* 5. 4. *For thou art not a God that haſt pleaſure in wickedneſs.* As we ſay in vindication of a man, he is not ſuch a man as you imagine him to be; Thou art not ſuch a God as the World commonly imagines Thee to be, a God taking pleaſure in iniquity. 'Tis too common for men to fancy God not as he is, but as they would have him; ſtrip him of his excellency for their own ſecurity. As God made man after his Image, man would dreſs God after his own Modes, as may beſt ſuit the content of his Luſts, and encourage him in a courſe of ſinning; for when they can frame ſuch a notion of God, as if he were a countenancer of Sin, they will derive from thence a reputation to their Crimes, commit Wickedneſs with an unbounded Licentiouſneſs, and crown their Vices with the name of Virtues, becauſe they are ſo like to the Sentiments of that God they fancy: From hence, as the *Pſalmiſt* in the *Pſalm* before mention'd, ariſeth that maſs of Vice in the World; ſuch Conceptions are the Mother and Nurſe of all Impiety; I queſtion not but the firſt Spring is ſome wrong notion of God in regard of his Holineſs: We are as apt to imagin God as we would have him, as the black *Ethiopians* were to draw the Image of their gods after their own dark hue, and paint him with their own colour: As a Philoſopher in *Theodoret* ſpeaks; if Oxen and Lions had hands, and could paint as Men do, they would frame the Images of their gods according to their own likeneſs and complexion: Such notions of God render him a Swiniſh Being, and worſe than the vileſt Idols ador'd by the *Egyptians*, when Men fancy a God indulgent to their Appetites and moſt fordid Luſts.

2. *In defacing the Image of God in our Souls.* God in the firſt draught of Man conform'd him to his own Image, or made him an Image of himſelf; becauſe we find that in Regeneration this Image is renew'd, *Eph.* 4. 24. *The New Man, which after God is created in Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs.* He did not take Angels for his Pattern in the firſt poliſhing the Soul, but himſelf. In defacing this Image we caſt Dirt upon the Holineſs of God, which was his Pattern in the framing of us; and rather chuſe to be conformed to *Satan*, who is God's grand Enemy, to have God's Image wip'd out of us, and the Devil's pictur'd in us: Therefore natural Men in an unregenerate ſtate, may juſtly be called Devils, ſince our Saviour called the worſt man, *Judas*, ſo *, and *Peter* one of the beſt †: And if this Title be given by an infallible Judge to one of the worſt, and one of the beſt, it may without wrong to any be aſcrib'd to all men that wallow in their Sin, which is directly contrary to that illuſtrious Image God did imprint upon them. How often is it ſeen that Men controul the light of their own Nature, and ſtain the cleareſt beams of that Candle of the Lord in their own Spirits, that fly in the face of their own Conſciences, and ſay to them, as *Ahab* to *Micaiah*, *Thou didſt never prophecy good to me*; Thou didſt never encou-

* Joh. 6. 70.
† Mat. 16. 23.

rage

rage me in thoſe things that are pleaſing to the Fleſh; and uſe it at the ſame rate as the wicked King did the *Prophet*, *impriſon it in unrighteouſneſs* ‖; becauſe it ſtarts up in them ſometimes Sentiments of the Holineſs of God, which it repreſents in the Soul of Man. How jolly are many Men when the exhalations of their Senſitive part riſe up to Cloud the exacteſt Principle of Moral Nature in their Minds, and render the monſtrous Principles of the Law of Corruption more lively? Whence ariſeth the Wickedneſs which hath been committed with an open face in the World, and the applauſe that hath been often given to the worſt of villanies? Have we not known among our ſelves, Men to glory in their ſhame, and eſteem that a moſt gentile accompliſhment of Man, which is the greateſt blot upon his Nature, and which, if it were upon God, would render him no God, but an impure Devil, ſo that to be a Gentleman among us hath been the ſame as to be an incarnate Devil? and to be a Man, was to be no better, but worſe than a Brute? Vile wretches! Is not this a contempt of Divine Holineſs, to kill that Divine Seed which lies languiſhing in the midſt of corrupted Nature; to cut up any ſprouts of it as Weeds unworthy to grow in their Gardens, and cultivate what is the Seed of Hell? prefer the rotten Fruits of *Sodom*, mark'd with a Divine Curſe, before thoſe Relicks of the Fruits of *Eden*, of God's own planting?

‖ Rom. 1. 18.

3. The *Holineſs of God is injur'd in charging our ſin upon God.* Nothing is more natural to Men, than to ſeek Excuſes for their Sin, and transfer it from themſelves to the next at hand; and rather than fail, ſhift it upon God himſelf; and if they can bring God into a ſociety with them in Sin, they will hug themſelves in a ſecurity that God cannot puniſh that guilt wherein he is a Partner: *Adam*'s Children are not of a different diſpoſition from *Adam* himſelf, who after he was arraign'd and brought to his Trial, boggles not at flingiug his Dirt in the face of God his Creator, and accuſeth him as if he had given him the Woman, not to be his help, but his ruine, *Gen.* 3. 12. *And the man ſaid, the Woman whom thou gaveſt to be with me, ſhe gave me of the Tree, and I did eat.* He never ſupplicates for Pardon, nor ſeeks a Remedy, but reflects his Crime upon God: Had I been alone, as I was firſt created, I had not eaten, but the Woman whom I receiv'd as a ſpecial Gift from thee, hath prov'd my Tempter and my Bane. When man could not be like God in Knowledge, he endeavour'd to make God like him in his Crime; and when his Ambition fail'd of equalizing himſelf with God, he did with an Inſolence *too common* to corrupted Nature, attempt by the imputation of his Sin, to equal the Divinity with himſelf. Some think *Cain* had the ſame ſentiment in his anſwer to God's demand, where his Brother was, *Gen.* 2. 9. *Am I my Brother's keeper?* Art not thou the Keeper and Governor of the World, why didſt not thou take care of him, and hinder my killing him, and drawing this guilt upon my ſelf, and terror upon my Conſcience? *David* was not behind, when after the murder of *Uriah*, he ſweeps the Dirt from his own Door to God's, 2 *Sam.* 2. 11, 25. *The Sword devoureth one as well as another*; fathering that ſolely upon Divine Providence, which was his own wicked Contrivance: Tho' afterwards he is more ingenuous in clearing God, and charging himſelf, *Pſal.* 51. 4. *Againſt thee, thee only, have I ſinned*; and he clears God in his Judgment too: *'Tis too common for the fooliſhneſs of man to pervert his way*, and then *his Heart frets againſt the Lord*, *Prov.* 19. 3. He ſtudies miſchief, runs in a way of ſin, and when he hath conjur'd up troubles to himſelf by his own folly, he excuſeth himſelf, and with indignation charges God as the Author both of his ſin and miſery, and ſets his mouth againſt the Heavens. 'Tis a more horrible thing to accuſe God as a Principal or Acceſſory in our Guilt, than to conceive him to be a favourer of our Iniquity; yet both are bad enough.

4. The Holineſs of God is injur'd, *when Men will ſtudy Arguments from the holy Word of God to colour and ſhelter their Crimes.* When Men will ſeek for a ſhelter for their Lies, in that of the Midwives to preſerve the Children; or in that of *Rahab*, to ſave the Spies; as if becauſe God rewarded their fidelity he countenanc'd their ſin. How often is Scripture wreſted to be a Plea for unbecoming Practiſes, that God in his Word may be imagin'd a Patron for their Iniquity? 'Tis not unknown that ſome have maintain'd their quaffing and carrouſing from *Eccl.* 8. 11. *That a man hath no better thing under the Sun, than to eat and drink and be merry*: And their Gluttony from *Matth.* 5. 11. *That which goes into the belly defiles not a man.* The *Jeſuites Morals* are a tranſcript of this. How often hath the Paſſion of our Saviour, the higheſt expreſſion of God's Holineſs, been employ'd to ſtain it, and encourage the moſt debauch'd Practiſes? Grace hath been turn'd into wantonneſs, and the abundance of Grace been us'd as a blaſt to encreaſe the flames of Sin; as if *God* had no other aim in that *Work of Redemption*, but to diſcover himſelf more indulgent to our Senſual Appetites, and by his Severity with his Son, become more gracious to our Luſts: This is to feed the Roots of Hell with the Dews of Heaven, to make Grace a Pandor for the abuſe of it, and to imploy the expreſſions of his Holineſs in his Word to be a Sword againſt the eſſential Holineſs of his Nature: As if a man ſhould draw an Apology for his Treaſon out of that Law that was made to forbid, not to protect his Rebellion. Not the meaneſt Inſtrument in the Temple was to be alienated from the uſe it was by Divine Order appointed to, nor was it to be employ'd in any common uſe; and ſhall the Word of God, which is the Image of his Holineſs, be transferr'd by baſe Interpretations to be an Advocate for Iniquity? Such an ill uſe of his Word reflects upon that Hand which imprinted thoſe Characters of Purity and Righteouſneſs upon it: As the miſinterpretation of the wholſome Laws of a Prince, made to diſcourage Debauchery, reflects upon his righteouſneſs and ſincerity in enacting them.

5. The *Holineſs of God* is injur'd, *when men will put up Petitions to God to favour them in a wicked Deſign.* Such there are, and tax'd by the *Apoſtle*, *Jam.* 4. 3. *Ye ask amiſs, that you may conſume it upon your Luſts:* who deſir'd Mercies from God, with an intent to make them Inſtruments of Sin, and Weapons of Unrighteouſneſs; as it is reported of a Thief, that he always pray'd for the ſucceſs of his Robbery. It hath not been rare in the World to appoint Faſts and Prayers for ſucceſs in Wars manifeſtly unjuſt, and commenc'd upon breaches of Faith. Many covetous men petition God to proſper them in their unjuſt gain; as if the bleſſed God ſate in his pure Majeſty upon a Throne of Grace, to eſpouſe unjuſt Practiſes, and make Iniquity proſperous. There are ſuch as *offer Sacrifice with an evil mind* *, to barter with God for a Divine Bleſſing to ſpirit a wicked contrivance. How great a contempt of the Holineſs of God is this? How inexcuſable would it be for a Favourite to addreſs himſelf to a juſt Prince with this Language? Sir, I deſire a Boon of ſuch Lands that lye near me, for an addition to my Eſtate, that I may have ſupports for my Debauchery, and be able to play the Villain more powerfully among my Neighbours. Hereby he implies, that his Prince is a Friend to ſuch Crimes and Wickedneſs he intends his Petition for. Is not this the Language of many

* Prov. 21. 27.

many mens Hearts in the immediate Preſence of God? The Order of Prayer runs thus, *Hallowed be thy Name*; firſt to have a deep ſenſe of the Holineſs of the Divine Nature, and an ardent deſire for the glory of it: This Order is inverted by asking thoſe things which are not agreeable to the Will of God; not meet for us to ask, nor meet for God to give; or asking things agreeable to the Will of God, but with a wicked intention: This is, in effect, to deſire God to ſtrip himſelf of his Holineſs, and commit Sacriledge upon his own Nature, to gratifie our Luſts.

6. The Purity of God is contemn'd, *in hating and ſcoffing at the Holineſs which is in a Creature.* Whoever looks upon the Holineſs of a Creature as an unlovely thing, can have no *good Opinion* of the amiableneſs of Divine Purity. Whoſoever hates thoſe qualities and graces that reſemble God in any perſon, muſt needs contemn the Original Pattern, which is more eminent in God. If there be no comlineſs in a Creature's holineſs, to render it grateful to us, we ſhould ſay of God himſelf, were he viſible among us, with thoſe in the *Prophet*, *Iſai.* 53. *There is no beauty in him, that we ſhould deſire him:* Holineſs is beautiful in it ſelf. If God be the moſt lovely Being, that which is a likeneſs to him, ſo far as it doth reſemble him, muſt needs be amiable, becauſe it partakes of God: And therefore thoſe that ſee no beauty in an inferiour Holineſs, but contemn it becauſe it is a Purity above them, contemn God much more: He that hates that which is imperfect meerly for that excellency which is in it, doth much more hate that which is perfect, without any mixture or ſtain. Holineſs being the *Glory of God*, the peculiar *Title* of the *Deity*, and from him derived unto the Nature of a Creature; he that mocks this in a Perſon, derides God himſelf; and when he cannot abuſe the Purity in the Deity, he will do it in his Image. As Rebels that cannot wrong the King in his Perſon, will do it in his Picture, and his Subjects that are Loyal to him: He that hates the Picture of a Man, hates the Perſon repreſented by it much more; he that hates the Beams, hates the Sun; the Holineſs of a Creature is but a Beam from that Infinite Sun, a Stream from that Eternal Fountain. Where there is a deriſion of the Purity of any Creature; there is a greater reflection upon God in that deriſion, as he is the Author of it. If a mix'd and ſtain'd *Holineſs* be more the ſubject of any man's Scoffs than a great deal of Sin, that Perſon hath a *diſpoſition* more roundly *to ſcoff at God* himſelf, ſhould he appear in that unbiemiſh'd and unſpotted Purity which infinitely ſhines in his Nature. O! 'tis a dangerous thing to ſcoff and deride *Holineſs* in any Perſon, tho' never ſo mean; ſuch do deride and ſcoff at the *moſt holy God.*

7. The *Holineſs of God* is injur'd *by our unprepared Addreſſes to him*, when like Swine we come into the preſence of God with all our Mire reeking and ſteaming upon us. A holy God requires a holy Worſhip: And if our beſt Duties, having Filth in every part, as perform'd by us, are unmeet for God; how much more unſuitable are dead and dirty Duties to a living and immenſe Holineſs? Slight approaches and droſſy frames ſpeak us to have Imaginations of God as of a ſlight and ſottiſh Being: this is worſe than the Heathens practis'd, who would purge their Fleſh before they ſacrific'd, and make ſome preparations in a ſeeming Purity, before they would enter into their Temples. God is *ſo holy*, that were our Services as refin'd as thoſe of Angels, we could not preſent him with a Service meet for his *holy* Nature*. We contemn then this Perfection when we come before him without due preparation; as if God himſelf were of an impure Nature, and did not deſerve our pureſt thoughts in our applications to him; as if any blemiſh'd and polluted Sacrifice were good enough for him, and his Nature deſerv'd no better. When we excite not thoſe elevated frames of Spirit which are due to ſuch a Being; when we think to put him off with a lame and imperfect Service, we worſhip him not according to the excellency of his Nature, but put a ſlight upon his Majeſtick Sanctity: When we nouriſh in our Duties thoſe *fooliſh Imaginations* which creep upon us; when we bring into and continue our worldly, carnal, debauch'd Fancies in his Preſence, worſe than the naſty Servants, or bemired Dogs, a man would bluſh to be attended with in his Viſits to a neat Perſon. To be converſing with ſordid Senſualities, when we are at the feet of an Infinite God, ſitting upon the Throne of his Holineſs, is as much a contempt of him, as it would be of a Prince, to bring a Veſſel full of naſty Dung with us, when we come to preſent a Petition to him clothed in his Royal Robes. Or as it would have been to God, if the High-prieſt ſhould have ſwept all the Blood and Excrements of the Sacrifices from the *foot of the Altar* into the *Holy of Holies*, and heap'd it up before the Mercy-ſeat, where the Preſence of God *dwelt between the Cherubims*, and afterwards ſhovel'd it up into the Ark, to be lodg'd with *Aaron*'s Rod, and the Pot of *Manna.*

8. God's Holineſs is ſlighted *in depending upon our imperfect Services to bear us out before the Tribunal of God.* This is too ordinary: The *Jews* were often infected with it*, who not well underſtanding the enormity of their Tranſgreſſions, the interweaving of Sin with their Services, and the unſpottedneſs of the Divine Purity, mingled an Opinion of Merit with their Sacrifices, and thought by the cutting the Throat of a Beaſt, and offering it upon God's Altar, they had made a ſufficient Compenſation to that Holineſs they had offended. Not to ſpeak of many among the *Romaniſts*, who have the ſame notion, thinking to make Satisfaction to God, by erecting an Hoſpital, or endowing a Church, as if this injur'd Perfection could be contented with the Dregs of their Purſes, and the offering of an unjuſt *Mammon*, more likely to mind God of the Injury they have done him, than contribute to the appeaſing of him. But is it not too ordinary with miſerable Men, whoſe Conſciences accuſe them of their Crimes, to rely upon the mumbling of a few formal Prayers, and in the ſtrength of them to think to ſtand before the tremendous Tribunal of God, and meet with a Diſcharge upon this account from any Accuſation this Divine Perfection can preſent againſt them? Nay, do not the beſt Chriſtians ſometimes find a Principle in them, that makes them ſtumble in their goings forth to Chriſt, and glorifying the Holineſs of God in that method which he hath appointed? Sometimes caſting an eye at their Grace, and ſticking a while to this or that Duty, and gazing at the glory of the Temple-building, while they ſhould more admire the glorious Preſence that fills it. What is all this but a vilifying of the Divine Nature, as tho' it would be well enough contented with our Impurities and Imperfections, becauſe they *look* like a Righteouſneſs in our eſtimation? As tho' *Droſs* and *Dung*, which are the Titles the *Apoſtle* gives to all the Righteouſneſs of a Fallen Creature*, were valuable in the ſight of God, and ſufficient to render us comely before him. 'Tis a Blaſphemy againſt this Attribute, to pretend that any thing ſo imperfect, ſo daub'd as the beſt of our Services are, can anſwer to that which is infinitely perfect, and be a ground of demanding Eternal Life: 'Tis at beſt, to ſet up a gilded *Dagon* as a fit Companion for the *Ark of his Holineſs*; our own Righ-

* Rom. 3. 10.

* Phil. 3. 8.

* Joſh. 24. 19.

Righteouſneſs as a ſuitable Mate for the *Righteouſneſs of God:* As if he had repented of the Claim he made by the Law to an exact conformity, and thrown off the Holineſs of his Nature for the fondling of a Corrupted Creature. *Rude* and *Fooliſh Notions* of the Divine Purity, are clearly evidenc'd by any confidence in any Righteouſneſs of our own, tho' never ſo ſplendid. 'Tis a rendring the *Righteouſneſs of God* as dull and obſcure as that of *Men*; a meer Out-ſide, as their own: As blind as the Heathens pictur'd their *Fortune*, that knew as little how to diſcern the Nature and Value of the Offerings made to her, as to diſtribute her gifts, as if it were all one to them to have a *Dog* or a *Lamb* preſented in Sacrifice. As if God did not well underſtand his own Nature, when he enacted ſo Holy a Law, and ſtrengthen'd it with ſo ſevere a Threatning; which muſt follow upon our Conceit, that he will accept a Righteouſneſs lower than that, which bears ſome ſuitableneſs to the *Holineſs* of his own Nature, and that of his Law; and that he could eaſily be put off with a pretended and counterfeit Service. What are the Services of the generality of Men, but Suppoſitions, that they can bribe God to an indulgence of them in their Sins, and by an Oral Sacrifice, cauſe him to diveſt himſelf of his Hatred of their former Iniquities, and countenance their following Practices. As the *Harlot* that would return freſh to her Uncleanneſs, upon the confidence that her *Peace-Offerings* had contented the Righteouſneſs of God *; as tho' a ſmall Service could make him wink at our Sins, and lay aſide the Glory of his Nature; when alas, the beſt Duties in the moſt gracious Perſons in this life, are but as the ſteams of a Spiced Dunghil, a *compoſition* of Myrrh and Filth, ſince there are ſwarms of *Corruptions* in their Nature, and ſecret Sins that they need a cleanſing from.

* Prov. 7. 14.

9. 'Tis a contemning the *Holineſs of God, when we charge the Law of God with rigidneſs.* We caſt Dirt upon the *Holineſs of God*, when we blame the *Law of God* becauſe it ſhackles us, and prohibits our deſired pleaſures; and hate the *Law of God*, as they did the *Prophets*, becauſe they did not *Prophecy ſmooth things*; but called to them, *to get them out of the way, and turn aſide out of the path, and cauſe the Holy One of Iſrael to ceaſe from before them*, Iſa. 30. 10, 11. Put us no more in mind of the *Holineſs of God*, and the *Holineſs* of his *Law:* 'tis a troubleſome thing for us to hear of it: Let him be gone from us, ſince he will not countenance our Vices, and indulge our Crimes; We would rather hear there is *no God*, than you ſhould tell us of a *Holy One.* We are contrary to the Law, when we wiſh it were not ſo exact; and therefore contrary to the *Holineſs of God*, which ſet the ſtamp of *Exactneſs* and *Righteouſneſs* upon it. We think him injurious to our Liberty, when by his Precept he thwarts our Pleaſure; we wiſh it of another frame, more mild, more ſuitable to our Minds: 'Tis the ſame, as if we ſhould openly blame God for conſulting with his own Righteouſneſs, and not with our Humors, before he ſettled his Law; that he ſhould not have drawn it from the depths of his Righteous Nature, but ſquar'd it to accommodate our Corruption.

This being the Language of ſuch Complaints, is a reproving God becauſe he would not be Unholy, that we might be Unrighteous with Impunity. Had the Divine Law been ſuited to our Corrupt ſtate, God muſt have been Unholy to have comply'd with his Rebellious Creature. To charge the *Law* with rigidneſs, either in Language or Practice, is the higheſt contempt of *God's Holineſs*; for it is an implicit Wiſh, that God were as defil'd, polluted, diſorderly as our Corrupted Selves.

10. The *Holineſs of God* is injur'd *Opinionatively.*

(1.) *In the Opinion of Venial Sins.* The *Romaniſts* divide Sins into *Venial* and *Mortal:* Mortal, are thoſe which deſerve Eternal Death; Venial, the lighter ſort of Sins, which rather deſerve to be pardon'd than puniſh'd; or if puniſh'd, not with an Eternal, but Temporal Puniſhment. This Opinion hath no foundation in, but is contrary to Scripture. How can any Sin be in its own nature venial, when the due *Wages of every Sin is death*, Rom. 6. 23. and he *who continues not in every thing that the Law commands, falls under a Curſe.* Gal. 3. 10. 'Tis a mean thought of the Holineſs and Majeſty of God to imagine, that any Sin which is againſt an Infinite Majeſty, and as Infinite a Purity both in the Nature of *God* and the Law of *God*, ſhould not be conſider'd as Infinitely hainous. All Sins are Tranſgreſſions of the Eternal Law, and in every one the Infinite *Holineſs of God* is ſome way ſlighted.

(2.) *In the Opinion of Works of Supererrogation.* That is, ſuch Works as are not commanded by *God*, which yet have ſuch a dignity and worth in their own nature, that the performers of them do not only merit at God's hands for themſelves, but fill up a Treaſure of Merits for others, that come ſhort of fulfilling the Precepts God hath enjoyn'd. 'Tis ſuch a mean thought of *God's Holineſs*, that the *Jews* in all the Charges brought againſt them in Scripture, were never guilty of. And if you conſider what pitiful things they are, which are within the compaſs of ſuch Works, you have ſufficient reaſon to bewail the Ignorance of Man, and the low eſteem he hath of ſo glorious a Perfection. The Whipping themſelves often in a Week, extraordinary Watchings, Faſtings, Macerating their Bodies, wearing a *Capuchin's* Habit, *&c.* are pitiful things to give content to an Infinite Purity. As if the Precept of God requir'd only the inferiour degrees of Virtue, and the Counſels the more high and excellent; as if the *Law of God*, which the *Pſalmiſt* counts *perfect* *, did not command all *Good*, and forbid all *Evil*; as if the *Holineſs of God* had forgotten it ſelf in the framing the Law, and made it a ſcanty and defective Rule; and the Righteouſneſs of a Creature were not only able to make an Eternal Righteouſneſs, but ſurmount it. As Man would be at firſt as knowing as God, ſo ſome of his Poſterity would be more holy than God; ſet up a Wiſdom againſt the Wiſdom of God, and a Purity above the Divine Purity. *Adam* was not ſo preſumptuous, he intended no more than an equalling God in Knowledge; but thoſe would exceed him in Righteouſneſs, and not only preſume to render a Satisfaction for themſelves to the *Holineſs* they have injur'd, but to make a Purſe for the ſupply of others that are Indigent, that they may ſtand before the Tribunal of *God* with a Confidence in the Imaginary Righteouſneſs of a Creature. How horrible is it for thoſe that come ſhort of the Law of God themſelves, to think that they can have enough for a Loan to their Neighbours? An unworthy Opinion.

† Pſal. 19. 7.

2. Information. It may inform us, *how great is our Fall from God, and how diſtant we are from him.* View the *Holineſs of God*, and take a proſpect of the *Nature of Man*, and be aſtoniſh'd to ſee a Perſon created in the Divine Image, degenerated into the Image of the Devil. We are as far fallen from the *Holineſs of God*, which conſiſts in a Hatred of Sin, as the loweſt Point of the Earth is from the higheſt Point of the Heavens. The *Devil* is not more fallen from the rectitude of his Nature and Likeneſs to God, than we are; and that we are not in the ſame condition with thoſe Apoſtate Spirits, is not from any thing in our Nature, but from the Me-

diation of Chriſt, upon which account God hath indulg'd in us a continuance of ſome Remainders of that which *Satan* is wholly depriv'd of. We are departed from our Original Pattern; we were created to live the *Life of God*, that is, a *Life of Holineſs*; but now we are *alienated from the life of God* *, and of a beautiful piece we are become deform'd, daub'd over with the moſt defiling Mud: We *work uncleanneſs with greedineſs*, according to our ability, as Creatures; as God doth work *Holineſs* with affection and ardency, according to his Infiniteneſs, as Creator. More diſtant we are from God by reaſon of Sin, than the vileſt Creature, the moſt deform'd *Toad* or poyſonous *Serpent* is from the higheſt and moſt glorious *Angel*. By forſaking our *Innocence*, we departed from God as our Original Copy. The *Apoſtle* might well ſay, *Rom.* 3. 23. that by *Sin we are come ſhort of the glory of God*. Interpreters trouble themſelves much about that place, *Man is come ſhort of the glory of God*, that is, of the *Holineſs of God*, which is the glory of the Divine Nature, and was pictur'd in the Rational, Innocent Creature. By the *Glory of God* is meant the *Holineſs of God*; as, 1 *Cor.* 3. 18. *Beholding, as in a glaſs, the Glory of the Lord, we are changed into the ſame Image from glory to glory*; that is, the Glory of God in the Text, into the Image of which we are chang'd; but the Scripture ſpeaks of no other Image of God, but that of *Holineſs*: *We are come ſhort of the glory of God*; of the *Holineſs of God*, which is the *Glory of God*; and the Image of it, which was the glory of Man. By Sin, which is particular in oppoſition to the *Purity* of God, Man was left many Leagues behind any reſemblance to God; he ſtript off that which was the glory of his Nature, and was the only means of glorifying God as his Creator. The word ὑστεροῦνται, the *Apoſtle* uſes, is very ſignificant, *Poſtpon'd* by Sin an infinite diſtance from any imitation of God's Holineſs, or any appearance before him in a garb of Nature pleaſing to him. Let us lament our Fall, and diſtance from God.

* Eph. 4. 18.

3. Information. *All Unholineſs is vile and oppoſite to the Nature of God.* 'Tis ſuch a loathſome thing, that the *Purity of God's eye is averſe from beholding*, *Hab.* 1. 3. 'Tis not ſaid there, that he *will not*, but he *cannot* look on evil; there cannot be any amicableneſs between God and Sin, the Natures of both are ſo directly and unchangeably contrary to one another. Holineſs is the Life of God, it endures as long as his Life; He muſt be Eternally averſe from Sin, he can live no longer than he lives in the hatred and loathing of it. If he ſhould for one inſtant ceaſe to hate it, he would ceaſe to live. To be a Holy God, is as eſſential to him as to be a living God; and he would not be a living, but a dead God, if he were in the leaſt point of time an unholy God. He cannot look on Sin without loathing it, he cannot look on Sin but his Heart riſeth againſt it: It muſt needs be moſt odious to him, as that which is againſt the glory of his Nature, and directly oppoſite to that which is the luſtre and varniſh of all his other Perfections. 'Tis the *Abominable thing which his Soul hates*, Jer. 44. 4. the vileſt terms imaginable are uſed to ſignifie it: Do you underſtand the loathſomneſs of a *miry Swine*, or the nauſeouſneſs of the *Vomit of a Dog*? Theſe are Emblems of Sin *. Can you endure the ſteams of putrified Carcaſſes from an open *Sepulchre* †? Is the ſmell of the *ſtinking ſweat* or Excrements of a Body delightful? the word ῥυπαρία, in *Jam.* 1. 21. ſignifies as much. Or is the ſight of a Body overgrown with *Scabs* and *Leproſie* grateful to you? So vile, ſo odious, is Sin in the ſight of God. 'Tis no light thing then to fly in the Face of God, to break his Eternal Law, to daſh both the *Tables* in pieces, to trample the Tranſcript of God's own Nature under our feet, to cheriſh that which is inconſiſtent with his Honour, to lift up our heels againſt the glory of his Nature, to joyn iſſue with the Devil in ſtabbing his Heart, and depriving him of his Life. *Sin* in every part of it is an oppoſition to the *Holineſs* of God, and conſequently an envying him a Being and Life, as well as a Glory. If Sin be ſuch a thing, *ye that love the Lord, hate evil.*

* 2 Pet. 2. 22.
† Rom. 3. 23.

4. Information. *Sin cannot eſcape a due puniſhment.* A hatred of Unrighteouſneſs, and conſequently a will to puniſh it, is as eſſential to God, as a love of Righteouſneſs. Since he is not as an *Heathen Idol*, but hath Eyes to ſee, and Purity to hate every Iniquity, he will have an Infinite Juſtice to puniſh whatſoever is againſt Infinite Holineſs. As he loves every thing that is amiable, ſo he loaths every thing that is filthy, and that conſtantly without any change; his whole Nature is ſet againſt it, he abhors nothing but this. 'Tis not the Devil's knowledge or activity that his hatred is terminated in, but the Malice and Unholineſs of his Nature; 'tis this only is the Object of his Severity: 'Tis in the recompence of this only, that there can be a manifeſtation of his Juſtice.

Sin muſt be puniſh'd; for,

1. *This deteſtation of Sin muſt be manifeſted.* How ſhould we certainly know his loathing of it, if he did not manifeſt by ſome act how ungrateful it is to him? As his love to Righteouſneſs would not appear, without rewarding it; ſo his hatred of Iniquity would be as little evidenc'd, without puniſhing it: His *Juſtice* is the great Witneſs to his *Purity*. The Puniſhment therefore inflicted on the wicked ſhall be, in ſome reſpect, as great as the Rewards beſtow'd upon the Righteous. Since the hatred of Sin is natural to God, 'tis as natural to him to ſhew one time or other his hatred of it. And ſince Men have a conceit that God is like them in Impurity, there is a neceſſity of ſome manifeſtation of himſelf to be infinitely diſtant from thoſe Conceits they have of him, *Pſal.* 50. 21. *I will reprove thee, and ſet them in order before thine eyes.* He would elſe encourage the Injuries done to his Holineſs, favour the Extravagancies of the Creature, and condemn, or at leaſt ſlight, the righteouſneſs both of his own Nature and his Sovereign Law. What way is there for God to manifeſt this Hatred, but by threatning the Sinner? And what would this be but a vain Affrightment, and ridiculous to the Sinner, if it were never to be put in execution? There is an indiſſolvable connexion between his Hatred of Sin, and Puniſhment of the Offender, *Pſal.* 11. 5, 6. *The wicked his Soul hates: Upon the wicked he ſhall rain ſnares, fire, and brimſtone*, &c. He cannot approve of it without denying himſelf, and a total Impunity would be a degree of Approbation.

The Diſpleaſure of God is Eternal and Irreconcileable againſt Sin; for Sin being abſolutely contrary to his holy Nature, he is Eternally contrary to it: If there be not therefore a way to ſeparate the Sin from the ſinner, the ſinner muſt lie under the diſpleaſure of God; no diſpleaſure can be manifeſted without ſome marks of it upon the Perſon that lies under that diſpleaſure. The *Holineſs* of God will right it ſelf of the wrongs done to it, and ſcatter the Prophaners of it at the greateſt diſtance from him, which is the greateſt Puniſhment that can be inflicted; to be removed far from the Fountain of Life, is the worſt of Deaths: God can as ſoon lay aſide his Purity, as always forbear his diſpleaſure againſt an Impure Perſon; 'tis all one not to hate it, and not to manifeſt his hatred of it.

2. *As his Holineſs is natural and neceſſary, ſo is the puniſhment of Unholineſs neceſſary to him.* 'Tis

ne-

neceſſary that he ſhould abominate Sin, and therefore neceſſary he ſhould diſcountenance it. The Severities of God againſt Sin are not vain Scare-crows, they have their Foundation in the Righteouſneſs of his Nature; 'tis becauſe he is a Righteous and *Holy* God, that he *will not forgive our Tranſgreſſions and Sins*, Joſh. 24. 19. that is, that he will puniſh them. The Throne of his *Holineſs* is a *fiery Flame*, Dan. 7. 9. there is both a pure light and a ſcorching heat. Whatſoever is contrary to the Nature of God, will fall under the Juſtice of God; he would elſe violate his own Nature, deny his own Perfection, ſeem to be out of love with his own Glory and Life. He doth not hate it out of choice, but from the Immutable propenſion of his Nature; 'tis not ſo free an act of his Will, as the Creation of Man and Angels, which he might have forborn as well as effected. As the deteſtation of ſin reſults from the univerſal rectitude of his Nature, ſo the puniſhment of Sin follows upon that, as he is the righteous Governour of the World: 'Tis as much againſt his Nature not to puniſh it, as it is againſt his Nature not to loath it; He would ceaſe to be Holy, if he ceas'd to hate it; and he would ceaſe to hate it, if he ceas'd to puniſh it. Neither the Obedience of our *Saviour's* Life, nor the ſtrength of his Cries, could put a bar to the Cup of his Paſſion; God ſo hated ſin, that when it was but imputed to his Son, without any commiſſion of it, he would bring a Hell upon his Soul. Certainly, if God could have hated ſin without puniſhing it, his Son had never felt the ſmart of his wrath: His love to his Son had been ſtrong enough to have cauſed him to forbear, had not the Holineſs of his Nature been ſtronger to move him to inflict a Puniſhment according to the demerit of his Sin. God cannot but be Holy, therefore cannot but be Juſt, becauſe Injuſtice is a part of Unholineſs.

3. Therefore *there can be no Communion between God and Unholy Spirits.* How is it conceivable, that God ſhould hate the Sin, and cheriſh the Sinner with all his filth in his Boſom; that he ſhould Eternally deteſt the Crime, and Eternally fold the Sinner in his Arms? Can leſs be expected from the Purity of his Nature, than to ſeparate an impure Soul, as long as it remains ſo? Can there be any delightful Communion between thoſe whoſe Natures are contrary? *Darkneſs* and *Light* may as ſoon kiſs each other, and become one Nature; *God* and the *Devil* may as ſoon enter into an Eternal League and Covenant together: For God to *have pleaſure in wickedneſs*, and to admit *Evil to dwell with him*, are things equally impoſſible to his
* Pſal. 5. 4. Nature *; while he hates Impurity, he cannot have Communion with an impure Perſon. It may as ſoon be expected, that God ſhould hate himſelf, offer violence to his own Nature, lay aſide his Purity as an Abominable thing, and blot his own Glory as love an Impure Perſon, entertain him as his delight, and ſet him in the ſame Heaven and Happineſs with Himſelf, and his holy Angels: he muſt needs loath him, he muſt needs baniſh him from his Preſence, which is the greateſt Puniſhment. God's *Holineſs* and Hatred of Sin, neceſſarily infer the Puniſhment of it.

5. Information. *There is therefore a neceſſity of the ſatisfaction of the Holineſs of God by ſome ſufficient Mediator.* The Divine Purity could not meet with any acquieſcence in all Mankind after the Fall: Sin was hated, the Sinner would be ruin'd, unleſs ſome way were found out to repair the Wrongs done to the *Holineſs* of God; either the Sinner muſt be condemned for ever, or ſome Satisfaction muſt be made, that the *Holineſs* of the Divine Nature might Eternally appear in its full luſtre. That it is Eſſential to the Nature of God to hate all Unrighteouſneſs, as that which is abſolutely repugnant to his Nature, none do queſtion. That the Juſtice of God is ſo Eſſential to him, as that Sin could not be pardon'd without Satisfaction, ſome do queſtion; though this latter ſeems rationally to follow upon the former *. That *Holineſs* is Eſſential to the Nature of God is evident, becauſe elſe God may as much be conceived without Purity, as he might be conceived without the creating the *Sun* or *Stars*. No Man can in his right Wits frame a right Notion of a Deity, without *Purity*. It would be a leſs Blaſphemy againſt the Excellency of God, to conceit him not Knowing, than to imagine him not Holy: And for the Eſſentialneſs of his Juſtice, *Joſhua* joyns both his *Holineſs* and his *Jealouſie* as going hand in hand together, *Joſh.* 24. 19. *He is a holy God, he is a jealous God, he will not forgive your ſin.*

† Turretin. *de Satisfact.* p. 8.

But conſider only the Purity of God, ſince it is contrary to Sin, and conſequently hating the Sinner; the guilty Perſon cannot be reduc'd to God, nor can the *Holineſs* of God have any complacency in a filthy Perſon, but as Fire hath in Stubble, to conſume it. How the Holy God ſhould be brought to delight in Man, without a *Salvo* for the Rights of his *Holineſs* is not to be conceiv'd without an impeachment of the Nature of God. The Law could not be aboliſh'd, that would reflect indeed upon the Righteouſneſs of the Law-giver; to aboliſh it, becauſe of Sin, would imply a change of the Rectitude of his Nature: Muſt he change his *Holineſs* for the ſake of that which was againſt his *Holineſs*, in a compliance with a prophane and unrighteous Creature? This ſhould engage him rather to maintain his Law than to null it. And to abrogate his Law as ſoon as he had enacted it, ſince Sin ſtept into the World preſently after it, would be no credit to his Wiſdom.

There muſt be a reparation made of the Honour of God's *Holineſs*; by our ſelves it could not be without Condemnation; by another it could not be without a ſufficiency in the Perſon: No Creature could do it. All the Creatures being of a finite Nature, could not make a compenſation for the diſparagements of Infinite *Holineſs*. He muſt have deſpicable and vile Thoughts of this excellent Perfection, that imagines that a few Tears, and the glavering Fawnings at the death of a Creature, can be ſufficient to repair the Wrongs, and reſtore the Rights of this Attribute. It muſt therefore be ſuch a compenſation as might be commenſurate to the Holineſs or the Divine Nature and the Divine Law, which could not be wrought by any, but him that was poſſeſſed of a Godhead, to give efficacy and exact congruity to it. The Perſon deſign'd and appointed by God for ſo great an Affair, was *one in the form of God, one equal with God*, Phil. 2. 6. who could not be term'd by ſuch a Title of Dignity, if he had not been equal to God in the univerſal rectitude of the Divine Nature, and therefore in his Holineſs. The puniſhment due to Sin is tranſlated to that Perſon for the righting Divine *Holineſs*, and the Righteouſneſs of that Perſon is communicated to the Sinner for the Pardon of the Offending Creature.

If the Sinner had been Eternally damn'd, God's hatred of Sin had been evidenc'd by the ſtrokes of his Juſtice; but his Mercy to a Sinner had lain in obſcurity. If the Sinner had been Pardoned and Saved without ſuch a Reparation, Mercy had been evident; but his *Holineſs* had hid its Head for ever in his own boſom. There was therefore a neceſſity of ſuch a way to manifeſt his Purity, and yet to bring forth his Mercy: That *Mercy* might not alway

way figh for the deſtruction of the Creature, and that *Holineſs* might not mourn for the neglect of his Honour.

6. Information. Hence it will follow, *There is no Juſtification of a Sinner by any thing in himſelf.* After Sin had ſet foot in the World, Man could preſent nothing to God acceptable to him, or bearing any proportion to the Holineſs of his Law, till God ſet forth a Perſon, upon whoſe account the Acceptation of our Perſons and Services is founded, *Epheſ.* 1. 6. *Who hath made us accepted in the Beloved.* The Infinite Purity of God is ſo glorious, that it ſhames the Holineſs of Angels, as the light of the *Sun* dims the light of the *Fire*: Much more will the Righteouſneſs of Fallen Man, who is vile, and *drinks up Iniquity like water*, vaniſh into Nothing in his Preſence. With what Self-abaſement and Abhorrence ought he to be poſſeſſed, that comes as ſhort of the Angels in Purity, as a *Dunghill* doth of a *Star*? The higheſt Obedience that ever was perform'd by any meer Man, ſince lapſed Nature, cannot challenge any acceptance with God, or ſtand before ſo exact an Inquiſition. What Perſon hath ſuch a clear Innocence, and unſpotted Obedience in ſuch a Perfection, as in any degree to ſute the *Holineſs* of the Divine Nature? *Pſal.* 143. 2. *Enter not into Judgment with thy Servant, for in thy ſight ſhall no Man living be juſtified.* If God ſhould debate the Caſe ſimply with Man in his own Perſon, without reſpecting the Mediator, he were not able to *anſwer one of a thouſand.* Tho' we are his Servants, as *David* was, and perform a ſincere Service, yet there are many little Motes and Duſt of Sin in the beſt Works, that cannot lye undiſcover'd from the Eye of his *Holineſs*: And if we come ſhort in the leaſt of what the Law requires, we are *guilty of all* *. So that *in thy ſight ſhall no man living be juſtified*: In the ſight of thy Infinite *Holineſs*, which hates the leaſt ſpot; in the ſight of thy Infinite Juſtice, which puniſhes the leaſt Tranſgreſſion.

* James 2. 10.

God would deſcend below his own Nature, and vilifie both his Knowledge and Purity, ſhould he accept that for a Righteouſneſs and Holineſs which is not ſo in it ſelf; and nothing is ſo, which hath the leaſt ſtain upon it contrary to the Nature of God. The moſt holy Saints in Scripture, upon a proſpect of his Purity, have caſt away all confidence in themſelves; every flaſh of the Divine Purity has ſtruck them into a deep ſenſe of their own Impurity and Shame for it, *Job* 42. 6. *Wherefore I abhor my ſelf in duſt and aſhes.* What can the language of any Man be that lies under a ſenſe of Infinite *Holineſs*, and his own Defilement in the leaſt, but that of the Prophet, *Iſai.* 6. 5. *Wo is me, I am undone?* And what is there in the World can adminiſter any other thought than this, unleſs God be conſidered in Chriſt, *reconciling the World to himſelf?* As a holy God, ſo righted, as that he can diſpenſe with the Condemnation of a Sinner, without diſpenſing with his hatred of Sin; pardoning the Sin in the Criminal, becauſe it hath been puniſhed in the Surety. That *Righteouſneſs* which God hath *ſet forth* for Juſtification, is not our own, but a *Righteouſneſs which is of God*, Phil. 3. 9, 10. of God's appointing, and of God's performing; appointed by the *Father*, who is God, and performed by the *Son*, who is one with the *Father*. A Righteouſneſs ſurmounting that of all the glorious Angels, ſince it is an Immutable one which can never fail, an *Everlaſting Righteouſneſs*, Dan. 9. 24. A Righteouſneſs wherein the *Holineſs* of God can acquieſce, as conſidered in it ſelf, becauſe it is a Righteouſneſs of one equal with God. As we therefore diſhonour the Divine Majeſty, when we inſiſt upon our own bemir'd Righteouſneſs for our Juſtification; (as if a *Mortal Man were as juſt as God*, and a *Man as pure as his Maker*, Job 4. 17.) So we highly honour the Purity of his Nature, when we charge our Selves with Folly, acknowledge our ſelves Unclean, and accept of that Righteouſneſs which gives a full content to his Infinite Purity. There can be no Juſtification of a Sinner by any thing in himſelf.

7. It informs us, If *Holineſs* be a glorious Perfection of the Divine Nature, *then the Deity of Chriſt might be argued from hence.* He is indeed dignified with the Title of the *Holy One*, Acts 3. 14, 16. a Title often given to God in the Old Teſtament; and he is called, *The Holy of Holies*, Dan. 9. 24. but becauſe the Angels ſeemed to be termed *Holy Ones*, Dan. 4. 13, 17. and the moſt Sacred place in the *Temple* was alſo called the *Holy of Holies*, I ſhall not inſiſt upon that. But you find our *Saviour* particularly applauded by the Angels, as *Holy*; when this Perfection of the Divine Nature, together with the Incommunicable Name of God, are link'd together, and aſcrib'd to him. *Iſai.* 6. 3. *Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hoſts, and the whole Earth is full of his glory*, which the *Apoſtle* interprets of *Chriſt*, John 12. 39, 41. *Iſaiah* again, *He hath blinded their Eyes, and hardned their Hearts, that they ſhould not ſee with their Eyes, nor underſtand with their Hearts, and be converted, and I ſhould heal them. Theſe things*, ſaith *Iſaiah*, *when he ſaw his glory, and ſpake of him.* He that *Iſaiah* ſaw environ'd with the *Seraphims* in a Reverential Poſture before his face, and praiſed as moſt Holy by them, was the True and Eternal God; ſuch Acclamations belong to none, but the great *Jehovah*, God bleſſed for ever: But, ſaith *John*, It was the *glory of Chriſt* that *Iſaiah* ſaw in this Viſion; *Chriſt* therefore is *God bleſſed for ever*, of whom it was ſaid, *Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Hoſts* *. The *Evangeliſt* had been ſpeaking of Chriſt, the Miracles which he wrought, the obſtinacy of the *Jews* againſt believing on him; *his Glory* therefore is to be referred to the Subject he had been ſpeaking of. The *Evangeliſt* was not ſpeaking of the *Father*, but of the *Son*, and cites thoſe words out of *Iſaiah*; not to teach any thing of the *Father*, but to ſhew that the *Jews* could not believe in Chriſt. He ſpeaks of him that had wrought ſo many Miracles; but Chriſt wrought thoſe Miracles: He ſpeaks of him whom the *Jews* refuſed to believe on; but Chriſt was the Perſon they would not believe on, while they acknowledged God. It was the *Glory* of this Perſon *Iſaiah* ſaw, and this Perſon *Iſaiah* ſpake of, if the words of the *Evangeliſt* be of any credit. The *Angels* are too holy to give Acclamations belonging to God, to any but Him that is God.

* Placeus *de Deitat. Chriſti in locum.*

8. It informs us, That *God is fully fit for the Government of the World.* The Righteouſneſs of God's Nature qualifies Him to be Judge of the World: If he were not perfectly Righteous and Holy, he were uncapable to Govern and Judge the World; *Rom.* 3. 5. *If there be unrighteouſneſs with God, how ſhall he judge the World? God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert Judgment*, Job 34. 12. How deſpicable is a Judge that wants Innocence? As *Omniſcience* fits God to be a Judge, ſo *Holineſs* fits him to be a Righteous Judge; *Pſal.* 1. 6. *The Lord knows*, that is, loves *the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly ſhall periſh.*

9. Information. If *Holineſs* be an eminent Perfection of the Divine Nature, *The Chriſtian Religion is of a Divine Extraction.* It diſcovers the *Holineſs* of God, and forms the Creature to a conformity

formity to him. It gives us a proſpect of his Nature, repreſents him in the *Beauty of Holineſs*, Pſal. 110. 3. more than the whole Glaſs of the Creation. 'Tis in this *Evangelical Glaſs* the *Glory of the Lord* is beheld, and rendred amiable and imitable *. 'Tis a Doctrine *according to Godlineſs*, 1 Tim. 6. 3. directing us to live the Life of God: a Life worthy of God, and worthy of our firſt Creation by his hand. It takes us off from our ſelves, fixeth us upon a noble End, points our Actions and the Scope of our Lives to God. It quells the Monſters of Sin, diſcountenanceth the Motes of Wickedneſs; and it is no mean Argument for the *Divinity* of it, that it ſets us no lower a Pattern for our Imitation, than the *Holineſs* of the Divine Majeſty. God is exalted upon the Throne of his *Holineſs* in it, and the Creature advanc'd to an Image and Reſemblance of it, 1 *Pet.* 1. 16. *Be ye holy, for I am holy.*

* 2 Cor. 3. 18.

Uſe 2. The ſecond Uſe is for *Comfort*. This Attribute frowns upon Lapſed Nature, but ſmiles in the Reſtorations made by the Goſpel. God's *Holineſs*, in conjunction with his *Juſtice*, is terrible to a guilty Sinner; but now, in conjunction with his *Mercy*, by the Satisfaction of Chriſt, 'tis ſweet to a Believing Penitent. 'In the *firſt Covenant*, the Purity of his Nature was joyned with the Rigours of his Juſtice: In the *ſecond Covenant*, the Purity of his Nature is joyned with the Sweetneſs and Tenderneſs of his Mercy. In the one, *Juſtice* flames againſt the Sinner in the right of Injur'd Holineſs: In the other, *Mercy* yearns towards a Believer, with the conſent of Righted Holineſs. To rejoyce in the *Holineſs* of God, is the true and genuine Spirit of the Renewed Man: *My heart rejoyceth in the Lord*; what follows? *There is none holy as the Lord*, 1 Sam. 2. 1, 2. Some Perfections of the Divine Nature are aſtoniſhing, ſome affrighting; but this may fill us both with Aſtoniſhment at it, and a Joy in it.

1. *By Covenant we have an Intereſt in this Attribute, as well as any other.* In that Clauſe of *God's being our God*, entire God with all his Glory, all his Perfections are paſt over as a portion, and a gracious Soul is brought into Union with God, as his God: Not with a part of God, but with God in the Simplicity, Extent, Integrity, of his Nature; and therefore in this Attribute. And upon ſome account it may ſeem more in this Attribute, than in any other; for if he be our God, he is our God in his Life and Glory, and therefore in his Purity eſpecially, without which he could not live, he could not be happy and bleſſed. Little comfort will it be to have a dead God, or a vile God made over to us: And as by this Covenant he is our *Father*, ſo he gives us his Nature, and communicates his *Holineſs* in all his Diſpenſations; and in thoſe that are ſevereſt, as well as thoſe that are ſweeteſt; *Heb.* 12. 10. *But he corrects us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his Holineſs.* Not ſimply, *partakers of Holineſs*, but of *his Holineſs*; to have a Portraiture of it in our Nature, a Meddal of it in our Hearts, a Spark of the ſame Nature with that immenſe ſplendor and flame in himſelf. The Holineſs of a Covenant Soul, is a reſemblance of the *Holineſs* of God, and formed by it: As the Picture of the Sun in a Cloud is a fruit of his Beams, and an Image of its Author. The fulneſs of the perfection of *Holineſs* remains in the Nature of God, as the fulneſs of the Light doth in the Sun; yet there are tranſmiſſions of Light from the Sun to the Moon, and it is a Light of the ſame Nature both in the one and in the other. The Holineſs of a Creature, is nothing elſe but the reflection of the Divine *Holineſs* upon it; and to make the Creature capable of it, God takes various methods, according to his Covenant Grace.

2. *This Attribute renders God a fit Object for Truſt and Dependance.* The Notion of an Unholy and Unrighteous God, is an uncomfortable *Idea* of him, and beats off our hands from laying any hold of him. 'Tis upon this Attribute the Reputation and Honour of God in the World is built: What encouragement can we have to believe him, or what Incentives could we have to ſerve him, without the luſtre of this in his Nature: The very thought of an Unrighteous God, is enough to drive Men at the greateſt diſtance from him: As the honeſty of a Man gives a reputation to his Word; ſo doth the Holineſs of God give credit to his Promiſe. 'Tis by this he would have us ſtifle our Fears, and fortifie our Truſt, *Iſai.* 41. 14. *Fear not thou worm Jacob, and ye Men of* Iſrael; *I will help thee, ſaith the Lord, and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Iſrael:* He will be in his Actions, what he is in his Nature. Nothing ſhall make him defile his own Excellency: Unrighteouſneſs is the ground of Mutability; but the Promiſe of God doth never fail, becauſe the rectitude of his Nature doth never languiſh: Were his Attributes without the conduct of this, they would be altogether formidable. As this is the glory of all his other Perfections; ſo this only renders him comfortable to a Believing Soul. Might we not fear his Power to cruſh us, his Mercy to overlook us, his Wiſdom to deſign againſt us, if this did not influence them? What an oppreſſion is Power without Righteouſneſs in the hand of a Creature, deſtructive inſtead of protecting: The *Devil* is a mighty Spirit, but not fit to be truſted, becauſe he is an Impure Spirit. When God would give us the higheſt Security of the ſincerity of his Intentions, he *ſwears* by this Attribute *: His *Holineſs* as well as his Truth, is laid to pawn for the ſecurity of his Promiſe. As we make God the Judge between us and others, when we ſwear by him; ſo he makes his Holineſs the Judge between himſelf and his People, when he ſwears by it.

* Pſal. 8. 35.

1. *'Tis this renders him fit to be confided in for the anſwer of our Prayers.* This is the ground of his readineſs to give, * *If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts; how much more ſhall your Father which is in Heaven give good things to them that ask him?* Though the Holineſs of God be not mention'd, yet it is to be underſtood; the *Emphaſis* lies in thoſe words, *If you being evil:* God is then conſidered in a diſpoſition contrary to this, which can be nothing but his Righteouſneſs. If you that are unholy, and have ſo much Corruption in you, to render you cruel, can beſtow upon your Children the good things they want, how much more ſhall God, who is Holy, and hath nothing in him to check his mercifulneſs to his Creatures, grant the Petitions of his Suppliants? 'Twas this Attribute edg'd the fiduciary importunity of the Souls under the Altar, for the revenging their Blood unjuſtly ſhed upon the Earth, *Rev.* 6. 10. *How long, O Lord, holy and true, doſt thou not avenge our blood on them that dwell on the Earth?* Let not thy Holineſs ſtand with folded Arms, as careleſs of the eminent Sufferings of thoſe that fear thee, we implore thee by the Holineſs of thy Nature, and the Truth of thy Word.

* Matth. 7. 11.

2. This renders him *fit to be confided in, for the comfort of our Souls in a broken condition.* The reviving the hearts of the ſpiritually afflicted, is a part of the Holineſs of his Nature, *Iſai.* 57. 15. *Thus ſaith the high and lofty One, that inhabits Eternity, whoſe name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him alſo that is of a contrite and humble ſpirit, to revive the ſpirit of the humble.* He acknowledg-

eth

eth himſelf the lofty One, they might therefore fear he would not revive them; but he is alſo the Holy One, and therefore he will refreſh them; he is not more lofty than he is holy; beſides the argument of the immutability of his Promiſe, and the might of his Power, here is the holineſs of his Nature moving him to pity his drooping Creature: His Promiſe is uſher'd in with the name of Power, *high and lofty One*, to bar their diſtruſt of his ſtrength; and with a declaration of his *holineſs*, to check any deſpair of his Will: There is no ground to think I ſhould be falſe to my Word, or miſemploy my Power, ſince that cannot be, becauſe of the holineſs of my Name and Nature.

3. This renders him *fit to be confided in for the maintenance of Grace, and protection of us againſt our ſpiritual Enemies.* What our Saviour thought an argument in Prayer, we may well take as a ground of our confidence. In the ſtrength of this he puts up his ſute, when in his mediatory capacity he intercedes for the preſervation of his People; *John* 17. 11. *Holy Father, keep through thy own Name thoſe that thou haſt given me, that they may be one as we are. Holy Father*, not merciful Father, or powerful, or wiſe Father, but *holy*; and *Verſe* 25. *righteous Father.* Chriſt pleads that Attribute for the performance of God's Word, which was laid to pawn when he paſt his word: For it was by his *Holineſs* that he ſwore, That *his Seed ſhould endure for ever, and his Throne as the Sun before* *Pſ.89.36. *him* *; which is meant of the perpetuity of the Covenant which he had made with Chriſt, and is alſo meant of the preſervation of the *myſtical Seed* of *David*, and the perpetuating his *loving* † Verſ. 32, 33. *kindneſs* to them †. Grace is an Image of God's holineſs, and therefore the holineſs of God is moſt proper to be uſed as an Argument to intereſt and engage him in the preſervation of it. In the midſt of Church provocations, he will not utterly extin- ‖Hoſ.11.9. guiſh, becauſe he is the *holy One* in the midſt of her ‖: Nor in the midſt of Judgments will he condemn *Hab.1.12 his People to Death, becauſe he is *their holy One* *; but their Enemies ſhall be ordained for Judgment, and eſtabliſhed for Correction. One *Prophet* aſſures them in the Name of the Lord, upon the ſtrength of this Perfection; and the other upon the ſame ground is confident of the protection of the Church, becauſe of God's holineſs engag'd in an inviolable Covenant.

4. *Comfort.* Since Holineſs is a glorious Perfection of the Nature of God, *he will certainly value every holy Soul.* 'Tis of greater value with him than the Souls of all Men in the World that are deſtitute of it: *Wicked men are the worſt of vile-* * Pſal.12.8 *neſſes*, meer droſs and dunghil *. Purity then, which *The vileſt Men.* זלות is contrary to wickedneſs, muſt be the moſt precious thing in his eſteem; he muſt needs love that quality which he is moſt pleas'd with in himſelf, as a Father looks with moſt delight upon the Child which is poſſeſs'd with thoſe diſpoſitions he moſt values in his own Nature. *His countenance doth behold the upright*, Pſal.11.7. He looks upon them with a full and open face of favour, with a countenance clear, unmask'd and ſmiling, with a Face full of delight: Heaven it ſelf is not ſuch a pleaſing Object to him, as the Image of his own increated Holineſs in the created Holineſs of Men and Angels: As a Man eſteems that moſt, which is moſt like him, of his own Generation, more than a piece of Art, which is meerly the product of his Wit or Strength. And he muſt love Holineſs in the Creature, he would not elſe love his own Image, and conſequently would undervalue himſelf: He de- †Pſ.73.20. ſpiſeth the *Image* the wicked bears †, but he cannot diſeſteem his own Stamp on the godly; he cannot but delight in his own work, his choice work, the Maſter-piece of all his works, the new Creation of things; that which is next to himſelf, as being a *Divine Nature* like himſelf ‖: When he over- ‖2 Pet.1.4 looks Strength, Parts, Knowledge, he cannot overlook this; He *ſets apart him that is godly for himſelf*, Pſal. 4. 3. as a peculiar Object to take pleaſure in, he reſerves ſuch for his own complacency, when he leaves the reſt of the World to the Devil's power; he is choice of them above all his other Works, and will not let any have ſo great a propriety in them as himſelf. If it be ſo dear to him here in its imperfect and mixt condition, that he appropriates it as a peculiar Object for his own delight; how much more will the unſpotted Purity of glorified Saints be infinitely pleaſing to him? So that he will take leſs pleaſure in the material Heavens, than in ſuch a Soul. Sin only is deteſtable to God, and when this is done away, the Soul becomes as lovely in his account, as before it was loathſome.

4. 'Tis comfort, upon this account, That *God will perfect holineſs in every upright Soul.* We many times diſtruſt God, and deſpond in our ſelves, becauſe of the Infinite Holineſs of the Divine Nature, and the dunghil Corruptions in our own; but the Holineſs of God engageth him to the preſervation of it, and conſequently to the perfection of it; as appears by our Saviour's Argument, *John* 17.11. *Holy Father, keep through thy own Name, thoſe whom thou haſt given me*; to what end? *that they may be one as we are*; one with us, in the reſemblances of Purity. And the holineſs of the Soul is uſed as an Argument by the *Pſalmiſt*, Pſal. 86. 2. *Preſerve my ſoul, for I am holy*; that is, I have an ardent deſire to Holineſs: Thou haſt ſeparated me from the maſs of the corrupted World, preſerve and perfect me with the Aſſembly of the glorified Quire. The more holy any are, the more communicative they are; God being moſt holy, is moſt communicative of that which he moſt eſteems in himſelf, and delights to ſee in his Creature: He is therefore more ready to impart his holineſs to them that beg for it, than to communicate his knowledge or his power. Though he were holy, yet he let *Adam* fall, who never petition'd his Holineſs to preſerve him; he let him fall, to declare the holineſs of his own Nature, which had wanted its due manifeſtation without it: But ſince that cannot be declar'd in a higher manner than it hath been already in the death of the Surety that bore our Guilt, there is no fear he ſhould caſt the work out of his hands, ſince the deſign of the permiſſion of Man's Apoſtacy, in the diſcovery of the perfections of his Nature has been fully anſwered. The *finiſhing the good work he hath begun*, hath a relation to the glory of Chriſt; and his own *glory in Chriſt* to be manifeſted in the *day* of his appearing *, wherein * Phil.1.6. the glory, both of his own holineſs, and the holineſs of the Mediator, are to receive their full manifeſtation. As it is a part of the holineſs of Chriſt to *ſanctifie his Church* †, till not a *wrinkle or ſpot* †Eph.5.26 be left; ſo it is the part of God not to leave that work imperfect, which his Holineſs hath attempted a ſecond time to beautifie his Creature with. He will not ceaſe, exalting this Attribute, which is the Believers by the new Covenant, till he utters that applauding Speech of his own work, *Cant.*4.7. *Thou art all fair, my Love, there is no ſpot in thee.*

Uſe 3. Is for *Exhortation.* Is Holineſs an eminent perfection of the Divine Nature? then

1. *Let us get and preſerve right and ſtrong apprehenſions of this Divine Perfection.* Without a due ſenſe of it, we can never exalt God in our hearts;

hearts; and the more diſtinct Conceptions we have of this, and the reſt of his Attributes, the more we glorifie him. When *Moſes* conſider'd God as *his* * Exod. 15. 2. *ſtrength and ſalvation*, he would exalt him*, and he could never break out in ſo admirable a *Doxology* as that in the *Text*, without a deep ſenſe of the glory of his Purity, which he ſpeaks of with ſo much admiration. Such a ſenſe will be of uſe to us.

1. *In promoting genuine Convictions.* A deep conſideration of the Holineſs of God cannot but be follow'd with a deep conſideration of our impure and miſerable condition by reaſon of Sin: We cannot glance upon it without reflections upon our own Vileneſs. *Adam* no ſooner heard the Voice of a holy God in the Garden, but he conſider'd his *own naked-* * Gen. 3. 10. *neſs* with ſhame and fear*: Much leſs can we fix our Minds upon it, but we muſt be touched with a ſenſe of our own Uncleanneſs. The clear beams of the Sun diſcover that filthineſs in our Garments and Members, which was not viſible in the darkneſs of the night. Impure Metals are diſcern'd by comparing them with that which is pure and perfect in its kind. The ſenſe of guilt is the firſt natural Reſult upon a ſenſe of this excellent Perfection; and the ſenſe of the Imperfection of our own Righteouſneſs is the next. Who can think of it, and reflect upon himſelf as an Object fit for Divine Love? Who can have a due thought of it without regarding himſelf as ſtubble before a conſuming Fire? Who can, without a confuſion of Heart and Face, glance upon that pure Eye which beholds with deteſtation, the foul Motes as well as the filthier and bigger Spots? When *Iſaiah* ſaw his glory, and heard how highly the Angels exalted God for this Perfection, he was in a cold ſweat, ready to ſwoon, till a *Seraphim* with a *Coal from the Altar*, both purg'd † Iſa. 6. 5, 6, 7. and reviv'd him†. They are ſound and genuine Convictions, which have the proſpect of Divine Purity for their immediate Spring, and not a foreſight of our own Miſery; when it is not the puniſhment we have deſerved, but the holineſs we have offended, moſt grates our hearts. Such Convictions are the firſt rude Draughts of the Divine Image in our Spirits; and grateful to God, becauſe they are an acknowledgment of the glory of this Attribute, and the firſt mark of honour given to it by the Creature. Thoſe that never had a ſenſe of their own Vileneſs, were alway deſtitute of a ſenſe of God's Holineſs. And by the way we may obſerve, That thoſe that ſcoff at any for hanging down the head under the Conſideration and Conviction of Sin, (as is too uſual with the World) ſcoff at them for having deeper Apprehenſions of the Purity of God than themſelves, and conſequently make a mock of the Holineſs of God, which is the ground of thoſe Convictions; a ſenſe of this would prevent ſuch a damnable reproaching.

2. A ſenſe of this *will render us humble in the poſſeſſion of the greateſt holineſs a Creature were capable of.* We are apt to be proud with the *Phariſee*, when we look upon others wallowing in the Mire of baſe and unnatural Luſts; but let any clap their Wings if they can in a vain boaſting and exaltation, when they view the holineſs of God. What Torch, if it had reaſon, would be proud, and ſwagger in its own light, if it compar'd it ſelf with the Sun? *Who can ſtand before this holy Lord God?* is the juſt reflection of the holieſt Perſon, as it was of thoſe 1 *Sam.* 6. 20. that had felt the marks of his Jealouſie after their looking into the Ark, tho' likely out of affection to it, and triumphant joy at its return. When did the Angels teſtifie, by the covering of their Faces, their weakneſs to bear the luſtre of his Majeſty, but when they beheld his glory? When did they ſignifie by their *covering their feet* the ſhame of their own Vileneſs, but when their hearts were fulleſt of the applaudings of this Perfection*? * Iſai. 6. 2, 3. Tho' they found themſelves without ſpot, yet not with ſuch a holineſs, that they could appear either with their faces or feet unveil'd and unmask'd in the Preſence of God. Doth the immenſe ſplendor of this Attribute engender ſhaming reflections in thoſe pure Spirits? What will it, what ſhould it do in us, that dwell in Houſes of Clay, and creep up and down with that Clay upon our Backs, and too much of it in our Hearts? The Stars themſelves which appear beautiful in the night, are mask'd at the awaking of the Sun: What a dim light is that of a Glow-worm to that of the Sun? The apprehenſions of this made the Elders humble themſelves in the midſt of their glory, by *caſting down their* † Rev. 4. 8, 10. *Crowns before his Throne*†; a Metaphor taken from the triumphing Generals among the *Romans*, who hung up their victorious *Laurels* in the *Capitol*, dedicating them to their Gods, acknowledging them their ſuperiors in ſtrength, and Authors of their Victory. This ſelf-emptineſs at the conſideration of Divine Purity, is the note of the true Church repreſented by the 24 *Elders*, and a note of a true Member of the Church; whereas boaſting of Perfection and Merit is the property of the *Antichriſtian* tribe that have mean thoughts of this adorable Perfection, and think themſelves more righteous than the unſpotted Angels. What a ſelf-annihilation is there in a good man when the ſenſe of Divine Purity is moſt lively in him; yea, how deteſtable is he to himſelf? There is as little proportion between the Holineſs of the Divine Majeſty, and that of the moſt righteous Creature, as there is between a nearneſs of a Perſon that ſtands upon a Mountain to the Sun, and of him that beholds him in a Vale, one is nearer than the other, but it is an advantage not to be boaſted of, in regard of the vaſt diſtance that is between the *Sun* and the elevated *Spectator*.

3. This would *make us full of an affectionate Reverence in all our approaches to God.* By this Perfection God is render'd venerable, and fit to be reverenc'd by his Creature; and magnificent thoughts of it in the Creature would awaken him to an actual reverence of the Divine Majeſty. *Pſal.* 111. 9. *Holy and reverend is his Name*; a good Opinion of this would engender in us a ſincere reſpect towards him, we ſhould then *ſerve the Lord with fear*, as the Expreſſion is *Pſal.* 2. 11. that is, be afraid to caſt any thing before him that may offend the eyes of his Purity. Who would venture raſhly and gariſhly into the preſence of an eminent Moraliſt, or of a righteous King upon his Throne? The fixedneſs of the Angels aroſe from the continual proſpect of this. What if we had been with *Iſaiah* when he ſaw the Viſion, and beheld him in the ſame glory, and the Heavenly Quire in their reverential poſture in the *Service of God*; would it not have barr'd our wandrings, and ſtak'd us down to our Duty? Would not the fortifying an Idea of it in our Minds produce the ſame effect? 'Tis for want of this we carry our ſelves ſo looſely and unbecomingly in the Divine preſence, with the ſame, or meaner Affections than thoſe wherewith we ſtand before ſome vile Creature, that is our ſuperiour in the World; as tho' a piece of filthy fleſh were more valuable than this Perfection of the Divinity. How doth the *Pſalmiſt* double his Exhortation to men to ſing praiſe to God, *Pſal.* 47. 6. *Sing praiſe to God, ſing Praiſes; ſing praiſe to our King, ſing praiſe*, becauſe of His Majeſty, and the Purity of his Dominion: And *ver.* 8. *God reigns over the Heathen, God ſits upon the Throne of his Holineſs.* How would this elevate us in Praiſe, and proſtrate us in Prayer, when we praiſe

and pray with an underſtanding and inſight of that Nature we bleſs or implore; as he ſpeaks, *verſe* 7. *Sing ye praiſe with underſtanding.* The Holineſs of God in his Government and Dominion, the holineſs of his Nature, and the holineſs of his Precepts, ſhould beget in us an humble reſpect in our Approaches. The more we grow in a ſenſe of this, the more ſhall we advance in the true performance of all our Duties *. Thoſe Nations which ador'd the *Sun*, had they at firſt ſeen his Brightneſs wrapp'd and mask'd in a Cloud, and paid a veneration to it, how would their Adorations have mounted to a greater point, after they had ſeen it in its full brightneſs, ſhaking off thoſe Veils, and chaſing away the Miſts before it; what a profound Reverence would they have paid it, when they beheld it in its Glory and Meridian Brightneſs? Our reverence to God in all our Addreſſes to him will arrive to greater degrees, if every act of Duty be uſher'd in, and ſeaſon'd with the thoughts of God as ſitting upon a Throne of Holineſs; we ſhall have a more becoming ſenſe of our own vileneſs, a greater ardour to his Service, a deeper reſpect in his Preſence, if our underſtanding be more clear'd, and poſſeſs'd with Notions of this Perfection. Thus take a view of God in this part of his Glory, before you fall down before his Throne, and aſſure your ſelves you will find your hearts and ſervices quicken'd with a new and lively Spirit.

* Amyrald. *Moral. Tom.* 5. *p.* 462.

4. A due ſenſe of this Perfection in God *would produce in us a fear of God, and arm us againſt Temptations and Sin.* What made the *Heathens* ſo wanton and looſe, but the repreſentations of their Gods as vicious? Who would ſtick at Adulteries and more prodigious Luſts, that can take a Pattern for them from the Perſon he adores for a Deity? Upon which account *Plato* would have *Poets* baniſh'd from his Common-wealth, becauſe by dreſſing up their gods in wanton garbs in their Poems, they encourag'd wickedneſs in the People. But if the thoughts of God's Holineſs were impreſt upon us, we ſhould regard ſin with the ſame eye, mark it with the ſame deteſtation in our meaſures as God himſelf doth. So far as we are ſenſible of the Divine Purity, we ſhould account ſin vile as it deſerves; we ſhould hate it entirely, without a grain of love to it, and hate it perpetually. *Pſal.* 119.104. *Through thy Precepts I get underſtanding, therefore I hate every falſe way.* He looks into God's Statute-Book, and thereby arrives to an underſtanding of the Purity of his Nature, whence his hatred of Iniquity commenc'd. This would govern our Motion, check our Vices; it would make us tremble at the hiſſing of a Temptation: When a Corruption did but peep out, and put forth its head, a look to the Divine Purity would be attended with a freſh Convoy of Strength to reſiſt it. There is no ſuch Fortification, as to be wrapped up in the ſenſe of this: This would fill us with an awe of God; we ſhould be aſham'd to admit any filthy thing into us, which we know is deteſtable to his pure Eye. As the approach of a grave and ſerious Man makes Children haſten their Trifles out of the way, ſo would a conſideration of this Attribute make us caſt away our Idols, and fling *away* our *ridiculous thoughts* and *deſigns*.

5. A due ſenſe of this Perfection, *would enflame us with a vehement deſire to be conform'd to him.* All our Deſires would be ardent to regulate our ſelves according to this Pattern of Holineſs and Goodneſs, which is not to be equall'd; the Contemplating it as it ſhines forth in the Face of Chriſt, will *transform us into the ſame Image* *. Since our lapſed ſtate, we cannot behold the Holineſs of God in it ſelf without affrightment; nor is it an Object of Imitation, but as temper'd in Chriſt to our view. When we cannot without blinding our ſelves, look upon the Sun in its Brightneſs, we may behold it through a colour'd Glaſs, whereby the luſtre of it is moderated, without dazling our eyes. The ſenſe of it will furniſh us with a greatneſs of mind, that little things will be contemn'd by us; Motives of a greater alloy would have little influence upon us; we ſhould have the higheſt Motives to every Duty, and Motives of the ſame ſtrain which influence the Angels above. It would change us, not only into an Angelical Nature, but a Divine Nature: We ſhould act like men of another Sphere; as if we had receiv'd our Original in another World, and ſeen with Angels the raviſhing Beauties of Heaven. How little would the mean Imployments of the World ſink us into Dirt and Mud? How often hath the Meditation of the Courage of a valiant Man, or Acuteneſs and Induſtry of a Learned Perſon, ſpurr'd on ſome Men to an imitation of them, and transform'd them into the ſame Nature? As the looking upon the Sun imprints an Image of the Sun upon our eye, that we ſeem to behold nothing but the Sun a while after. The view of the Divine Purity would fill us with a holy generoſity to imitate him, more than the Examples of the beſt men upon Earth. It was a ſaying of a *Heathen*, That *if Virtue were viſible, it would kindle a noble flame of Love to it in the heart, by its raviſhing beauty.* Shall the Infinite Purity of the Author of all Virtue come ſhort of the ſtrength of a Creature? Can we not render that viſible to us by frequent Meditation, which tho' it be inviſible in his Nature, is made viſible in his Law, in his Ways, in his Son? It would make us ready to obey him, ſince we know he cannot command any thing that is ſinful, but what is holy, juſt, and good: It would put all our Affections in their due place, elevate them above the Creature, and ſubject them to the Creator.

* 2 Cor. 3. 19.

6. It would *make us patient and contented under all God's Diſpenſations.* All Penal Evils are the Fruits of his Holineſs, as he is Judge and Governor of the World: He is not an Arbitrary Judge, nor doth any Sentence pronounc'd, nor Warrant for Execution iſſue from him, but what bears upon it a Stamp of the Righteouſneſs of his Nature; he doth nothing by Paſſion or Unrighteouſneſs, but according to the Eternal Law of his own unſtain'd Nature, which is the Rule to him in his Works, the *Baſis* and Foundation of his Throne and Sovereign Dominion. *Pſal.* 89. 14. *Juſtice*, or Righteouſneſs, *and Judgment are the Habitation of thy Throne*; upon theſe his Soveraign Power is eſtabliſh'd: So that there can be no juſt Complaint or Indictment brought againſt any of his Proceedings with Men. How doth our Saviour, who had the higheſt Apprehenſions of God's Holineſs, juſtifie God in his deepeſt diſtreſſes, when he cried and was not anſwer'd in the particular he deſir'd, in that Prophetick *Pſalm* of him, *Pſal.* 22. 2, 3. *I cry day and night, but thou heareſt not.* Thou ſeemeſt to be deaf to all my Petitions, afar off *from the words of my roaring, but thou art holy.* I caſt no blame upon thee: All thy dealings are ſquar'd by thy holineſs, this is the only Law to thee, in this I acquieſce. 'Tis part of thy holineſs to hide thy face from me, to ſhew thereby thy deteſtation of ſin. Our Saviour adores the Divine Purity in his ſharpeſt Agony, and a like ſenſe of it would guide us in the ſame ſteps to acknowledge and glorifie it, in our greateſt deſertions and afflictions; eſpecially ſince as they are the fruit of the holineſs of his Nature, ſo they are the means to impart to us clearer ſtamps of *Holineſs*, according to that in himſelf, which is the original Copy *. He melts us down as Gold, to fit us for the receiving a new Impreſſion, to mortifie the Affections of the Fleſh, and cloath us with the Graces of his Spirit. The due ſenſe of this would make us to

* Heb. 12. 10.

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ſubmit to his ſtroke, and to wait upon him for a good iſſue of his dealings.

2. *Exhortation.* Is holineſs a Perfection of the Divine Nature? Is it the glory of the Deity? Then *let us glorifie this holineſs of God.* *Moſes* glorifies it in the *Text*, and glorifies it in a *Song*, which was a Copy for all Ages. The whole Corporation of *Seraphims* have their Mouths fill'd with the praiſes of it. The Saints, whether Militant on Earth, or Triumphant in Heaven, are to continue the ſame Acclamation, *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hoſts* *. Neither Angels nor glorified Spirits exalt at the ſame rate the *Power* which formed them Creatures, nor *Goodneſs* which preſerves them in a bleſſed Immortality; as they do *Holineſs*, which they bear ſome beams of in their own Nature, and whereby they are capacitated to ſtand before his Throne. Upon the account of this, a Debt of Praiſe is demanded of all Rational Creatures by the *Pſalmiſt*, *Pſal.* 99. 3. *Let them praiſe thy great and terrible Name, for it is holy.* Not ſo much for the greatneſs of his Majeſty, or the Treaſures of his Juſtice, but as they are conſider'd in conjunction with his holineſs, which renders them beautiful; *for it is holy.* Grandeur and Majeſty, ſimply in themſelves, are not Objects of Praiſe, nor do they merit the Acclamations of Men when deſtitute of Righteouſneſs: This only renders every thing elſe adorable: and this adorns the Divine Greatneſs with an amiableneſs: *Iſa.* 12. 6. *Great is the holy one of Iſrael in the midſt of thee*; and makes his Might worthy of Praiſe, *Luke* 1. 49. In honouring this which is the Soul and Spirit of all the reſt, we give a glory to all the Perfections which conſtitute and beautifie his Nature: And without the glorifying this, we glorifie nothing of them, tho' we ſhould extol every other ſingle Attribute a thouſand times. He values no other *Adoration* of his Creatures, unleſs this be intereſted, nor accepts any thing as a glory from them; * *Levit.* 10. 3. *I will be ſanctified in them that come near me, and I will be glorified.* As if he had ſaid, in manifeſting my Name to be holy, you truly, you only honour me. And as the Scripture ſeldom ſpeaks of this Perfection without a particular *Emphaſis*, it teaches us not to think of it without a ſpecial Elevation of heart: By this act only, while we are on Earth, can we joyn Conſort with the Angels in Heaven; he that doth not honour it, delight in it, and in the meditation of it, hath no reſemblance of it; he hath none of the Image, that delights not in the Original. Every thing of God is glorious, but this moſt of all. If he built the World principally for any thing, it was for the *communication* of his *Goodneſs*, and diſplay of his Holineſs. He formed the Rational Creature to manifeſt his Holineſs in that Law whereby he was to be govern'd: Then deprive not God of the deſign of his own Glory.

* Rev. 4. 8.

We honour this Attribute,

1. *When we make it the ground of our love to God.* Not becauſe he is gracious to us, but holy in himſelf. As God honours it, in loving himſelf for it, we ſhould honour it, by pitching our Affections upon him chiefly for it. What renders God amiable to himſelf, ſhould render him lovely to all his Creatures, *Iſa.* 42. 21. *The Lord is well pleaſed for his righteouſneſs ſake.* If the hatred of evil be the immediate reſult of a love to God, then the peculiar object or term of our love to God, muſt be that Perfection which ſtands in direct *oppoſition* to the hatred of evil. *Pſal.* 97. 10. *Ye that love the Lord, hate evil.* When we honour his holineſs in every ſtamp and impreſſion of it; his Law, not principally becauſe of its uſefulneſs to us, its accommodateneſs to the order of the World, but for its innate Purity, and his People not for our intereſt in them, ſo much as for bearing upon them this glittering mark of the Deity, we honour then the Purity of the *Law-giver*, and the Excellency of the Sanctifier.

2. We honour it, *when we regard chiefly the illuſtrious appearance of this in his Judgments in the World.* In a caſe of Temporal Judgment, *Moſes* celebrates it in the *Text*: In a caſe of Spiritual Judgments, the Angels applaud it in *Iſaiah*. All his ſevere proceedings are nothing but the ſtrong breathings of this Attribute. Purity is the flaſh of his revenging Sword. If he did not hate evil, his Vengeance would not reach the Committers of it: He is a *Refiner's Fire* in the day of his Anger *: By his ſeparating Judgments, he *takes away the wicked of the earth like Droſs*, *Pſal.* 119. 119. How is his Holineſs honour'd, when we take notice of his ſweeping out the Rubbiſh of the World: How he ſuits puniſhment to ſin, and diſcovers his hatred of the matter and circumſtances of the Evil, in the matter and circumſtances of the Judgment. This Perfection is legible in every ſtroke of his Sword; we honour it when we read the ſyllables of it, and not by ſtanding amaz'd only at the greatneſs and ſeverity of the Blow, when we read how holy he is in his moſt terrible Diſpenſations: For as in them God magnifies the greatneſs of his Power, ſo he ſanctifies himſelf, that is, declares the Purity of his Nature as a Revenger of all Impiety. *Ezek.* 38. 22, 23. *And I will plead againſt him with Peſtilence, and with Blood; and I will rain upon him, and upon his bands, and upon the People that are with him, an overflowing Rain and great Hail-ſtones, Fire and Brimſtone. Thus will I magnifie my ſelf, and ſanctifie my ſelf.*

* Mal. 3. 2.

3. We honour this Attribute, *when we take notice of it in every accompliſhment of his Promiſe, and every grant of a Mercy.* His Truth is but a branch of his Righteouſneſs, a Slip from this Root. He is glorious in Holineſs in the account of *Moſes*, becauſe he *led forth his People whom he had redeemed*, Exod. 15. 13. His People, by a Covenant with their Fathers, being the God of *Moſes*, the God of *Iſrael*, and the God of their *Fathers*: Verſe 2. *My God, and my Father's God, I will exalt thee.* For what? for his faithfulneſs to his Promiſe. The holineſs of God, which *Mary*, *Luke* 1. 49. magnifies, is ſumm'd up in this, the help he afforded his Servant *Iſrael*, in the *remembrance of his mercy, as he ſpake to our Fathers, to* Abraham *and his Seed for ever*, Ver. 54, 55. The certainty of his Covenant-Mercy depends upon an unchangeableneſs of his holineſs. What are * *ſure Mercies* are *holy Mercies* in the *Septuagint*; and in *Acts* 13. 34. which makes that Tranſlation *Canonical*. His nearneſs to anſwer us when we call upon him for ſuch Mercies, is a fruit of the holineſs of his Name and Nature. *Pſal.* 145. 17. *The Lord is holy in all his works; the Lord is nigh to all them that call upon him.* *Hannah*, after a return of Prayer, ſets a particular mark upon this in her Song, 1 *Sam.* 2. 2. *There is none holy as the Lord*; ſeparated from all Droſs, firm to his Covenant, and righteous in it to his Suppliants that confide in him, and plead his Word. When we obſerve the workings of this in every return of Prayer, we honour it; 'tis a ſign the Mercy is really a return of Prayer, and not a Mercy of courſe, bearing upon it only the characters of a common Providence. This was the Perfection *David* would bleſs for the Catalogue of Mercies in *Pſal.* 103. 1, &c. *Bleſs his (Holy) Name.* Certainly one reaſon why ſincere Prayer is ſo delightful to him, is becauſe it puts him upon the exerciſe of this his beloved Perfection, which he ſo much delights to honour. Since God acts in all thoſe as the Governour of the World, we honour him not, unleſs we take notice of that Righteouſneſs which fits him

* Iſa. 55. 3.

for a Governour, and is the inward Spring of all his Motions. *Gen.* 18. 25. *Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?* It was his deſign, in his pity to *Iſrael*, as well as the Calamities he intended againſt the *Heathens*, to be *ſanctified in them*; that is, declared holy in his Merciful, as well as his Judicial procedure †. Hereby God credits his Righteouſneſs, which ſeem'd to be forgotten by the one, and contemn'd by the other ‖, he removes by this all ſuſpicion of any unfaithfulneſs in him.

† Ez. 36. 21, 23.
‖ *Sanct.* in loc.

4. We honour this Attribute, *when we truſt his Covenant and Promiſe againſt outward Appearances.* Thus our *Saviour* in the *Prophecy of him* *; when God ſeem'd to bar up the Gates of his Palace againſt the entry of any more Petitions. This Attribute proves the ſupport of the Redeemer's Soul; *But thou art holy, O thou that inhabiteſt the praiſes of Iſrael:* As it refers to what goes before, it has been twice explain'd; as it refers to what follows, it is a ground of truſt, *Thou inhabiteſt the praiſes of Iſrael:* Thou haſt had the Praiſes of *Iſrael* for many Ages for thy holineſs. How? *Our Fathers truſted in thee, and thou didſt deliver them*; They honour'd thy holineſs by their truſt, and thou didſt honour their Faith by a deliverance; Thou always hadſt a Purity that would not ſhame nor confound them. I will truſt in thee as thou art holy, and expect the breaking out of this Attribute for my good, as well as my Predeceſſors; *Our Fathers truſted in thee*, &c.

* Pſal. 22. 2, 3, 4.

5. We honour this Attribute, *when we ſhew a greater Affection to the marks of his holineſs in times of the greateſt contempt of it.* As the *Pſalmiſt*, *Pſal.* 119. 126, 127. *They have made void thy Law, therefore I love thy Commandments above Gold*, While they ſpurn at the purity of thy Law, I will value it above the Gold they poſſeſs; I'll eſteem it as Gold, becauſe others count it as Droſs: By their ſcorn of it, my love to it ſhall be the warmer, and my hatred of Iniquity ſhall be the ſharper: The diſdain of others ſhould enflame us with a zeal and fortitude to appear in the behalf of his deſpiſed Honour. We honour this Holineſs many other ways; by preparation for our Addreſſes to him, out of a ſenſe of his Purity: When we imitate it; As he honours us by *teaching us his Statutes* *, ſo we honour him by learning and obſerving them. When we beg of him to ſhew himſelf a Refiner of us, to make us more conformable to him in holineſs, and bleſs him for any communication of it to us, it renders us beautiful and lovely in his ſight.

* Pſal. 119. 135.

To *Conclude*; to honour it, is the way to engage it for us: To give it the glory of what it hath done by the Arm of Power for our reſcue from Sin, and beating down our Corruptions at his feet, is the way to ſee more of its marvellous works, and behold a clearer brightneſs. As *Unthankfulneſs* makes him withdraw his Grace *, ſo glorifying him cauſes him to impart it. God honours men in the ſame way they honour him: When we honour him by acknowledging his Purity, he will honour us by communicating of it to us. This is the way to derive a greater excellency to our Souls.

* Rom. 1. 21, 24.

3. *Exhortation.* Since Holineſs is an eminent Perfection of the Divine Nature, *let us labour after a Conformity to God in this Perfection.* The Nature of God is preſented to us in the Scripture, both as a Pattern to imitate, and a Motive to perſwade the Creature to Holineſs *. Since it is therefore the *Nature* of God, the more our Natures are beautified with it, the more like we are to the Divine Nature. 'Tis not the Pattern of Angels, nor Arch-angels, that our *Saviour* or his *Apoſtle* propoſeth for our imitation, but the Original of all Purity, *God himſelf*, the ſame that created us, to be imitated by us. Nor is an equal degree of Purity enjoyn'd us; tho' we are to be pure, and perfect, and merciful as God is, yet not eſſentially ſo, for that would be to command us an impoſſibility in it ſelf; as much as to order us to ceaſe to be Creatures, and commence Gods. No Creature can be eſſentially holy, but by participation from the chief Fountain of holineſs; but we muſt have the ſame kind of holineſs, the ſame truth of holineſs. As a ſhort line may be as ſtrait as another, tho' it parallel it not in the immenſe length of it: A Copy may have the likeneſs of the Original, tho' not the ſame Perfection: We cannot be good, without eying ſome Exemplar of Goodneſs as the Pattern. No Pattern is ſo ſuitable as that which is the higheſt Goodneſs and Purity. That Limner that would draw the moſt excellent piece, fixes his eyes upon the moſt perfect Pattern. He that would be a good Orator, or Poet, or Artificer, conſiders ſome perſon moſt excellent in each kind, as the Object of his imitation. Who ſo fit as God to be view'd, as the Pattern of Holineſs, in our intendment of and endeavour after Holineſs? The *Stoicks*, one of the beſt ſects of Philoſophers, adviſed their Diſciples to pitch upon ſome eminent Example of Virtue, according to which to form their lives; as *Socrates*, &c. but true Holineſs doth not only endeavour to live the life of a good man, but chuſes to live a divine life: As before the man was *alienated from the life of God* †, ſo upon his return he aſpires after the life of God. To endeavour to be like a good man, is to make one Image like another; to ſet our Clocks by other Clocks, without regarding the Sun: But true Holineſs conſiſts in a likeneſs to the moſt exact Sampler. God being the firſt Purity, is the Rule as well as the Spring of all Purity in the Creature, the chief and firſt Object of Imitation. We diſown our ſelves to be his Creatures, if we breath not after a reſemblance to him in what he is imitable. There was in man, as created according to God's Image, a natural Appetite to reſemble God: It was at firſt planted in him by the Author of his Nature. The Devil's temptation of him by that Motive to tranſgreſs the Law, had been as an Arrow ſhot againſt a brazen Wall, had there not been a deſire of ſome *likeneſs* to his Creator engraven upon him ‖: It would have had no more influence upon him, than it could have had upon a meer Animal. But Man miſtook the term; he would have been like God in knowledge, whereas he ſhould have affected a greater reſemblance of him in Purity. O that we could exemplifie God in our Nature! Precepts may inſtruct us more, but Examples affect us more; one directs us, but the other attracts us. What can be more attractive of our imitation, than that which is the Original of all Purity both in Men and Angels?

† Eph. 4. 19.
‖ Gen. 3. 5.

This conformity to him conſiſts in an imitation of him,

1, *In his Law.* The Purity of his Nature was firſt viſible in this Glaſs; hence 'tis call'd a *holy Law*: *Rom.* 7. 12. a *pure Law*: *Pſal.* 19. 8. Holy and pure as it is a Ray of the pure Nature of the Law-giver. When our Lives are a Comment upon his Law, they are expreſſive of his Holineſs: We conform to his Holineſs, when we regulate our ſelves by his Law, as it is a Tranſcript of his Holineſs: We do not imitate it, when we do a thing in the matter of it agreeable to that holy Rule, but when we do it with reſpect to the Purity of the Law-giver beaming in it. If it be agreeable to God's Will, and convenient for ſome deſign of our own, and we do any thing only with a reſpect to that deſign, we make not God's Holineſs diſcover'd in the Law our Rule, but our own conveniency: 'Tis not a conformity to God, but a conformity of our Actions to Self. As in abſtinence from intemperate Courſes, not becauſe the holineſs of God in his Law hath preſcrib'd it, but be-

* 1 John 3. 3. Mat. 5. 48. Lev. 11. 44. 1 Pet. 1. 15, 16.

becauſe the health of our Bodies, or ſome noble Contentments of Life, require it; then it is not God's holineſs that is our Rule, but our own ſecurity, conveniency, or ſomething elſe which we make a God to our ſelves.

It muſt be a real conformity to the Law: Our holineſs ſhould ſhine as really in the practiſe, as God's Purity does in the Precept. God hath not a pretence of Purity in his Nature, but a reality: 'Tis not only a ſudden boiling up of an admiration of him, or a ſtarting wiſh to be like him, from ſome ſudden impreſſion upon the Fancy, (which is a meer temporary blaze) but a ſettled temper of Soul, loving every thing that is like him, doing things out of a firm deſire to reſemble his Purity in the Copy he hath ſet; not a reſting in *Negatives*, but aſpiring to *Poſitives*; *Holy and harmleſs* are diſtinct things: they were diſtinct qualifications in our High Prieſt in his Obedience to the Law *, ſo they muſt be in us.

* Heb. 7. 26

2. *In his Chriſt.* As the Law is the Tranſcript, ſo Chriſt is the Image of his Holineſs: The glory of God is too dazling to be beheld by us: The acute eye of an Angel is too weak to look upon that bright Sun without covering his Face. We are much too weak to take our Meaſures from that Purity which is infinite in his Nature. But he hath made his Son like us, that by the imitation of him in that temper, and ſhadow of human *Fleſh* we may arrive to a reſemblance of him *. Then there is a conformity to him, when that which Chriſt did is drawn in lively Colours in the Soul of a Chriſtian; when as he died upon the Croſs we dye to our ſins; as he roſe from the Grave, we riſe from our Luſts; as he aſcended on high, we mount our Souls thither: When we expreſs in our Lives what ſhined in his, and exemplifie in our hearts what he acted in the World, and become with him, as he was ſeparate from ſinners. The holineſs of God in Chriſt is our ultimate Pattern: As we are not only to believe *in Chriſt*, but *by Chriſt in God* †, ſo we are not only to imitate Chriſt, but the holineſs of God as diſcovered in Chriſt.

* 2 Cor. 3. 18.

† Joh. 14. 1

And to enforce this upon us, let us conſider,

1. *'Tis this only wherein he commands our imitation of him.* We are not commanded to be mighty and wiſe, as God is mighty and wiſe; but *be holy as I am holy.* The declarations of his power are to enforce our ſubjection; thoſe of his wiſdom to encourage our direction by him; but this only to attract our imitation. When he ſaith, *I am holy*, the immediate Inference he makes, is *be ye ſo too*, which is not the proper inſtruction from any other Perfection *. Man was created by Divine Power, and harmoniz'd by Divine Wiſdom, but not after them, or according to them, as the true Image; this was the Prerogative of Divine *Holineſs*, to be the *Pattern* of his Rational Creature †: Wiſdom and Power were ſubſervient to this, the one as the Penſil, the other as the Hand that mov'd it. The condition of a Creature is too mean to have the communications of the Divine Eſſence, the true Impreſſions of his Righteouſneſs and Goodneſs we are only capable of. 'Tis only in thoſe moral Perfections we are ſaid to reſemble God. The *Devils*, thoſe impure and ruin'd Spirits, are nearer to him in ſtrength and knowledge than we are; yet in regard of that natural and intellectual Perfection, never counted like him, but at the greateſt diſtance from him, becauſe at the greateſt diſtance from his Purity. God values not a natural Might, nor an acute Underſtanding, nor vouchſafes ſuch Perfections the glorious Title of that of his Image. ‖ *Plutarch* ſaith, God is angry with thoſe that imitate his Thunder or Lightning, his Works of Majeſty, but delighted with thoſe that imitate his Vertue. In this only we can never incur any reproof from him, but for falling ſhort of him and his Glory. Had *Adam* endeavour'd after an imitation of this, inſtead of that of Divine Knowledge, he had eſcap'd his fall, and preſerv'd his ſtanding; And had *Lucifer* wiſh'd himſelf like God in this, as well as his Dominion, he had ſtill been a glorious Angel, inſtead of being now a ghaſtly Devil: To reach after a Union with the Supream Being in regard of Holineſs, is the only generous and commendable Ambition.

* *In this ſaith* Plato, *God is* ἐν μέσῳ πυξίδος ἕστηκε.

† Eph. 4. 24 Col. 3. 10.

‖ Eugub. *de perenni Philoſo.* lib. 6. cap. 6

2. *This is the prime way of honouring God.* We do not ſo glorifie God by elevated Admirations, or eloquent Expreſſions, or pompous Services of him, as when we aſpire to a converſing with him with unſtained Spirits, and live to him in living like him. The Angels are not called holy for applauding his Purity, but conforming to it. The more perfect any Creature is in the rank of Beings, the more is the Creator honoured; As it is more for the honour of God to create an Angel or Man, than a meer Animal; becauſe there are in ſuch, clearer Characters of Divine Power and Goodneſs, than in thoſe that are Inferiour. The more perfect any Creature is morally, the more is God glorified by that Creature; 'tis a real declaration that God is the beſt and moſt amiable Being; that nothing beſides him is valuable, and worthy to be the Object of our imitation. 'Tis a greater honouring of him, than the higheſt acts of Devotion, and the moſt religious bodily Exerciſe, or the ſinging this *Song of* Moſes *in the Text*, with a Triumphant Spirit. As it is more the honour of a Father to be imitated in his Vertues by his Son, than to have all the glavering Commendations by the Tongue or Pen of a vicious and debauch'd Child. By this we honour him in that Perfection which is deareſt to him, and counted by him as the chiefeſt glory of his Nature. God ſeems to accept the glorifying this Attribute, as if it were a real addition to that Holineſs which is infinite in his Nature, and becauſe infinite, cannot admit of any increaſe: And therefore the word *ſanctified* is uſed inſtead of *glorified.* Iſai. 8. 13. *Sanctifie the Lord of Hoſts himſelf, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.* And *Iſai.* 29. 23. *They ſhall ſanctifie the holy One of* Jacob, *and fear the God of* Iſrael. This ſanctification of God is by the fear of him, which ſignifies in the Language of the old Teſtament, a Reverence of him, and a Righteouſneſs before him. He doth not ſay, when he would have his Power or Wiſdom glorified, *empower me*, or *make me wiſe*; but when he would have Holineſs glorified by the Creature, 'tis *ſanctifie me*; that is, manifeſt the Purity of my Nature by the Holineſs of your Lives: But he expreſſeth it in ſuch a term, as if it were an addition to this infinite Perfection; ſo acceptable it is to him, as if it were a Contribution from his Creature for the inlarging an Attribute ſo pleaſing to him, and ſo glorious in his Eye. 'Tis as much as in the Creature lies, a preſerving the Life of God, ſince this Perfection is his Life; and that he would as ſoon part with his Life as part with his Purity. It keeps up the Reputation of God in the World, and attracts others to a love of him; whereas unworthy carriages defame God in the Eyes of Men, and bring up an ill report of him, as if he were ſuch a one as thoſe that profeſs him, and walk unſutably to their Profeſſion, appear to be.

3. *This is the excellency and beauty of a Creature.* The Title of Beauty is given to it in *Pſal.* 110. 3. *Beauties* in the Plural Number, as comprehending in it all other Beauties whatſoever. What is a Divine Excellency cannot be a Creatures Deformity:

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The natural beauty of it is a repreſentation of the Divinity; and a holy Man ought to eſteem himſelf excellent, in being ſuch in his meaſure as his God is, and put his principal felicity in the poſſeſſion of the ſame Purity in Truth. This is the refin'd Complexion of the Angels that ſtand before his Throne. The Devils loſt their comelineſs when they fell from it. It was the honour of the Humane Nature of our Saviour, not only to be united to the Deity, but to be ſanctified by it. He was *fairer then all the children of men*, becauſe he had a Holineſs above the Children of Men: *Grace was poured into his lips*, Pſal. 45. 2. It was the *Jewel* of the reaſonable Nature in Paradiſe: Conformity to God was Man's original happineſs in his created ſtate, and what was naturally ſo, cannot but be immutably ſo in its own Nature. The beauty of every copied thing conſiſts in its likeneſs to the Original: Every thing hath more of lovelineſs, as it hath greater impreſſions of its firſt Pattern: In this regard Holineſs hath more of beauty on it, than the whole Creation, becauſe it partakes of a greater excellency of God than the *Sun*, *Moon*, and *Stars*. No greater glory can be, than to be a conſpicuous and viſible Image of the inviſible, and holy, and bleſſed God. As this is the ſplendor of all the Divine Attributes, ſo it is the flower of all a Chriſtian's Graces, the Crown of all Religion: 'Tis the glory of the Spirit. In this regard the *King's Daughter* is ſaid to be *all glorious within* *. 'Tis more excellent than the Soul it ſelf, ſince the greateſt Soul is but a deformed piece without it: (*A Diamond without luſtre* †.) What are the noble Faculties of the Soul without it, but as a curious ruſty Watch, a delicate heap of Diſorder and Confuſion? 'Tis impoſſible there can be Beauty, where there are a multitude of *ſpots and wrinkles* that blemiſh a Countenance ‖. It can never be in its true brightneſs, but when it is perfect in Purity, when it regains what it was poſſeſſed of by Creation, and diſpoſſeſſed of by the fall, and recovers its primitive temper. We are not ſo beautiful by being the Work of God, as by having a Stamp of God upon us. Worldly Greatneſs may make Men honourable in the ſight of creeping Worms. Soft lives, ambitious reaches, luxurious pleaſures, and a pompous Religion render no Man excellent and noble in the ſight of God: This is not the excellency and nobility of the Deity which we are bound to reſemble; Other Lines of a Divine Image muſt be drawn in us to render us truly excellent.

* Pſ. 45. 13.

† *Vaughan.* p. 4, 5.

‖ Eph. 5. 27.

4. *'Tis our life.* What is the life of God, is truly the life of a rational Creature *. The life of the Body conſiſts not in the perfection of its Members, and the integrity of its Organs, theſe remain when the Body becomes a Carcaſs; but in the preſence of the Soul, and its vigorous animation of every part, to perform the diſtinct Offices belonging to each of them. The life of the Soul conſiſts not in its Being, or Spiritual Subſtance, or the excellency of its Faculties of Underſtanding and Will, but in the moral and becoming operations of them. The ſpirit is only *life becauſe of righteouſneſs* †. The Faculties are turned by it, to acquit themſelves in their Functions, according to the Will of God; the abſence of this doth not only deform the Soul, but in a ſort annihilate it, in regard of its true eſſence and end: *Grace* gives a Chriſtian Being, and a want of it is the want of a true Being, 1 *Cor.* 15. 10. When *Adam* deveſted himſelf of his original Righteouſneſs, he came under the force of the threatning, in regard of a Spiritual Death: Every perſon is *morally dead whiles he lives* an unholy life ‖. What life is to the body, that is righteouſneſs to the Spirit; and the greater meaſure of holineſs it hath, the more of life it hath, becauſe it is in a greater nearneſs, and partakes more fully of the Fountain of Life. Is not that the moſt worthy life, which God makes moſt account of, without which his life could not be a pleaſant and bleſſed life, but a life worſe than death? What a miſerable life is that of the Men of the World, that are carried with greedy inclinations to all manner of unrighteouſneſs, whither their Intereſts or their Luſts invite them? The moſt beautiful Body is a Carcaſs, and the moſt honourable Perſon hath but a brutiſh life *; miſerable Creatures when their life ſhall be extinct without a Divine rectitude, when all other things will vaniſh as the ſhadows of the Night at the appearance of the Sun.

* Amirald. *in Heb.* p. 101, 102.

† Rom. 8. 10.

‖ 1 Tim. 5. 6.

* Pſal. 49. 20.

Holineſs is our Life.

5. *'Tis this only fits us for Communion with God.* Since it is our Beauty and our Life, without it, what Communion can an excellent God have with deformed Creatures, a living God with dead Creatures? *Without Holineſs none ſhall ſee God*, Heb. 12. 14. The Creature muſt be ſtript of his Unrighteouſneſs, or God of his Purity, before they can come together. Likeneſs is the ground of Communion and of Delight in it: The oppoſition between God and unholy Souls, is as great as that between *Light and Darkneſs* *, Divine fruition is not ſo much by a union of Preſence, as a Union of Nature. Heaven is not ſo much an outward, as an inward life; the foundation of Glory is laid in Grace; a reſemblance to God is our vital happineſs, without which the Viſion of God would not be ſo much as a cloudy and ſhadowy happineſs, but rather a torment than a felicity; unleſs we be of a like Nature to God, we cannot have a pleaſing fruition of him. Some *Philoſophers* think, that if our Bodies were of the ſame nature with the Heavens, of an Æthereal Subſtance, the nearneſs to the Sun would cheriſh, not ſcorch us. Were we partakers of a Divine Nature, we might enjoy God with delight; whereas remaining in our unlikeneſs to him, we cannot think of him, and approach to him without terrour. As ſoon as ſin had ſtript Man of the Image of God, he was an Exile from the comfortable Preſence of God, unworthy for God to hold any correſpondence with: He can no more delight in a defiled Perſon, than a Man can take a Toad into intimate converſe with him; he would hereby diſcredit his own Nature, and juſtifie our Impurity. The holineſs of a Creature only prepares him for an eternal conjunction with God in glory. *Enoch*'s walking with God, was the cauſe of his being ſo ſoon wafted to the place full of a fruition of him; he hath as much delight in ſuch, as in Heaven it ſelf; one is his Habitation as well as the other: The one is his habitation of Glory, and the other is the Houſe of his Pleaſure: If he dwell in *Zion*, it muſt be a *holy Mountain* †, and the Members of *Zion* muſt be upheld in their rectitude and integrity, before they be *ſet before the face of God for ever* ‖. Such are ſtil'd his Jewels, his Portion, as if he lived upon them, as a Man upon his Inheritance. As God cannot delight in us, ſo neither can we delight in God without it. We muſt *purifie* our ſelves *as he is pure*, if we expect to *ſee him as he is* in the comfortable glory and beauty of his Nature *, elſe the ſight of God would be terrible and troubleſome: We cannot be ſatisfied with the likeneſs of God at the Reſurrection, unleſs we have *a righteouſneſs* wherewith to *behold his face* †. 'Tis a vain imagination in any to think that Heaven can be a place of Happineſs to him, in whoſe eye the Beauty of Holineſs, which fills and adorns it, is an unlovely thing: Or that any can have a ſatisfaction in that Divine Purity which is loathſome to him in the imitations of it. We cannot

* 1 John 1. 6.

† Joel 3. 17.

‖ Pſ. 41. 12.

* 1 John 3. 2, 3.

† Pſal. 17. 15.

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enjoy him, unleſs we reſemble him; nor take any pleaſure in him if we were with him, without ſomething of likeneſs to him.

Holineſs fits us for Communion with God.

6. *We can have no Evidence of our Election and Adoption without it.* Conformity to God in Purity, is the fruit of electing Love, *Eph.* 1. 4. *He hath choſen us that we ſhould be holy.* The goodneſs of the Fruit evidenceth the Nature of the Root: This is the Seal that aſſures us the Patent is the Authentick Grant of the Prince. Whatſoever is holy, ſpeaks it ſelf to be from God; and whoſoever is holy, ſpeaks himſelf to belong to God. This is the only evidence that *we are born of God* *. The ſubduing our ſouls to him, the forming us into a reſemblance to himſelf, is a more certain ſign we belong to him, than if we had with *Iſaiah* ſeen his glory in the Viſion with all his train of Angels about him. This juſtifies us to be the Seed of God, when he hath as it were taken a ſlip from his own Purity, and engrafted it in our Spirits: He can never own us for his Children without his mark, the ſtamp of Holineſs. The Devil's ſtamp is none of God's Badge. Our ſpiritual Extraction from him is but pretended, unleſs we do things worthy of ſo illuſtrious a Birth, and becoming the honour of ſo great a Father: What evidence can we elſe have of any Child-like love to God, ſince the proper act of Love is to imitate the Object of our Affections?

* 1 John 2. 29.

And that we may be in ſome meaſure like to God in this excellent Perfection;

1. *Let us be often viewing and ruminating on the holineſs of God, eſpecially as diſcovered in Chriſt.* 'Tis by a believing Meditation on him, that we are *changed into the ſame Image* *. We can think often of nothing that is excellent in the World, but it draws our Faculties to ſome kind of ſutable Operation; and why ſhould not ſuch an excellent *Idea* of the holineſs of God in Chriſt perfect our Underſtandings, and awaken all the powers of our Souls to be formed to actions worthy of him? A *Painter* employed in the limning ſome excellent Piece, has not only his Pattern before his eyes, but his eye frequently upon the Pattern, to poſſeſs his fancy to draw forth an exact reſemblance. He that would expreſs the Image of God, muſt imprint upon his Mind the Purity of his Nature; Cheriſh it in his thoughts, that the excellent beauty of it may paſs from his Underſtanding to his Affections, and from his Affections to his Practiſe. How can we ariſe to a conformity to God in Chriſt, whoſe moſt holy Nature we ſeldom glance upon, and more rarely ſink our Souls into the depths of it by meditation? Be frequent in the meditation of the holineſs of God.

† 2 Cor. 3. 18.

2. *Let us often exerciſe our ſelves in acts of love to God, becauſe of this Perfection.* The more adoring thoughts we have of God, the more delightfully we ſhall aſpire to, and more raviſhingly catch after any thing that may promote the more full draught of his Divine Image in our hearts. What we intenſly affect, we deſire to be as near to as we can, and to be that very thing rather than our ſelves. All imitations of others, ariſe from an intenſe love to their Perſons or Excellency. When the Soul is raviſht with this Perfection of God, it will deſire to be united with it; to have it drawn in it, more than to have its own being continued to it. It will deſire and delight in its own being, in order to this heavenly and ſpiritual work. The impreſſions of the Nature of God upon it, and the imitations of the Nature of God by it, will be more deſirable than any natural perfection whatſoever. The Will in loving is rendred like the Object beloved; is turned into its nature, and imbibes * its qualities. The Soul by loving God, will find it ſelf more and more transform'd into the Divine Image, whereas ſlighted enſamples are never thought worthy of Imitation.

* *Amor naturam induit & mores imbibit rei amatæ.*

3. *Let us make God our end.* Every Man's mind forms it ſelf to a likeneſs to that which it makes its chief end. An earthly Soul is as droſſy as the Earth he gapes for: An ambitious Soul is as elevated as the Honour he reaches at: The ſame Characters that are upon the thing aimed at, will be imprinted upon the Spirit of him that aims at it. When God and his Glory are made our end, we ſhall find a ſilent likeneſs paſs in upon us; the Beauty of God will by degrees enter upon our Souls.

4. *In every deliberate action, let us reflect upon the Divine Purity as a pattern.* Let us examine whether any thing we are prompted unto, bear an impreſſion of God upon it: Whether it looks like a thing, that God himſelf would do in that caſe, were he in our Natures, and in our Circumſtances. See whether it hath the Livery of God upon it, how congruous it is to his Naure: whether, and in what manner the Holineſs of God can be glorified thereby; and let us be induſtrious in all this: For can ſuch an imitation be eaſie which is reſiſted by the conſtant aſſaults of the Fleſh, which is diſcouraged by our own ignorance, and depreſt by our faint and languiſhing Deſires after it? O! happy we, if there were ſuch a Heart in us.

5. A fourth *Exhortation.* If Holineſs be a Perfection belonging to the Nature of God; then, *where there is ſome weak conformity to the holineſs of God, let us labour to grow up in it, and breathe after fuller meaſures of it.* The more likeneſs we have to him, the more love we ſhall have from him. Communion will be ſutable to our imitation; his love to himſelf in his Eſſence, will caſt out beams of love to himſelf in his Image. If God loves holineſs in a lower meaſure, much more will he love it in a higher degree, becauſe then his Image is more illuſtrious and beautiful, and comes nearer to the lively Lineaments of his own Infinite Purity. Perfection in any thing is more lovely and amiable than Imperfection in any ſtate; and the nearer any thing arrives to Perfection, the further are thoſe things ſeparated from it which might cool an affection to it. An increaſe in holineſs is attended with a manifeſtation of his love, *John* 14. 21. *He that hath my Commandments, and keeps them, he it is that loves me, and he ſhall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and I will manifeſt my ſelf to him:* 'Tis a teſtimony of love to God, and God will not be behind hand with the Creature in kindneſs: He loves a holy Man for ſome reſemblance to him in his Nature; but when there is an abounding in ſanctified Diſpoſitions ſutable to it, there is an increaſe of favour: The more we reſemble the Original, the more ſhall we enjoy the bleſſedneſs of that Original: As any partake more of the Divine Likeneſs, they partake more of the Divine Happineſs.

6. *Exhortation. Let us carry our ſelves holily in a ſpiritual manner in all our religious approaches to God;* Pſal. 93. 5. *Holineſs becomes thy Houſe, O Lord, for ever.* This Attribute ſhould work in us a deep and reverential reſpect to God. This is the reaſon rendred why we ſhould *worſhip at his Footſtool*, in the loweſt poſture of humility proſtrate before him, becauſe *he is holy* *. Shoes muſt be put off from our feet, *Exod.* 3. 5. that is, Luſts from our Affections, every thing that our Souls are clogged and bemired with, as the Shoe is with dirt. He is not willing we ſhould offer to him an impure Soul, mired Hearts, rotten Carcaſſes, putrefied in vice, rotten in iniquity: Our Services are to be as

* Pſ. 99. 5.

free

free from Prophaneneſs, as the ſacrifices of the Law were to be free from ſicklineſs or any blemiſh. Whatſoever is contrary to his Purity is *abhorred* by him, and unlovely in his ſight, and can meet with no other *ſucceſs* at his hands, but a diſdainful turning away both of his eye and ear *. Since he is an immenſe Purity, he will reject from his preſence, and from having any communion with him, all that which is not conformable to him; as light chaſes away the darkneſs of the night, and will not mix with it. If we *ſtretch out* our *hands towards him*, we muſt *put iniquity far away from* us †; the fruits of all ſervice will elſe drop off to nothing. *Then ſhall the offering of Judah and Jeruſalem be pleaſant to the Lord:* When? when the heart is purg'd by Chriſt fitting as a *purifier of ſilver* ‖. Not all the Incenſe of the *Indies* yield him ſo ſweet a Savour, as one ſpiritual act of Worſhip from a heart eſtranged from the vileneſs of the World, and raviſh'd with an affection to, and a deſire of imitating the Purity of his Nature.

* Iſa. 1. 15.

† Job 11. 13, 14.

‖ Mal. 3. 3, 4.

7. *Exhortation. Let us addreſs for Holineſs to God the Fountain of it.* As he is the Author of bodily life in the Creature, ſo he is the Author of his own life, the life of God in the Soul. By his holineſs he makes men holy, as the Sun by his light enlightens the Air. He is not only the Holy One, but *our* Holy One *: *The Lord that ſanctifies us, Levit.* 20. 8. As he hath mercy to pardon us, ſo he hath holineſs to purifie us, the excellency of being a Sun to comfort us, and a Shield to protect us, giving *Grace and Glory* †; Grace, whereby we may have Communion with him to our comfort, and ſtrength againſt our ſpiritual enemies for our defence: Grace as our preparatory to Glory, and Grace growing up till it ripen in Glory. He only can mould us into a divine frame. The great Original can only derive the excellency of his own nature to us. We are too low, too lame to lift up our ſelves to it; too much in love with our own Deformity, to admit of this Beauty without a heavenly power inclining our deſires for it, our affections to it, our willingneſs to be partakers of it. He can as ſoon ſet the beauty of Holineſs in a deformed Heart, as the beauty of harmony in a confuſed maſs when he made the World. He can as ſoon cauſe the light of Purity to riſe out of the darkneſs of Corruption, as frame glorious ſpirits out of the inſufficiency of nothing. His beauty doth not decay, he hath as much in himſelf now as he had in his Eternity: He is as ready to impart it, as he was at the Creation; only we muſt wait upon him for it, and be content to have it by ſmall meaſures and degrees. There is no fear of our ſanctification, if we come to him as a God of holineſs, ſince he is a God of Peace, and the breach made by *Adam* is repair'd by Chriſt, 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 23. *And the very God of Peace ſanctifie you wholly*, &c. He reſtores the ſanctifying ſpirit which was withdrawn by the Fall, as he is a God pacified, and his Holineſs righted by the Redeemer. The beauty of it appears in its ſmiles upon a man in Chriſt, and is as ready to impart it ſelf to the reconcil'd Creature, as before Juſtice was to puniſh the rebellious one. He loves to ſend forth the Streams of this perfection into created Chanels, more than any elſe. He did not deſign the making the Creature ſo powerful as he might, becauſe power is not ſuch an excellency in its own Nature, but as it is conducted and manag'd by ſome other excellency. Power is indifferent, and may be uſed well or ill, according as the poſſeſſor of it is righteous or unrighteous. God makes not the Creature ſo powerful as he might, but he delights to make the Creature that waits upon him as holy as it can be, beginning it in this World, and ripening it in the other: 'Tis from him we muſt expect it, and from him that we muſt beg it, and draw Arguments from the holineſs of his Nature to move him to work holineſs in our Spirits: We cannot have a ſtronger plea. Purity is the Favourite of his own Nature, and delights it ſelf in the reſemblances of it in the Creature. Let us alſo go to God, to preſerve what he hath already wrought and imparted. As we cannot attain it, ſo we cannot maintain it without him. God gave it *Adam*, and he loſt it: When God gives it us, we ſhall loſe it without his influencing and preſerving Grace: The channel *will* be without a Stream, if the Fountain do not bubble it forth; and the ſtreams *will* vaniſh, if the Fountain doth not conſtantly ſupply them: let us apply our ſelves to him for holineſs as he is a God *glorious in holineſs*; by this we honour God, and advantage our ſelves.

† Pſal. 84. 11.

A

DISCOURSE

UPON THE

Goodneſs of GOD.

MARK X. 18.

And Jeſus ſaid unto him, Why calleſt thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God.

THE words are part of a Reply of our Saviour to the young Man's Petition to him: A certain Perſon came in haſte, *running*, as being eager for ſatisfaction, to entreat his directions, what he ſhould do, to inherit Everlaſting Life: The Perſon is deſcribed only in general, *verſe* 17. *There came one*, A certain Man: But *Luke* deſcribes him by his Dignity, * *A certain Ruler*; One of Authority among the *Jews*. He deſires of him an Anſwer to a Legal Queſtion. [*What he ſhould do?*] Or, as *Matthew* hath it, *What good thing ſhall I do, that I may have Eternal Life?* † He imagin'd Everlaſting Felicity was to be purchaſed by the Works of the Law; He had not the leaſt Sentiments of Faith: *Chriſt*'s Anſwer implies, there was no hopes of the Happineſs of another World by the Works of the Law; unleſs they were perfect and anſwerable to every Divine Precept. He doth not ſeem to have any ill, or hypocritical intent in his Addreſs to Chriſt; not to tempt him, but to be inſtructed by him. He ſeems to come with an ardent deſire, to be ſatisfi'd in his Demand; he performed a ſolemn Act of Reſpect to him, *he kneeled to him*, γονυπετήσας, proſtrated himſelf upon the ground: Beſides Chriſt is ſaid, *v.* 21. *to love him*, which had been inconſiſtent with the knowledge Chriſt had of the Hearts and Thoughts of Men, and the abhorrence he had of Hypocrites, had he been only a Counterfeit in this Queſtion.

* Luke 18.18.

† Matth. 19.16.

But the firſt Reply Chriſt makes to him, reſpects the Title of *Good Maſter*, which this Ruler gave him in his Salutation.

1. Some think, that Chriſt hereby would draw him to an *acknowledgment of him as God*; You acknowledge me *good*, How come you to ſalute me with ſo great a Title, ſince you do not afford it to your greateſt Doctors? *Lightfoot in loc.* obſerves, that the Title of *Rabbi bone* is not in all the *Talmud*. You muſt own me to be *God*, ſince you own me to be *good*: *Goodneſs* being a Title only due and properly belonging to the Supream Being.

If you take me for a common Man, with what Conſcience can you ſalute me in a manner proper to God? Since no Man is *good*, no, not one, but the Heart of Man is evil continually. The *Arrians* uſed this place to back their denying the Deity of Chriſt: Becauſe, ſay they, he did not acknowledge himſelf *Good*, therefore he did not acknowledge himſelf God. * But he doth not here deny his Deity, but reproves him for calling him *Good*, when he had not yet confeſt him to be more than a Man. † You behold my Fleſh, but you conſider not the fulneſs of my Deity; If you account me *Good*, account me *God*, and imagine me not to be a ſimple and a meer Man. He diſowns not his own Deity, but allures the young Man to a confeſſion of it. Why call'ſt thou me Good, ſince thou doſt not diſcover any apprehenſions of my being more than a Man? Tho' thou comeſt with a greater Eſteem to me, than is commonly entertain'd of the Doctors of the Chair, why doſt thou own me to be *good*, unleſs thou own me to be *God?* If Chriſt had deny'd himſelf in this Speech to be *good*, he had rather entertain'd this Perſon with a frown and ſharp reproof for giving him a Title due to *God alone*, than have received him with that courteſie and complaiſance as he did ‖. Had he ſaid there is none *good* but the Father, he had excluded himſelf; but in ſaying, There is none *good* but *God*, he comprehends himſelf.

* *Eraſm. in loc.*

† *Auguſtin.*

‖ *Heinſius in Matth.*

2. Others ſay, That Chriſt had *no intention to draw him to an acknowledgment of his Deity*, but only aſſerts his *Divine Authority* or Miſſion from God. * For which interpretation *Maldonat* calls *Calvin* an *Arrianizer*. He doth not here aſſert the Eſſence of his Deity, but the Authority of his Doctrine: As if he ſhould have ſaid, You do without ground give me the Title of *good*, unleſs you believe I have a Divine Commiſſion for what I declare and act. Many do think me an Impoſtor, an Enemy of God, and a Friend to Devils; you muſt firmly believe, that I am not ſo as your Rulers report me, but that I am ſent of God, and authorized by him; you cannot elſe give me the Title of *good*, but of *wicked*. And the reaſon they give for this interpretation, is, becauſe it is a queſtion, whether any of the *Apoſtles* underſtood him at this time, to be God, which ſeems to have no great ſtrength in it; ſince not only the *Devil* had publickly owned him, to be the *Holy One of God* †; but *John the Baptiſt* had born Record, that he was the *Son of God* ‖; and before this time *Peter* had confeſt him openly, in the hearing of the reſt of the Diſciples, That he was *the Chriſt the Son of the living God* *. But I think *Paræus* his interpretation is beſt, which takes in both thoſe; Either you are ſerious or deceitful in this Addreſs; if you are ſerious, Why do you call me *good*, and make bold

* *Calvin in loc.*

† Luke 4. 34.

‖ John 1. 32, 34.

* Matth. 16. 16.

to fix ſo great a Title upon one you have no higher Thought of than of a meer Man? Chriſt takes occaſion from hence, to aſſert God to be only and ſoveraignly *good*: † *There is none good but God.* God only hath the honour of *abſolute goodneſs*, and none but God merits the name of *good*. ‖ A Heathen could ſay much after the ſame manner: All other things are far from the nature of good; call none elſe good but God, for this would be a profane Errour: Other things are only good in opinion, but have not the true ſubſtance of Goodneſs: He is *good* in a more excellent way, than any Creature can be denominated *good*.

† *Triſmegiſt. Pæmend. c. 2.*
‖ *Eugubin de Peren. Philoſ. l. 5. c. 9.*

1. *God is only originally Good, Good of himſelf.* All Created Goodneſs is a Rivulet from this Fountain, but *Divine Goodneſs* hath no Spring; God depends upon no other for his Goodneſs, he hath it in, and of himſelf: Man hath no Goodneſs from himſelf, God hath no Goodneſs from without himſelf: his Goodneſs is no more derived from another, than his Being: If he were Good by any External thing, that thing muſt be in being before him, or after him: If before him, he was not then himſelf from Eternity; If after him, he was not Good in himſelf from Eternity. The end of his Creating things then, was not to confer a Goodneſs upon his Creatures, but to partake of a Goodneſs from his Creatures. *God is good by and in himſelf*, ſince all things are only Good by him; and all that Goodneſs which is in Creatures, is but the breathing of his own Goodneſs upon them. They have all their Lovelineſs from the ſame Hand they have their Being from. Tho' by Creation God was declar'd Good, yet he was not made Good by any, or by all the Creatures. He partakes of none, but all things partake of him. He is ſo Good that he gives all, and receives nothing; *Only Good* becauſe nothing is Good but by him: Nothing hath a Goodneſs but from him.

2. *God only is infinitely Good.*

A boundleſs Goodneſs that knows no limits, a Goodneſs as infinite as his Eſſence, not only Good, but beſt; not only Good, but Goodneſs it ſelf, the Supream unconceivable Goodneſs. All things elſe are but little Particles of God, ſmall Sparks from this Immenſe Flame, Sips of Goodneſs to this Fountain. Nothing that is good by his influence, can equal him, who is good by himſelf: Derived goodneſs, can never equal Primitive goodneſs; Divine goodneſs communicates it ſelf to a vaſt number of Creatures in various degrees; to Angels, glorified Spirits, Men on Earth, to every Creature; and when it hath communicated all that the preſent World is capable of, there is ſtill leſs diſplay'd, than left to enrich another World. All poſſible Creatures are not capable of exhauſting the Wealth, the Treaſures, that Divine Bounty is filled with.

3. *God is only perfectly good*, becauſe only Infinitely good.

He is good without indigence, becauſe he hath the whole Nature of Goodneſs, not only ſome Beams that may admit of increaſe of degree. As in him is the whole Nature of Entity, ſo in him is the whole Nature of Excellency. As nothing hath an abſolute perfect Being but God, ſo nothing hath an *abſolutely perfect goodneſs* but God. As the Sun hath a perfection of Heat in it, but what is warm'd by the Sun, is but imperfectly hot, and equals not the Sun in that perfection of heat, wherewith it is naturally endued. The goodneſs of God is the meaſure and rule of goodneſs in every thing elſe.

4. *God only is immutably good.*

Other things may be perpetually good by Supernatural Power, but not *Immutably good* in their own Nature. Other things are not ſo good, but they may be bad; God is ſo good, that he cannot be bad. * It was the Speech of a *Philoſopher*, That it was a hard thing to find a good Man, yea impoſſible; but tho' it were poſſible to find a good Man, he would be good but for ſome moment, or a ſhort time: For tho' he ſhould be good at this inſtant, it was above the Nature of Man to continue in a habit of goodneſs, without going awry and warping.

* *Eugubin. Peren. Philoſ. l. 5. c. 9.*

But *the goodneſs of God endureth for ever* †. God always glitters in goodneſs, as the Sun, which the Heathens call'd the viſible Image of the Divinity, doth with Light. There is not ſuch a perpetual light in the Sun, as there is a fulneſs of goodneſs in God; *no variableneſs* in him, as he is the *Father of Lights* ‖.

† Pſ. 52. 1.
‖ Jam. 1. 17

Before I come to the *Doctrine*, that is the chief ſcope of the words, ſome remarks may be made upon the young Man's *Queſtion* and *Carriage*, *What muſt I do to inherit Eternal Life?*

1. *The opinion of gaining Eternal Life by the outward obſervation of the Law, will appear very unſatisfactory to an inquiſitive Conſcience.* This *Ruler* affirm'd, and certainly did confidently believe, that he had fulfill'd the Law: *All this have I obſerved from my youth*; yet he had not any full ſatisfaction in his own Conſcience; his heart miſgave, and ſtarted upon ſome Sentiments in him, that ſomething elſe was requir'd, and what he had done might be too weak, too ſhort to ſhoot Heavens lock for him. And to that purpoſe he comes to Chriſt, to receive Inſtructions for the piecing up whatſoever was defective. Whoſoever will conſider the Nature of God, and the Relation of a Creature, cannot with reaſon think, that Eternal Life was of it ſelf due from God as a Recompence to *Adam*, had he perſiſted in a ſtate of Innocence: Who can think ſo great a Reward due, for having perform'd that, which a Creature in that Relation was oblig'd to do? Can any Man think another oblig'd to convey an Inheritance of 1000 *l. per Annum* upon his payment of a few Farthings, unleſs any compact appears to ſupport ſuch a conceit? And if it were not to be expected in the integrity of Nature, but only from the goodneſs of God, how can it be expected ſince the Revolt of Man, and the Univerſal Deluge of Natural Corruption? God owes nothing to the holieſt Creature; what he gives is a Preſent from his Bounty, not the Reward of the Creatures Merit. And the Apoſtle defies all Creatures from the greateſt to the leaſt, from the talleſt Angel to the loweſt Shrub, to bring out any one Creature that hath firſt given to God; * *Who hath firſt given to him; And it ſhall be recompenced to him again?* The Duty of the Creature, and God's gift of Eternal Life is not a Bargain and Sale.

Verſe 20.

* Rom. 11. 35.

God gives to the Creature, he doth not properly repay: For he that repays hath received ſomething of an equal value and worth before. When God crowns Angels and Men, he beſtows upon them purely what is his own, not what is theirs by Merit and Natural Obligation: Tho' indeed what God gives by virtue of a Promiſe made before, is upon the performance of the Condition due by gracious Obligation. God was not indebted to Man in Innocence, but every Man's Conſcience may now mind him, that he is not upon the ſame level as in the State of Integrity; And that he cannot expect any thing from God, as the Salary of his Merit, but the free gift of Divine Liberality. * Man is oblig'd to the practiſe of what is good, both from the Excellency of the Divine Precepts, and the Duty he owes to God, and cannot without ſome Declaration from God, hope for any other Reward, than

* *Amiraut. Morale.*

than the ſatisfaction of having well acquitted himſelf.

2. *'Tis the Diſeaſe of Human Nature ſince its Corruption, to hope for Eternal Life by the tenor of the Covenant of Works.*

Tho' this *Ruler*'s Conſcience was not throughly ſatisfy'd with what he had done, but imagin'd he might for all that fall ſhort of Eternal Life, yet he ſtill hugs the imagination of obtaining it by doing, * *What ſhall I do, that I may inherit Eternal Life?* This is natural to corrupted Man: *Cain* thought to be accepted for the ſake of his Sacrifice; and when he found his miſtake, he was ſo weary of ſeeking Happineſs by doing, that he would court Miſery by Murdering. All Men ſet too high a value upon their own Services: Sinful Creatures would fain make God a Debtor to them, and be Purchaſers of Felicity; They would not have it conveyed to them by God's Soveraign Bounty, but by an Obligation of Juſtice upon the value of their Works. The *Heathens* thought God would treat Men according to the Merit of their Services, and 'tis no wonder they ſhould have this Sentiment, when the *Jews* educated by God in a wiſer School, were wedded to that Notion. The *Phariſees* were highly fond of it, it was the only Argument they uſed in Prayer, for Divine Bleſſing: You have one of them boaſting of his frequency in *Faſting*, and his exactneſs in paying his *Tithes* †; as if God had been beholding to him, and could not without manifeſt wrong deny him his Demand. And *Paul* confeſſeth it to be his own Sentiment before his Converſion, he accounted this *Righteouſneſs of the Law gain to him* ‖; he thought by this to make his Market with God. The whole Nation of the *Jews* affected it, * *compaſſing Sea and Land* to make out a Righteouſneſs of their own, as the *Phariſees* did to make Proſelytes.

*Verſe 17.
† Luke 19. 12.
‖ Phil. 3.7.
*Rom. 10. 3.
Going about to eſtabliſh their own Righteouſneſs.

The *Papiſts* follow their ſteps, and diſpute for Juſtification by the Merit of Works, and find out another Key of Works of Supererogation, to unlock Heaven's Gate, than whatever the *Scripture* informed us of: 'Tis from hence alſo, that Men are ſo ready to make Faith as a Work, the cauſe of our Juſtification. Man fooliſhly thinks he hath enough to ſet up himſelf after he hath proved Bankrupt, and loſt all his Eſtate. This Imagination is born with us, and the beſt Chriſtians may find ſome Sparks of it in themſelves, when there are ſpringings up of Joy in their Hearts, upon the more cloſe performance of one Duty than of another, as if they had wiped off their ſcores, and given God a ſatisfaction for their former neglects. *We have forſaken all and followed thee*, was the boaſt of his Diſciples: *What ſhall we have therefore?* was a Branch of this Root *. Eternal Life is a gift not by any Obligation of Right, but an abundance of goodneſs; 'tis owing not to the dignity of our Works, but the magnificent Bounty of the Divine Nature, and muſt be ſued for by the Title of God's Promiſe, not by the Title of the Creatures Services. We may obſerve,

* Matth. 19.27.

3. *How inſufficient are ſome Aſſents to Divine Truth, and ſome Expreſſions of Affection to Chriſt, without the Practice of Chriſtian Precepts.* This Man addreſt to Chriſt with a profound Reſpect, acknowledging him more than an ordinary Perſon, with a more Reverential Carriage than we read any of his Diſciples paid to him in the days of his Fleſh: he fell down at his Feet, kiſt his Knees, as the Cuſtom was, when they would teſtifie the great Reſpect they had to any eminent Perſon, eſpecially to their *Rabbins*. All this ſome think to be included in the word γονυπλήσας; * He ſeems to acknowledge him the *Meſſiah* by giving him the Title of *Good*, a Title they did not give to their Doctors of the Chair; He breathes out his opinion, that he was able to inſtruct him beyond the ability of the Law; He came with a more than ordinary Affection to him, and expectation of advantage from him, evident by his departing ſad, when his Expectations were fruſtrated by his own perverſity; it was a ſign he had a high eſteem of him, from whom he could not part without marks of his Grief. What was the cauſe of his refuſing the inſtructions, he pretended ſuch an affection to receive? He had Poſſeſſions in the World. How ſoon do a few drops of worldly Advantages quench the firſt Sparks of an ill-grounded love to *Chriſt*? How vain is a complemental and cringing Devotion, without a ſupream preference of God, and valuation of *Chriſt* above every outward Allurement? We may obſerve this,

*Verſe 17. Lightfoot *in loc.*

4. *We ſhould never admit any thing to be aſcrib'd to us, which is proper to God. Why calleſt thou me Good? There is none good but One, that is God.* If you do not acknowledge me God, aſcribe not to me the Title of Good. It takes off all thoſe Titles which fawning Flatterers give to Men, Mighty, Invincible to *Princes*, Holineſs to the *Pope*. We call one another good, without conſidering how Evil; and Wiſe, without conſidering how Fooliſh; Mighty, without conſidering how Weak; and Knowing, without conſidering how Ignorant. No Man but hath more of Wickedneſs than Goodneſs; of Ignorance than Knowledge; of Weakneſs than Strength. God is a jealous God of his own Honour, he will not have the Creature ſhare with him in his Royal Titles. 'Tis a part of Idolatry to give Men the Titles which are due to God; a kind of a Worſhip of the Creature together with the Creator. Worms will not ſtand out, but aſſault *Herod* in his Purple, when he uſurps the Prerogative of God, and prove ſtiff and invincible Vindicators of their Creators Honour, when ſummoned to Arms by the Creator's Word *.

† Acts 12. 22, 24.

The Obſervation which I intend to proſecute is this:

Doctr.

Pure and Perfect Goodneſs is only the Royal Prerogative of God. Goodneſs is a choice Perfection of the Divine Nature.

This is the true and genuine Character of God; He is good, He is goodneſs, good in Himſelf, good in his Eſſence, good in the Higheſt Degree, poſſeſſing whatſoever is Comely, Excellent, Deſirable; the Higheſt Good, becauſe the Firſt Good; whatſoever is perfect Goodneſs, is GOD; whatſoever is truly goodneſs in any Creature, is a reſemblance of God *. All the Names of God are comprehended in this one of Good. All gifts, all variety of goodneſs, are contained in him as one common good. He is the efficient cauſe of all good, by an overflowing goodneſs of his Nature; He refers all things to Himſelf as the end, for the repreſentation of his own goodneſs; *Truly God is good* †. Certainly it is an undoubted Truth, 'tis written in his Works of Nature; and his Acts of Grace ‖, *He is abundant in Goodneſs.*

* *Divin. in Dionyſ. de divin. nom. cap.* 5 11.
† Pſ. 73.1.
‖ Ex. 34.6.

And every thing is a Memorial, not of ſome few Sparks, but of his greater goodneſs *. This is often celebrated in the *Pſalms*, and Men invited more than once, to ſing forth the Praiſes of it †. It may better be admired than ſufficiently ſpoken of, or thought of, as it Merits. 'Tis diſcover'd in all his Works, as the goodneſs of a Tree in all its Fruits; 'tis eaſie to be ſeen, and more pleaſant to be contemplated. In general,

* Pſ. 145.7.
† Pſal. 107. 8, 15, 21, 31.

1. *All Nations in the World have acknowledged* GOD *Good*, τὸ Ἀγαθὸν, was one of the Names the *Platoniſts* expreſt him by, and Good, and God are

almoſt the ſame words in our Language. All as readily conſented in the Notion of his Goodneſs, as in that of his Deity. Whatſoever Diviſions or Diſputes there were among them in the other Perfections of God, they all agreed in this without diſpute, ſaith *Syneſius* *. One calls him *Venus*, in regard of his Lovelineſs †: Another calls him Ἔρωτα, Love, as being the Band which ties all things together. No Perfection of the Divine Nature is more eminently, nor more ſpeedily viſible in the whole Book of the Creation than this. His greatneſs ſhines not in any part of it, where is goodneſs doth not as glorioufly gliſter. Whatſoever is the Inſtrument of his Work, as his Power; Whatſoever is the orderer of his Work, as his Wiſdom; yet nothing can be ador'd as the Motive of his Work, but the goodneſs of his Nature. This only could induce him, to reſolve to Create: His Wiſdom then ſteps in, to diſpoſe the Methods of what hereſolved; And his Power follows to execute, what his Wiſdom hath diſpoſed, and his Goodneſs deſign'd. His Power in making, and his Wiſdom in ordering, are ſubſervient to his *Goodneſs*; and this Goodneſs, which is the end of the Creation, is as viſible to the Eyes of Men, as legible to the Underſtanding of Men, as his Power in forming them, and his Wiſdom in tuning them. And as the Book of Creation, ſo the Records of his Government muſt needs acquaint them with a great part of it, when they have often beheld him, ſtretching out his Hand, to ſupply the Indigent, relieve the Oppreſſed, and puniſh the Oppreſſors, and give them in their Diſtreſſes, what might *fill their Hearts with Food and Gladneſs*. ‖ Tis this the *Apoſtle* means by his *Godhead*, which he links with his Eternity and Power, as clearly ſeen in the things that are made, as in a pure Glaſs. *For the inviſible things of him from the Creation of the World, are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made, even his Eternal Power and Godhead.* The Godhead which comprehends the whole Nature of God as diſcoverable to his Creatures, was not known, yea, was impoſſible to be known by the Works of Creation. There had been nothing then reſerv'd to be manifeſted in *Chriſt*. But his *Goodneſs*, which is properly meant there by his *Godhead*, was as clearly viſible as his Power. The *Apoſtle* upbraids them with their Unthankfulneſs, and argues their inexcuſableneſs, becauſe the Arm of his Power in Creation made no due impreſſions of fear upon their Spirits, nor the Beams of his Goodneſs wrought in them ſufficient Sentiments of Gratitude. Their not glorifying God, was a contempt of the former, and their not being thankful, was a ſlight of the latter. God is the Object of Honour, as he is powerful, and the Object of Thankfulneſs properly, as he is bountiful.

All the Idolatry of the Heathens, is a clear teſtimony of their common Sentiment of the Goodneſs of God: Since the more eminently uſeful any Perſon was in ſome advantagious Invention for the benefit of Mankind, they thought he merited a rank in the number of their Deities. The *Italians* eſteemed *Pythagoras* a God becauſe he was φιλανθρωπότατος *: To be Good and Uſeful, was an Approximation to the Divine Nature: Hence it was, that when the *Lyſtrians* ſaw a reſemblance of the Divine Goodneſs in the charitable and miraculous Cure of one of their cripled Citizens, preſently they miſtook *Paul* and *Barnabas* for Gods, and inferred from thence their right to Divine Worſhip, inquiring into nothing elſe but the viſible Character of their goodneſs and uſefulneſs, to capacitate them for the Honour of a Sacrifice †. Hence it was that they adored thoſe Creatures, that were a common Benefit, as the Sun, and Moon, which muſt be founded upon a præexiſtent Notion not only of the Being, but of the Bounty, and Goodneſs of God, which was naturally implanted in them, and legible in all God's Works. And the more beneficial any thing was to them, and the more ſenſible advantages they received from it, the higher ſtation they gave it in the rank of their Idols, and beſtowed upon it a more ſolemn Worſhip. An abſurd miſtake to think every thing that was ſenſibly good to them, to be God, cloathing himſelf in ſuch a form, to be adored by them. And upon this account the *Egyptians* worſhipped God under the figure of an Ox, and the *Eaſt Indians* in ſome parts of their Country Deifie a Heifer, intimating the Goodneſs of God as their Nouriſher and Preſerver, in giving them Corn, whereof the Ox is an inſtrument in ſerving for Plowing, and preparing the Ground.

2. *The Notion of Goodneſs is inſeparable from the Notion of a God.*

We cannot own the Exiſtence of God, but we muſt confeſs alſo the Goodneſs of his Nature. Hence the Apoſtle gives to his Goodneſs the Title of his Goodhead, as if *Goodneſs* and *Godhead* were convertible terms *. As it is indiſſolubly linkt with the Being of a Deity, ſo it cannot be ſever'd from the Notion of it: We as ſoon Undeifie him by denying him Good, as by denying him Great: *Optimus*, *Maximus*, the Beſt, Greateſt, was the name whereby the *Romans* entitled Him. His Nature is as Good, as it is Majeſtick; ſo doth the *Pſalmiſt* joyn them †. *I will declare thy Greatneſs, they ſhall abundantly utter the memory of thy great Goodneſs.* They conſidered his Goodneſs before his Greatneſs, in putting *Optimus* before *Maximus*; Greatneſs without Sweetneſs, is an unruly and affrighting Monſter in the World; like a vaſt turbulent Sea, always caſting out Mire, and Dirt. Goodneſs is the brightneſs and lovelineſs of our Majeſtical Creator. To fancy a God without it, is to fancy a miſerable, ſcanty, narrow-hearted ſavage God, and ſo an unlovely, and horrible Being: For he is not a God that is not Good, he is not a God that is not the higheſt Good: Infinite Goodneſs is more neceſſary to, and more ſtraitly joyned with an infinite Deity, than infinite Power, and infinite Wiſdom: We cannot conceive him God, unleſs we conceive him the higheſt Good, having nothing ſuperiour to Himſelf in Goodneſs, as he hath nothing Superiour to Himſelf, in Excellency and Perfection. No Man can poſſibly form a Notion of God in his Mind, and yet form a Notion of ſomething better than God: for whoever thinks any thing better than God, fancieth a God with ſome defect. By how much the better he thinks that thing to be, by ſo much the more imperfect he makes God in his Thoughts. This Notion of the Goodneſs of God was ſo natural, that ſome *Philoſophers* and others, being ſtartled at the Evil they ſaw in the World, fancy'd beſides a good God, an evil Principle, the Author of all Puniſhments in the World. This was ridiculous; for thoſe two muſt be of equal Power, or one inferiour to the other; If Equal, the Good could do nothing, but the Evil one would reſtrain him; and the Evil one could do nothing, but the Good one would contradict him: So they would be always contending and never conquering: If one were inferiour to the other, then there would be nothing but what that Superiour order'd. Good, if the Good one were Superiour, and nothing but Evil, if the Bad one were Superiour. In the proſecution of this let us ſee,

1. *What*

* *Empedocles.*
† *Heſiod.*
‖ Rom. 20. 21.
* Rom. 1. 20.
† Pſal. 145. 6, 7.
* *Jamblych. vit. Pythag. lib. 1. cal. 6. p. 43.*
† Acts. 14. 8, 9, 10, 11.

1. *What this Goodneſs is.*
2. *Some Propoſitions concerning the Nature of it.*
3. *That God is Good.*
4. *The manifeſtation of it, in Creation, Providence, and Redemption.*
5. *The Uſe.*

1. *What this Goodneſs is.* There is a Goodneſs of Being, which is the natural perfection of a thing; There is the Goodneſs of Will, which is the Holineſs and Righteouſneſs of a Perſon: There is the Goodneſs of the Hand, which we call Liberality, or Beneficence, a doing good to others.

1. We mean not by this, *the Goodneſs of his Eſſence, or the Perfection of his Nature.* God is thus Good, becauſe his Nature is infinitely Perfect, He hath all things requiſite to the compleating of a moſt Perfect and Sovereign Being. *All Good meets in his Eſſence*, as all Water meets in the Ocean. Under this Notion all the Attributes of God, which are requiſite to ſo illuſtrious a Being, are comprehended. All things that are, have a goodneſs of Being in them, derived to them by the Power of God, as they are Creatures; ſo the Devil is good, as he is a Creature of God's making: He hath a natural goodneſs, but not a moral goodneſs: When he fell from God, he retain'd his natural goodneſs as a Creature; becauſe he did not ceaſe to be, he was not reduced to that nothing, from whence he was drawn; but he ceaſed to be morally good, being ſtript of his Righteouſneſs by his Apoſtacy; as a Creature he was God's Work, as a Creature he remains ſtill God's Work, and therefore as a Creature remains ſtill good, in regard of his created Being. The more of Being any thing hath, the more of this ſort of natural goodneſs it hath; and ſo the Devil hath more of this natural goodneſs than Men have; becauſe he hath more marks of the excellency of God upon him, in regard of the greatneſs of his Knowledge, and the extent of his power, the largeneſs of his capacity, and the acuteneſs of his underſtanding, which are natural Perfections belonging to the nature of an Angel; tho' he hath loſt his moral Perfections. God is *ſovereignly and infinitely good in this ſort of Goodneſs.* He is unſearchably perfect *, nothing is wanting to his Eſſence, that is neceſſary to the perfection of it; yet this is not that which the Scripture expreſſeth under the term of Goodneſs, but a Perfection of God's Nature as related to us, and which he poureth forth upon all his Creatures, as Goodneſs which flows from this Natural Perfection of the Deity.

* Job 11. 7.

2. *Nor is it the ſame with the Bleſſedneſs of God, but ſomething flowing from his Bleſſedneſs.* Were he not firſt infinitely Bleſſed, and Full in himſelf, he could not be infinitely Good and Diffuſive to us; had he not an infinite abundance in his own nature, he could not be overflowing to his Creatures.

Had not the Sun a fulneſs of Light in it ſelf, and the Sea a vaſtneſs of Water, the one could not enrich the World with its Beams, nor the other fill every Creek with its Waters.

3. *Nor is it the ſame with the Holineſs of God.* The Holineſs of God is the rectitude of his Nature, whereby he is Pure, and without Spot in himſelf. The *Goodneſs of God* is the efflux of his Will, whereby he is beneficial to his Creatures. The *Holineſs of God* is manifeſt in his rational Creatures; but the *Goodneſs of God* extends to all the Works of his Hands. His Holineſs beams moſt in his Law, his Goodneſs reacheth to every thing that had a Being from him *. *The Lord is good to all.* And tho' he be ſaid in the ſame Pſalm, *verſe* 17. to be *holy in all his Works*, 'tis to be underſtood of his Bounty, Bountiful in all his Works; the *Hebrew* word ſignifying both Holy and Liberal, and the Margent of the *Bible* reads it *Merciful* or *Bountiful.*

* Pſ. 145. 9

4. *Nor is this Goodneſs of God the ſame with the Mercy of God.* Goodneſs extends to more Objects than Mercy; Goodneſs ſtretcheth it ſelf out to all the Works of his Hands; Mercy extends only to a miſerable Object; for it is joyn'd with a ſentiment of pity, occaſion'd by the calamity of another. The Mercy of God is exerciſed about thoſe that merit Puniſhment; the Goodneſs of God is exerciſed upon Objects that have not merited any thing contrary to the acts of his Bounty. Creation is an act of *Goodneſs*, not of *Mercy*; Providence in governing ſome part of the World, is an act of *Goodneſs*, not of *Mercy* *. The Heavens, ſaith *Auſtin*, need the *Goodneſs of God* to govern them, but not the Mercy of God to relieve rhem: The Earth is full of the Miſery of Man, and the Compaſſions of God; but the Heavens need not the Mercy of God to pity them, becauſe they are not miſerable; tho' they need the *Goodneſs* and *Power of God* to ſuſtain them; becauſe as Creatures they are impotent without him. God's Goodneſs extends to the Angels, that kept their ſtanding, and to Man in Innocence, who in that ſtate ſtood not in need of Mercy. Goodneſs and Mercy are diſtinct, tho' Mercy be a Branch of Goodneſs; there may be a manifeſtation of Goodneſs, tho' none of Mercy. Some think Chriſt had been incarnate, had not Man fallen: Had it been ſo, there had been a manifeſtation of *Goodneſs* to our Nature, but not of Mercy; becauſe Sin had not made our Natures miſerable. The Devils are Monuments of God's creating Goodneſs, but not of his pardoning Compaſſions. The Grace of God reſpects the rational Creature, Mercy the miſerable Creature, Goodneſs all his Creatures, Brutes, and the ſenſleſs Plants, as well as reaſonable Man.

* *Lombard*, lib. 4. diſt. 46. *p.* 286.

5. *By Goodneſs is meant the Bounty of God.* This is the notion of Goodneſs in the World; when we ſay a good Man, we mean either a holy Man in his life, or a charitable and liberal Man in the management of his Goods. A righteous Man, and a good Man are diſtinguiſh'd *: For ſcarcely for a *righteous Man* will one die; yet for a *good Man* one would even dare to die. For an innocent Man, one as innocent of the Crime as Himſelf would ſcarce venture his Life; but for a good Man, a liberal tender-hearted Man, that had been a common Good in the place where he liv'd, or had done another as great a benefit as life it ſelf amounts to, a Man out of gratitude might dare to die. *The Goodneſs of God is his inclination to deal well and bountifully with his Creatures* †. 'Tis that whereby he wills, there ſhould be ſomething beſides Himſelf for his own Glory. God is good in Himſelf, and to Himſelf, *i. e.* highly amiable to Himſelf: and therefore ſome define it a Perfection of God, whereby he loves himſelf and his own Excellency; but as it ſtands in relation to his Creatures, 'tis that Perfection of God, whereby he delights in his Works, and is beneficial to them. God is the *higheſt Goodneſs*, becauſe he doth not act for his own profit, but for his Creatures welfare, and the manifeſtation of his own *Goodneſs*. He ſends out his Beams, without receiving any addition to himſelf, or ſubſtantial advantage from his Creatures. 'Tis from this Perfection that he loves whatſoever is good, and that is, whatſoever he hath made, *for every Creature of God is good* ‖; every Creature hath ſome Communications from him, which cannot be without ſome Affection to them; every Creature hath a Footſtep of *Divine Goodneſs* upon it; God therefore loves that *Goodneſs* in the Creature, elſe he would not love himſelf. * God hates no Creature, no, not the Devils and Damn'd, as Creatures; he is not an Enemy

* *Rom.* 5. 7.

† *Coccei. ſum. p.* 50.

‖ 1 Tim. 4. 4.

* *Cajetan in ſecund' ſecundæ*, Qu. 34. Ar. 3.

to

to them, as they are the Works of his hands: He is properly an Enemy, that doth ſimply and abſolutely wiſh Evil to another; but God doth not abſolutely wiſh Evil to the Damned; that Juſtice that inflicts upon them the deſerved Puniſhment of their Sin, is part of his Goodneſs, (as ſhall afterward be ſhewn.)

This is the moſt pleaſant Perfection of the Divine Nature; His Creating Power amazes us, His Conducting Wiſdom aſtoniſheth us, His Goodneſs, as furniſhing us with all Conveniencies, delights us, and renders both his amazing Power and aſtoniſhing Wiſdom delightful to us.

As the Sun, by effecting things, is an Emblem of God's Power, by diſcovering things to us, is an Emblem of his Wiſdom, but by refreſhing and comforting us, is an Emblem of his Goodneſs; and without this refreſhing Virtue it communicates to us, we ſhould take no pleaſure in the Creatures it produceth, nor in the Beauties it diſcovers. As God is Great and Powerful, he is the Object of our Underſtanding; but as Good and Bountiful, he is the Object of our Love and Deſire.

6. The Goodneſs of God comprehends all his Attributes. All the Acts of God are nothing elſe but the Effluxes of his Goodneſs, diſtinguiſh'd by ſeveral names, according to the Objects it is exerciſed about. As the Sea, tho' it be one maſs of Water, yet we diſtinguiſh it by ſeveral Names, according to the Shores it waſheth, and beats upon, as the *Britiſh* and *German* Ocean, tho' all be one Sea. When *Moſes* long'd to ſee his Glory, God tells him, he would give him a proſpect of his *Goodneſs*; * *I will make all my goodneſs to paſs before thee.* His *Goodneſs* is his Glory and Godhead, as much as is delightfully viſible to his Creatures, and whereby he doth benefit Man; *I will cauſe my Goodneſs*, or *Comelineſs*, as *Calvin* renders it, *to paſs before thee*; What is this, but the Train of all his lovely Perfections ſpringing from his *Goodneſs*? † The whole Catalogue of *Mercy*, *Grace*, *Long-ſuffering*, *abundance of Truth*, ſummed up in this *one word.* All are Streams from this Fountain; he could be none of this, were he not firſt Good. When it confers Happineſs without Merit, 'tis Grace; when it beſtows Happineſs againſt Merit, 'tis Mercy; when he bears with provoking Rebels, it's long-ſuffering; when he performs his Promiſe, 'tis Truth; when it meets with a Perſon to whom it is not oblig'd, 'tis Grace; when he meets with a Perſon in the World to which he hath oblig'd himſelf by Promiſe, 'tis Truth ‖; when it commiſerates a Diſtreſſed Perſon, 'tis Pity; when it ſupplies an Indigent Perſon, 'tis Bounty; when it ſuccours an Innocent Perſon, 'tis Righteouſneſs; and when it pardons a Penitent Perſon, 'tis Mercy; all ſumm'd up in this one name of *Goodneſs*: And the *Pſalmiſt* expreſſeth the ſame Sentiment in the ſame words: * *They ſhall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodneſs, and ſhall ſing of thy righteouſneſs. The Lord is gracious and full of compaſſion, ſlow to anger, and of great mercy: the Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.* He is firſt Good, and then Compaſſionate. Righteouſneſs is often in Scripture taken, not for Juſtice, but Charitableneſs: This Attribute, ſaith one, † is ſo full of God, that it doth Deifie all the reſt, and verifie the Adorableneſs of him. His Wiſdom might contrive againſt us, his Power bear too hard upon us; one might be too hard for an Ignorant, and the other too mighty for an Impotent Creature; his holineſs would ſcare an impure and guilty Creature, but his goodneſs conducts them all for us, and makes them all amiable to us; Whatever Comelineſs they have in the eye of a Creature, whatever Comfort they afford to the Heart of a Creature, we are oblig'd for all to his *Goodneſs.* This puts all the reſt upon a delightful Exerciſe, this makes his Wiſdom deſign for us, and this makes his Power to act for us: This vails his Holineſs from affrighting us, and this ſpirits his Mercy to relieve us: ‖ All his acts towards Man, are but the Workmanſhip of this. What mov'd him at firſt to create the World out of nothing, and erect ſo noble a Creature as Man, endow'd with ſuch excellent gifts; was it not his *goodneſs*? What made him ſeparate his Son to be a Sacrifice for us, after we had endeavour'd to raze out the firſt marks of his favour; was it not a ſtrong bubbling of *goodneſs*? What moves him to reduce a fallen Creature to the due ſenſe of his Duty, and at laſt bring him to an Eternal Felicity; is it not only his *goodneſs*? This is the Captain Attribute that leads the reſt to act. This attends them, and ſpirits them in all his ways of acting. This is the Compliment and Perfection of all his Works; had it not been for this, which ſet all the reſt on work, nothing of his Wonders had been ſeen in Creation, nothing of his Compaſſions had been ſeen in Redemption. The Second thing is ſome *Propoſitions to explain the Nature of this Goodneſs.*

1. *He is good by his own Eſſence.* God is not only *good* in his Eſſence, but *good* by his Eſſence: The Eſſence of *every created thing is good*, ſo the unerring God pronounc'd every thing which he had made *. The Eſſence of the worſt Creatures, yea, of the impure and ſavage Devils, is good; but they are not good *per eſſentiam*, for then they could not be bad, malicious and oppreſſive. God is *good* as he is God, and therefore *good* by himſelf, and from himſelf, not by participation from another; He made every thing *good*, but none made him *good*: Since his *Goodneſs* was not receiv'd from another, he is *good* by his *own Nature.* He could not receive it from the things he Created, they are later than he: Since they receiv'd all from him, they could beſtow nothing on him, and no God preceded him, in whoſe Inheritance and Treaſures of Goodneſs he could be a Succeſſor: He is abſolutely his *own Goodneſs*, he needed none to make him good; but all things needed him, to be *good* by him. Creatures are *good*, by being made ſo by him, and cleaving to him: He is *good* without cleaving to any *Goodneſs* without him; *Goodneſs* is not a Quality in him, but a Nature †, not a Habit added to his Eſſence, but his Eſſence it ſelf; He is not firſt God, and then afterwards good, but he is good as he is God, his *Eſſence* being one and the ſame, is formally and equally God and good. Αυτάγαθον, *good of himſelf*, was one of the Names the *Platoniſts* gave him. He is eſſentially good in his own Nature, and not by any outward action which follows his *Eſſence.* He is an Independent Being, and hath nothing of goodneſs or happineſs from any thing without him, or any thing he doth act about. If he were not good by his *Eſſence*, he could not be eternally good, he could not be the *firſt good*, he would have ſomething before him, from whence he derived that *Goodneſs* wherewith he is poſſeſſed; Nor could he be perfectly good, for he could not be equally good to that, from whom he derived his goodneſs: No Star, no ſplendid Body that derives light from the Sun, doth equal that Sun by which it's enlightned.

Hence his *Goodneſs* muſt be infinite, and circumſcrib'd by no limits: The exerciſe of his *Goodneſs* may be limited by himſelf, but his *Goodneſs* the Principle, cannot; For ſince his *Eſſence* is Infinite, and his *Goodneſs* is not diſtinguiſh'd from his *Eſſence*, 'tis Infinite alſo; if it were limited, it were Finite; he cannot be bounded by any thing without him; if ſo, then he were not God, becauſe he would have ſomething ſuperiour to him, to put bars in his way;

* Exod. 33. 19.

† Exod. 34. 6.

‖ Herle upon Wiſdom, cap. 5. p. 41, 42.

* Pſal. 145. 7, 8.

† Ingelo Bentivoglio & Uran, Book 4, p. 260, 261.

‖ Daille Melang. part 2. p. 704, 705.

* Gen. 1. 31

† Ficini Epiſt. lib. 11. Epiſt. 30.

way; if there were any thing to fix him, it muſt be a good or evil Being; Good it cannot be, for it is the property of *goodneſs* to encourage *goodneſs*, not to bound it; Evil it cannot be, for then it would extinguiſh *Goodneſs*, as well as limit it; it would not be content with the circumſcribing it, without deſtroying it; for it is the nature of every Contrary to endeavour the deſtruction of its Oppoſite. He is eſſentially good by his own Eſſence, therefore good of himſelf, therefore eternally good, and therefore abundantly good.

2. *God is the prime and chief Goodneſs.* Being good *per ſe*, and by his own Eſſence, he muſt needs be the *chief Goodneſs*, in whom there can be nothing but good, from whom there can proceed nothing but *good*, to whom all *good* whatſoever muſt be referr'd as the final cauſe of all *good*. As he is the chief Being, ſo he is the chief Good. And as we riſe by ſteps from the Exiſtence of Created things, to acknowledge one Supream Being, which is God, ſo we mount by ſteps from the Conſideration of the goodneſs of Created things, to acknowledge one Infinite Ocean of *Sovereign Goodneſs*, whence the Streams of *Created Goodneſs* are deriv'd. When we behold things that partake of *Goodneſs* from another, we muſt acquieſce in one that hath *Goodneſs* by participation from no other, but originally from himſelf, and therefore ſupreamly in himſelf above all other things. So that as nothing greater and more Majeſtick can be imagin'd, ſo alſo nothing Better and more Excellent can be conceiv'd than God. Nothing can add to him, or make him better than he is, nothing can detract from him, to make him worſe, nothing can be added to him, nothing can be ſever'd from him; no Created Good can render him more Excellent; no Evil from any Creature, can render him leſs Excellent. *Our goodneſs extends not to him; Wickedneſs may hurt a Man*, as we are, and our *Righteouſneſs may profit the Son of Man*; but if we be *Righteous, what give we to him*, or *what receives he at our hands?* † As he hath no Superior in place above him, ſo being chief of all, he cannot be made better by any Inferior to him. How can he be made better by any, that hath from himſelf all that he hath? The *goodneſs* of a Creature may be chang'd, but the *goodneſs* of the Creator is immutable; He is always like himſelf, ſo Good that he cannot be Evil, as he is ſo Bleſſed, that he cannot be Miſerable.

*Pſal. 16. 2.

† Job 35. 7, 8.

Nothing is good but God, becauſe nothing is of it ſelf but God: As all things being from nothing are nothing in compariſon of God, ſo all things being from nothing, are ſcanty and evil in compariſon of God. If any thing had been *ex Deo*, God being the Matter of it, it had been as good as God is; but ſince the Principle whence all things were drawn, was nothing, tho' the Efficient Cauſe by which they were extracted from nothing was God, they are as nothing in goodneſs, and not eſtimable in compariſon of God. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee*, &c. God is all good, every Creature hath a diſtinct variety of *goodneſs*. God diſtinctly pronounc'd every days work in the Creation *good*. Food communicates the goodneſs of its Nouriſhing Vertue to our Bodies, Flowers the goodneſs of their Odors to our Smell, every Creature a goodneſs of Comlineſs to our Sight; Plants the goodneſs of Healing Qualities for our Cure. And all derive from themſelves a goodneſs of Knowledge, objectively to our Underſtandings. The Sun by one ſort of goodneſs warms us, Metals enrich us, living Creatures ſuſtain us, and delight us by another; All thoſe have diſtinct kinds of *Goodneſs*, which are eminently ſummed up in God, and are all but parts of his *Immenſe Goodneſs*. 'Tis he that enlightens us by his Sun, nouriſheth us by Bread. † *'Tis not by Bread alone that we live, but by the Word of God.* 'Tis all but his own Supream Goodneſs, convey'd to us thro' thoſe varieties of Conduit-pipes. *God is all Good*, other things are good in their kind, as a *good Man*, a *good Angel*, a *good Tree*, a *good Plant*; but God hath a *Good* of all kinds eminently in his Nature. He is no leſs All-good, than he is Almighty, and All-knowing: As the Sun contains in it all the light, and more light than is in all the cleareſt Bodies in the World; ſo doth God contain in himſelf all the Good, and more Good than is in the richeſt Creatures. Nothing is good, but as it reſembles him; as nothing is hot, but as it reſembles Fire, the prime Subject of heat.

* Pſ. 73. 25

† Mat. 4. 4.

God is Omnipotent, therefore no *Good* can be wanting to him. If he were deſtitute of any which he could not have, he were not Almighty: He is ſo good that there is no mixture of any thing, which can be call'd not good in him; every thing beſides him wants ſome good, which others have. Nothing can be ſo Evil as God is Good. There can be no evil but there is ſome mixture of good with it. No Nature ſo evil, but there is ſome ſpark of goodneſs in it: But God is a Good which hath no taint of Evil; nothing can be ſo Supream an Evil, as God is Supream Goodneſs.

He is only good without capacity of Encreaſe: He is all good, and unmixedly good; none good but *God*. A goodneſs like the Sun, that hath all Light, and no Darkneſs. That is the ſecond thing, He is the ſupream and chief goodneſs.

3. *This Goodneſs is Communicative.* None ſo communicatively good as *God*. As the Notion of *God* includes Goodneſs, ſo the Notion of Goodneſs includes Diffuſiveneſs; without Goodneſs he would ceaſe to be a Deity, and without Diffuſiveneſs he would ceaſe to be good. The being Good is neceſſary to the being God: for *Goodneſs* is nothing elſe in the Notion of it, but a ſtrong inclination to do good; either to find, or make an Object, wherein to exerciſe it ſelf, according to the Propenſion of its own Nature; and it is an Inclination of Communicating it ſelf, not for its own intereſt, but the good of the Object it pitcheth upon. Thus God is good by Nature, and his Nature is not without activity, he acts conveniently to his own Nature. *Thou art good, and doſt good.* And nothing accrews to him by the Communications of himſelf to others, ſince his Bleſſedneſs was as great before the frame of any Creature, as ever it was ſince the erecting of the World; ſo that the Goodneſs of Chriſt himſelf encreaſeth not the luſtre of his Happineſs: † *My goodneſs extends not to thee.* He is not of a niggardly and envious Nature; He is *too rich* to have any cauſe to envy, and *too good* to have any will to envy. He is as liberal as he is rich, according to the capacity of the Object about which his *Goodneſs* is exercis'd. The *Divine Goodneſs* being the *Supream Goodneſs*, is *Goodneſs* in the higheſt degree of Activity; not an idle, enclos'd, pent up *Goodneſs*, as a Spring ſhut up, or a Fountain ſealed, bubbling up within it ſelf, but bubbling out of it ſelf. A Fountain of Gardens to water every part of his Creation; *He is an Ointment poured forth* ‖: Nothing ſpreads it ſelf more than Oyl, and takes up a larger ſpace, whereſoever it drops. It may be no leſs ſaid of the *Goodneſs of God*, as it is of the *Fulneſs of Chriſt*, * *He fills all in all*: He fills Rational Creatures with Underſtanding, Senſitive Nature with Vigor and Motion, the whole World with Beauty and Sweetneſs. Every Taſte, every Touch of a Creature is a Taſte and Touch of Divine Goodneſs. Divine Goodneſs offers it ſelf in one ſpark in this Creature, in another ſpark in the other Creature, and altogether make up a good-

*Pſal. 119. 68.

† Pſ. 16. 2.

‖ Can. 1. 3.

* Eph. 1. 23.

a goodneſs inconceivable by any Creature. The whole Maſs and extracted Spirit of it is infinitely ſhort of the Goodneſs of the Divine Nature, imperfect ſhadows of that Goodneſs which is in himſelf.

Indeed, The more excellent any thing is, the more nobly it acts; How remotely doth Light, that excellent brightneſs of the Creation, diſperſe it ſelf? How doth that glorious Creature, which God hath ſet in the Heavens, ſpread its Wings over Heaven and Earth, roll it ſelf about the World, caſt its Beams upward and downward, inſinuate into all Corners, pierce the Depths, and ſhoot up its Rays into the Heights, encircle the higher and lower Creatures in its Arms, reach out its Communications to influence every thing under the Earth, as well as dart its Beams of Light and Heat on things above, or upon the Earth? *Nothing is hid from it*; * not from its Power, nor from its Sweetneſs. How communicative alſo is Water, a neceſſary and excellent Creature? How active is it in a River, to nouriſh the living Creatures engendred in its Womb? Refreſheth every Shore it runs by, promotes the propagation of Fruits for the Nouriſhment, and beſtows a Verdure upon the Ground for the delight of Man; and where it cannot reach the higher Ground in its Subſtance, it doth by its Vapours mounted up, and concocted by the Sun, and gently diſtilled upon the Earth, for the opening its Womb to bring forth its Fruits. † God is more prone to communicate himſelf, than the Sun to ſpread its Wings, or the Earth to mount up its Fruits, or the Water to multiply living Creatures. *Goodneſs* is his Nature. Hence were there internal Communications of himſelf from Eternity; Diffuſions of himſelf without himſelf in time, in the Creation of the World, like a full Veſſel running over. He created the World that he might impart his Goodneſs to ſomething without him, and diffuſe larger meaſures of his Goodneſs, after he had laid the firſt Foundation of it in its Being: And therefore he created ſeveral ſorts of Creatures, that they might be capable of various, and diſtinct meaſures of his Liberality, according to the diſtinct Capacities of their Nature; but imparted moſt to the Rational Creature, becauſe that is only capable of an Underſtanding to know him, and Will to embrace him. He is the higheſt Goodneſs, and therefore a communicative Goodneſs, and acts excellently according to his Nature.

* Pſ. 19. 6.

† *Tom.* 2. *p.* 926.

4. *God is neceſſarily Good.* None is neceſſarily Good but God; he is as neceſſarily Good, as he is neceſſarily God. His goodneſs is as inſeparable from his Nature as his Holineſs. He is good by Nature, not only by Will; as he is Holy by Nature not not only by Will; he is good in his Nature, and good in his Actions; and as he cannot be bad in his Nature, ſo he cannot be bad in his Communications: He can no more act contrary to this Goodneſs in any of his Actions, than he can un-God himſelf. 'Tis not neceſſary that God ſhould create a World; he was at his own choice whether he would create or no: But when he reſolves to make a World, 'tis neceſſary that he ſhould make it good, becauſe he is goodneſs it ſelf, and cannot act againſt his own Nature. He could not create any thing without goodneſs in the very act: The very act of Creation, or Communicating being to any thing without himſelf, is in it ſelf an act of Goodneſs, as well as an act of Power: Had he not been good in himſelf, nothing could have been endued with any goodneſs by him. In the act of giving Being, he is Liberal, the Being he beſtows is a diſplaying his own Liberality: He could not confer what he needs not, and which could not be deſerved, without being Bountiful. Since what was nothing, could not merit to be brought into Being, the very act of giving to nothing a Being, was an act of choice Goodneſs.

He could not create any thing without Goodneſs as the Motive, and the neceſſary Motive: His Goodneſs could not neceſſitate him to make the World, but his Goodneſs could only move him to reſolve to make a World; He was not bound to erect and faſhion it becauſe of his Goodneſs, but he could not frame it without his Goodneſs as the moving Cauſe. He could not create any thing, but he muſt create it Good. It had been inconſiſtent with the Supream Goodneſs of his Nature, to have created only Murderous, Ravenous, Injurious Creatures: To have created a Bedlam rather than a World. A meer heap of Confuſion would have been as inconſiſtent with his Divine Goodneſs, as with his Divine Wiſdom.

Again, When his Goodneſs had moved him to make a Creature, his Goodneſs would neceſſarily move him to be beneficial to his Creature; not that this neceſſity reſults from any Merit in the Creature which he had framed; but from the Excellency and Diffuſiveneſs of his own Nature, and his own Glory, the end for which he form'd it, which would have been obſcure, yea, nothing, without ſome degrees of his Bounty. What occaſion of Acknowledgments and Praiſe could the Creature have for its Being, if God had given him only a miſerable Being, while it was innocent in action: The Goodneſs of God would not ſuffer him to make a Creature, without providing Conveniencies for it, ſo long as he thought good to maintain its Being, and furniſhing it with that which was neceſſary to anſwer that End for which he created it; And his own Nature would not ſuffer him to be unkind to his Rational Creature, while it was innocent. It had been Injuſtice to inflict Evil upon the Creature, that had not offended, and had no relation to an offending Creature; The Nature of God could not have brought forth ſuch an act. * And therefore ſome ſay, That God, after he had created Man, could not preſently annihilate him, and take away his Life and Being. As a Soveraign he might do it, as Almighty he was able to do it, as well as create him; but in regard of his Goodneſs, he could not Morally do it: For had he annihilated Man as ſoon as ever he had made him, he had not made Man for himſelf, and for his own Glory; to be loved, worſhipped, ſought, and acknowledged by him: He would not then have been the End of Man; He had created him in vain, and the World in vain, which he aſſures he did not †. And certainly, if the gifts of God be without Repentance, Man could not have been annihilated after his Creation without Repentance in God, without any Cauſe, had not Sin entred into the World. If God did not ſay to Man, after Sin had made its entrance into the World, *Seek ye me in vain*; he could not, becauſe of his Goodneſs, have ſaid ſo to Man in his Innocence. As God is neceſſarily Mind, ſo he is neceſſarily Will; as he is neceſſarily Knowing, ſo he is neceſſarily Loving. He could not be Bleſſed, if he did not know Himſelf, and his own Perfection: Nor Good, if he did not delight in Himſelf, and his own Perfections. And this Goodneſs whereby he delights in Himſelf, is the ſource of his delight in his Creatures, wherein he ſees the footſteps of Himſelf. If he loves Himſelf, he cannot but love the Reſemblance of Himſelf, and the Image of his own Goodneſs. He loves Himſelf, becauſe he is the higheſt Goodneſs and Excellency, and loves every thing as it reſembles Himſelf, becauſe it is an efflux of his own Goodneſs: And as he doth neceſſarily love Himſelf, and his own Excellency, ſo

* *Coccei ſum Theo- log. p.* 91.

† Iſai. 45. 18, 19.

ſo he doth neceſſarily love any thing that reſembles that Excellency, which is the Primary Object of his Eſteem. But,

5. Tho' he be neceſſarily Good, yet *he is alſo freely Good.* The neceſſity of the Goodneſs of his Nature hinders not the liberty of his Actions: The matter of his acting is not at all neceſſary, but the manner of his acting in a good and bountiful way, is neceſſary, as well as free *. He created the World and Man freely, becauſe he might chooſe whether he would create it, but he created them good neceſſarily, becauſe he was firſt neceſſarily good in his Nature, before he was freely a Creator. When he created Man, he freely gave him a poſitive Law, but neceſſarily a Wiſe and Righteous Law; becauſe he was neceſſarily Wiſe and Righteous, before he was freely a Lawgiver. When he makes a Promiſe, he freely lets the Word go out of his Lips, but when he hath made it, he is neceſſarily a faithful Performer; becauſe he was neceſſarily True and Righteous in his Nature, before he was freely a Promiſer. God is neceſſarily good in his Nature, but free in his Communications of it: To make him neceſſarily to communicate his Goodneſs in the firſt Creation of the Creature, would render him but Impotent, good without liberty and without will: If the Communications of it be not free, the Eternity of the World muſt neceſſarily be concluded, which ſome anciently aſſerted from the Naturalneſs of God's Goodneſs, making the World flow from God as Light from the Sun.

* Gilbert. *de Dei Domine, p.* 6.

God indeed is neceſſarily good *Affectivè*, in regard of his Nature; but freely good *Effectivè*, in regard of the Effluxes of it to this or that particular Subject he pitcheth on. He is not neceſſarily Communicative of his Goodneſs as the Sun of his Light, or a Tree of its cooling Shade, that chooſeth not its Objects, but enlightens all indifferently, without any variation or diſtinction: This were to make God of no more Underſtanding than the Sun, to ſhine not where it pleaſeth, but where it muſt. He is an underſtanding Agent, and hath a Soveraign Right to chooſe his own Subjects. It would not be a Supream Goodneſs, if it were not a voluntary Goodneſs. 'Tis agreeable to the Nature of the higheſt Good, to be abſolutely free, to diſpenſe his Goodneſs in what methods and meaſures he pleaſeth, according to the free Determinations of his own Will, guided by the Wiſdom of his Mind, and regulated by the Holineſs of his Nature. He is not to *give an account of any of his matters* *. *He will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and he will have compaſſion on whom he will have compaſſion* †. And he will be good to whom he will be good: When he doth act, he cannot but act well, ſo it's neceſſary; yet he may act this good, or that good, to this or that degree, ſo it is free. As it is the Perfection of his Nature, 'tis neceſſary; as 'tis the communication of his Bounty, 'tis voluntary. The Eye cannot but ſee if it be open, yet it may glance upon this or that colour, fix upon this or that object, as it is conducted by the Will. God neceſſarily loves Himſelf, becauſe he is good, yet not by conſtraint, but freedom; becauſe his affection to himſelf is from a knowledge of Himſelf: He neceſſarily loves his own Image; becauſe 'tis his Image, yet freely, becauſe not blindly, but from motions of Underſtanding and Will. What neceſſity could there be upon him, to reſolve to communicate his Goodneſs? It could not be to make Himſelf better by it; for he had a Goodneſs uncapable of any addition: He confers a goodneſs on his Creatures, but reaps not a Harveſt of goodneſs to his own Eſſence from his Creatures. What Obligation could there be from the Creature, to confer a goodneſs on him to this or that degree, for this or that duration? If he had not created a Man, nor Angel, he had done them no wrong. If he had given them only a ſimple Being, he had manifeſted a part of his Goodneſs, without giving them a right to challenge any more of him. If he had taken away their Beings after a time when he had anſwered his End, he had done them no Injury: For what Law oblig'd him to enrich them, and leave them in that Being wherein he had inveſted them, but his ſole Goodneſs? Whatever ſparks of goodneſs any Creature hath, are the free effuſions of God's Bounty, the Offſpring of his own Inclination to do well, the ſimple favour of the Donor; not purchaſed, not merited by the Creature. God is as unconſtrained in his Liberty in all his Communications, as Infinite in his Goodneſs, the Fountain of them.

* Job 33. 13.

† Rom. 9. 15.

6. This Goodneſs is Communicative with the greateſt Pleaſure. *Moſes* deſired to ſee his Glory, God aſſures him, he ſhould *ſee his Goodneſs* *, intimating that his Goodneſs is his *Glory*, and his Glory his Delight alſo. He ſends not forth his Bleſſings with an ill Will; He doth not ſtay till they are ſqueez'd from him; He *prevents* Men with his *Bleſſings of Goodneſs* †; He is moſt delighted, when he is moſt diffuſive, and his pleaſure in beſtowing, is larger than his Creatures in poſſeſſing; He is not covetous of his own Treaſures; He lays up his Goodneſs in order to laying it out with a complacency wholly Divine. The jealouſie Princes have of their Subjects, makes them ſparing of their Gifts, for fear of giving them Materials for Rebellion. God's foreſight of the ill uſe Men would make of his Benefits, dampt him not in beſtowing his Largeſſes. He is uncapable of Envy: His own Happineſs can no more be diminiſh'd, than it can be encreaſed. None can over-top him in goodneſs, becauſe nothing hath any Good, but what is derived from him; his Gifts are without Repentance: Sorrow hath no footing in him, who is infinitely Happy, as well as infinitely Good. Goodneſs and Envy are inconſiſtent. How unjuſtly then did the Devil accuſe God? What God gives out of Goodneſs, he gives with joy and gladneſs. He did not only Will what we ſhould be, but rejoyce that he had brought us into Being. He *rejoyced* in his *Works* ‖. And his Wiſdom ſtood by him, *delighting in the habitable parts of the Earth* *. He beheld the World after its Creation with a Complacency, and ſtill governs it with the ſame pleaſure wherewith he reviewed it. Infinite Chearfulneſs attends Infinite Goodneſs. He would not give, if he had not a pleaſure that others ſhould enjoy his Goodneſs; Since he is better than any thing, and more Communicative than any thing; He is more joyful in giving out, than the Sun can be to run its Race in pouring forth Light. He is ſaid only to repent and grieve, when Men anſwer not the Obligations and Ends of his Goodneſs; which would be their own Felicity as well as his Glory. Though he doth not force greater degrees of his Goodneſs upon thoſe that neglect it, yet he denies them not to thoſe that ſollicite him for it. 'Tis always greatet pleaſure to him to impart upon the importunities of the Creatures, than it is to a Mother to reach out her Breaſt to her crying and longing Infant. He is not wearied by the ſollicitations of Men, he is pleaſed with their Prayers; becauſe he is pleaſed with the imparting of his own Goodneſs. He ſeems to be in travel with it, longing to be delivered of it into the lap of his Creature. He is as much delighted with Petitions for his Liberality in beſtowing his beſt Goodneſs, as Princes are

* Exod. 33. 18, 19.

† Pſal. 21. 3

‖ Pſal. 104. 31.

* Prov. 8. 31.

weary of the craving of their Subjects. None can be ſo deſirous to ſqueeze thoſe that are under them, as God is delighted to enlarge his hand towards them. 'Tis the nature of his Goodneſs to be glad of Mens ſollicitations for it: becauſe they are ſignificant valuations of it, and therefore fit occaſions for him to beſtow it. Since he doth not delight in the unhappineſs of any of his Creatures, he certainly delights in what may conduce unto their Felicity. He doth with the ſame delight multiply the effects of his Goodneſs, where his Wiſdom ſees it convenient, as he beheld the Firſt-fruits of his Goodneſs, with a complacency upon the laying the Top-ſtone of the Creation.

7. *The diſplaying of this Goodneſs was the Motive and End of all his Works of Creation and Providence* *. God being infinitely Wiſe, could not act without the higheſt Reaſon, and for the higheſt End: The reaſon that induced him to create, muſt be of as great an Eminency as Himſelf: The Motive could not be taken from without him, becauſe there was nothing but Himſelf in Being: It muſt be taken therefore from within Himſelf, and from ſome one of thoſe moſt Excellent Perfections whereby we conceive Him. But upon the exact Conſideration of all of them, none can ſeem to challenge that Honour of being the Motive of them, to reſolve the ſetting forth any Work but his own Goodneſs; This being the firſt thing manifeſt in his Creation, ſeems to be the firſt thing moving him to a Reſolution to Create; Wiſdom may be conſidered as directing; Power conſidered as Acting; but it is natural to reflect upon Goodneſs as moving the one to Direct, the other to Act: Power was the Principle of his Action, Wiſdom the Rule of his Action: Goodneſs the Motive of his Action: Principle and Rule are awakened by the Motive, and ſubſervient to the End. That which is the moſt amiable Perfection in the Divine Nature, and that which he firſt took notice of as the Foot-ſteps of them in the diſtinct view of every days Work, and the general view of the whole Frame, ſeems to claim the beſt right to be entitled the Motive and End of his Creation of Things.

* Amyral. *Moral. Tom.* 1. *p.*260.

God could have no End but Himſelf, becauſe there was nothing beſides Himſelf. Again, The end of every Agent is that which he eſteems good, and the beſt good for that kind of Action. Since nothing is to be eſteemed good but God, nothing can be the ultimate End of God but Himſelf and his own *Goodneſs*: What a Man wills chiefly, is his End; but God cannot will any other thing but Himſelf as his End, becauſe there is nothing Superiour to Himſelf in Goodneſs. He cannot will any thing, that ſupreamly ſerves Himſelf and his own Goodneſs as his End: for if he did, that which he wills, muſt be Superiour to Himſelf in Goodneſs, and then he is not God; or Inferiour to them in Goodneſs, and then he would not be Righteous, in willing that which is a lower Good before a higher. God cannot will any thing as his End of acting but Himſelf, without undeifying Himſelf. God's Will being Infinitely Good, cannot move for any thing but what is Infinitely Good; and therefore whatſoever God made, he made for Himſelf, * that whatſoever he made might bear a badge of this Perfection upon it, and be a diſcovery of his wonderful Goodneſs: For the making things for Himſelf doth not ſignifie any Indigence in God, that he made any thing to encreaſe his Excellency (for that is capable of no addition) but to manifeſt his Excellency. God poſſeſſing every thing eminently in Himſelf, did not create the World for any need he had of it; Finite things were unable to make any acceſſion to that which is Infinite. Man indeed builds a Houſe to be a ſhelter to him againſt wind and weather, and makes Clothes to ſecure him from cold, and plants Gardens for his recreation and health. God is above all thoſe little helps: he did not make the World for Himſelf in ſuch a kind, but for Himſelf, *i. e.* the manifeſtation of Himſelf, and the riches of his Nature. Not to make Himſelf bleſſed, but to diſcover his own bleſſedneſs to his Creatures, and communicate ſomething of it to them. He did not garniſh the World with ſo much Bounty, that he might live more happily than he did before; but that his rational Creatures might have fit Conveniencies. As the end for which God demands the performance of our Duty, is not for his own advantage, but for our good; † ſo the end why he conferr'd upon us the excellency of ſuch a Being, was for our good, and the diſcovery of his Goodneſs to us: For had not God created the World, he had been wholly unknown to any but himſelf; He produced Creatures that he might be known. As the Sun ſhines not only to diſcover other things, but to be ſeen it ſelf in its beauty and brightneſs. God would create things, becauſe he would be known in his Glory and Liberality; Hence is it that he created Intellectual Creatures, becauſe without them, the reſt of the Creation could not be taken notice of: It had been in ſome ſort in vain; for no Nature lower than an Underſtanding Nature, was able to know the Marks of God in the Creation, and acknowledge him as God. In this regard, God is good above all Creatures, becauſe he intends only to communicate his Goodneſs in Creation, not to acquire any Goodneſs or Excellency from them, as Men do in their framing of things. God is all, and is deſtitute of nothing, and therefore nothing accrues to him by the Creation, but the acknowledgment of his Goodneſs. This Goodneſs therefore muſt be the Motive and End of all his Works.

* Prov. 26. 4.

† Deut. 10. 13.

The third thing, *That God is good.*

1. *The more excellent any thing is in Nature, the more of goodneſs and kindneſs it hath.* For we ſee more of love and kindneſs in Creatures that are endued with Senſe, to their Deſcendents, than in Plants, that have only a Principle of Growth. Plants preſerve their Seeds whole that are incloſed in them; Animals look to their young only after they are dropt from them; yet after ſome time take no more notice of them than of a Stranger that never had any Birth from them. But Man, that hath a higher Principle of Reaſon, cheriſheth his Offspring, and gives them Marks of his goodneſs while he lives, and leaves not the World at the time of his Death without ſome Teſtimonies of it; Much more muſt God, who is a higher Principle than Senſe or Reaſon, be *good* and bountiful to all his Offspring. The more perfect any thing is, the more it doth communicate it ſelf. The Sun is more excellent than the Stars, and therefore doth more ſenſibly, more extenſively diſperſe its liberal Beams than the Stars do. And the better any Man is, the more charitable he is. God being the moſt excellent Nature, having nothing more excellent than himſelf, becauſe nothing more ancient than himſelf, who is the Ancient of Days; There is nothing therefore better and more bountiful than himſelf.

2. *He is the cauſe of all created Goodneſs, he muſt therefore himſelf be the Supream Good.* What Good is in the Heavens, is the Product of ſome Being above the Earth; and thoſe varieties of Goodneſs in the Earth, and ſeveral Creatures, are ſome where in their Fulneſs and Union: That therefore which poſſeſſes all thoſe ſcattered Goodneſſes in their fulneſs, muſt be all Good, All that Good

which

which is diſplay'd in Creatures; therefore Soveraignly beſt. Whatſoever Natural or Moral Goodneſs there is in the World, in Angels, or Men, or Inferiour Creatures, is a Line drawn from that Center, the Bublings of that Fountain. God cannot but be better then all, ſince the Goodneſs that is in Creatures is the Fruit of his own, if he were not good, he could produce no good: he could not beſtow what he had not. If the Creature be *good*, as the *Apoſtle* ſays, *every Creature is* *, he muſt needs be better than all, becauſe they have nothing but what is derived to them from him; and much more *goodneſs* than all, becauſe Finite Beings are not capable of receiving into them, and containing in themſelves all that goodneſs which is in an Infinite Being. When we ſearch for good in Creatures, they come ſhort of that ſatisfaction which is in God. † As the certainty of a firſt Principle of all things, is neceſſarily concluded from the Being of Creatures, and the upholding and ſuſtaining Power and Vertue of God is concluded from the mutability of thoſe Things in the World; whence we infer, that there muſt be ſome ſtable Foundation of thoſe tottering things, ſome firm Hinge upon which thoſe changeable Things do move, without which, there would be no Stability in the kinds of Things, no Order, no Agreement, or Union among them: So from the goodneſs of every Thing, and their uſefulneſs to us, we muſt conclude him Good, who made all thoſe Things. And ſince we find diſtinct Goodneſſes in the Creature, we muſt conclude that one Principle whence they did flow, excels in the Glory of Goodneſs: All thoſe little Glimmerings of Goodneſs which are ſcattered in the Creatures, as the Image in the Glaſs, repreſent the Face, Poſture, Motion of him whoſe Image it is, but not in the fulneſs of Life and Spirit, as in the Original; 'Tis but a Shadow at the beſt, and ſpeaks ſomething more excellent in the Copy. As God hath an Infiniteneſs of Being above them, ſo he hath a *Supremacy of Goodneſs* beyond them: What they have, is but a Participation from him; what he hath, muſt be infinitely ſuper-eminent above them. If any thing be good by it ſelf, it muſt be Infinitely Good, it would ſet it ſelf no bounds; we muſt make as many Gods, as parriculars of Goodneſs in the World: But being Good by the bounty of another, that from whence they flow muſt be the chief Goodneſs. ‖ 'Tis God's Excellency and Goodneſs, which like a Beam pierceth all things: He decks Spirits with Reaſon, endues Matter with Form, furniſheth every thing with uſeful Qualities.

* 1 Tim. 4. 4.

† Pſal. 4. 6.

* Ficinus in Com. Amor. Orat. 2. cap. 1326.

As one Beam of the Sun illuſtrates Fire, Water, Earth; ſo one Beam of God enlightens and endows Minds, Souls, and Univerſal Nature: Nothing in the World had its goodneſs from it ſelf, any more than it had its being from it ſelf. The Cauſe muſt be richer than the Effect.

But that which I intend is the *Defence of this Goodneſs.*

1. *The Goodneſs of God is not impair'd by ſuffering Sin to enter into the World, and Man to fall thereby.* 'Tis rather a Teſtimony of God's Goodneſs, that he gave Man an ability to be Happy, than any Charge againſt his Goodneſs, that he ſettled Man in a capacity to be Evil. God was firſt a Benefactor to Man, before Man could be a Rebel againſt God. May it not be enquired, whether it had not been againſt the Wiſdom of God, to have made a Rational Creature with Liberty, and not ſuffer him to act according to the Nature he was endowed with, and to follow his own choice for ſome time? Had it been Wiſdom to frame a Free Creature, and totally to reſtrain that Creature from following its Liberty? Had it been Goodneſs, as it were, to force the Creature to be happy againſt its will? God's Goodneſs furniſh'd *Adam* with a power to ſtand; was it contrary to his Goodneſs, to leave *Adam* to a free uſe of that Power? To make a Creature, and not let that Creature act according to the freedom of his Nature, might have been thought to have been a blot upon his Wiſdom, and a conſtraint upon the Creature, not to make uſe of that freedom of his Nature, which the Divine Goodneſs had beſtowed upon him. 'To what purpoſe did God make a Law to govern his Rational Creature, and yet reſolve that Creature ſhould not have his choice, whether he would obey it or no? Had he been really conſtrained to obſerve it, his Obſervation of it could no more have been call'd Obedience, than the acts of Brutes that have a kind of Natural conſtraint upon them by the inſtinct of their Nature, can be called Obedience: In vain had God endowed a Creature with ſo great and noble a Principle as Liberty. Had it been Goodneſs in God after he had made a Reaſonable Creature, to govern him in the ſame manner as he did Brutes, by a neceſſary Inſtinct? It was the Goodneſs of God to the Nature of Men and Angels, to leave them in ſuch a Condition, to be able to give him a voluntary Obedience, a nobler Offering than the whole Creation could preſent him with; And ſhall this Goodneſs be undervalued, and accounted mean, becauſe Man made an ill uſe of it, and turn'd it into wantonneſs? As the unbelief of Man doth not diminiſh the Redeeming Grace of God, * ſo neither doth the Fall of Man leſſen the Creating Goodneſs of God. Beſides, why ſhould the permiſſion of ſin be thought more a blemiſh to his Goodneſs, than the providing a way of Redemption for the deſtroying the Works of Sin, and the Devil be judged the Glory of it, whereby he diſcover'd a goodneſs of Grace that ſurpaſt the bounds of Nature? If this were a thing that might ſeem too obſcure, or deface the Goodneſs of God, in the permiſſion of the fall of *Angels* and *Adam*, it was in order to bring forth a greater Goodneſs in a more illuſtrious pomp to the view of the World: † *God hath concluded them all in Unbelief, that he might have Mercy upon all.* But if nothing could be alledged for the defence of his Goodneſs in this, it were moſt comely for an ignorant Creature, not to Impeach his Goodneſs, but adore him in his proceedings, in the ſame language the *Apoſtle* doth, *ver.* 33. *O the depth of the riches both of the Wiſdom and Knowledge of God! How unſearchable are his Judgments, and his ways paſt finding out?*

* Rom. 3. 3.

† Rom. 11. 32.

2. *Nor is his goodneſs prejudic'd, by not making all things the equal Subjects of it.*

1. *'Tis true all things are not Subjects of an equal Goodneſs.* The Goodneſs of God is not ſo illuſtriouſly manifeſted in one thing as another. In the Creation he hath dropt goodneſs upon ſome, in giving them Beings and Senſe; and pour'd it upon others, in endowing them with Underſtanding and Reaſon. The *Sun* is full of Light, but it hath a want of Senſe; *Brutes* excel in the vigor of Senſe, but they are deſtitute of the Light of Reaſon: *Man* hath a Mind and Reaſon conferr'd on him, but he hath neither the acuteneſs of Mind, nor the quickneſs of Motion equal with an Angel. In Providence alſo he doth give abundance: and opens his hand to ſome, to others he is more ſparing; He gives greater gifts of Knowledge to ſome, while he lets others remain in Ignorance; he ſtrikes down ſome, and raiſeth others; He afflicts ſome with a continual Pain, while he bleſſeth others with an uninterrupted Health; He hath choſen one Nation wherein to ſet up his Goſpel Sun, and leaves

another benighted in their own Ignorance. *Known was God in Judea, they were a peculiar People alone* * Deut. 12. 4. *of all the Nations of the Earth* *. He was not equally good to the Angels: He held forth his hand to ſupport ſome in their happy Habitation, while he ſuffered others to ſink in irreparable Ruine; and he is not ſo diffuſive here of his Goodneſs to his own, as he will be in Heaven. Here their Sun is ſometimes clouded, but there all Clouds and Shades will be blown away, and melted into nothing: Inſtead of Drops here, there will be above Rivers of Life. Is any Creature deſtitute of the open Marks of his Goodneſs, tho' all are not enrich'd with thoſe ſignal Characters which he vouchſafes to others? He that is unerring pronounced *every thing good* diſtinctly in its Production, and the whole good in † Gen. 1. 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31. its Univerſal Perfection. † Tho' he made not all things *equally good*, yet he made nothing evil; and tho' one Creature in regard of its Nature, may be better than another, yet an Inferiour Creature, in regard of its uſefulneſs in the order of the Creation, may be better than a Superiour. The Earth hath a goodneſs in bringing forth Fruits, and the Waters in the Sea a goodneſs in multiplying Food. That any of us have a Being, is goodneſs; that we have not ſo healthful a Being as others, is unequal, but not unjuſt goodneſs. He is good to all, tho' not in the ſame degree. *The whole Earth is full of* ‖ Pſal. 119. 64. *his Mercy* ‖. A good Man is good to his Cattle, to his Servants; he makes a proviſion for all, but he beſtows not thoſe Floods of Bounty upon them, that he doth upon his Children. As there are *va-* * 1 Cor. 12. 4. *rious Gifts*, but *one Spirit* *; ſo there are *various Diſtributions*, but from *one Goodneſs*; The Drops as well as the fuller Streams, are of the ſame Fountain, and reliſh of the Nature of it; And tho' he do not make all Men partake of the riches of his Grace after the corruption of their Nature, Is his Goodneſs diſgraced hereby? Or doth he merit the Title of Cruelty? Will any diminiſh the goodneſs of a Father, for his not ſetting up his Son, after he hath fooliſhly and wilfully proved Bankrupt; or not rather admire his liberality in giving him ſo large a Stock to Trade with, when he firſt ſet him up in the World?

2. *The goodneſs of God to Creatures, is to be meaſured by their diſtinct Uſefulneſs to the Common End.* It were better for a Toad or Serpent to be a Man, *i. e.* better for the Creature it ſelf, if it were advanced to a higher degree of Being, but not better for the Univerſe: He could have made every Pebble a living Creature, and every living Creature a Rational one: But that he made every thing as we ſee, it was a goodneſs to the Creature it ſelf; But that he did not make it of a higher Elevation in Nature, was a part of his goodneſs to the Rational Creature. If all were Rational Creatures, there would have been wanting Creatures of an Inferiour Nature for their conveniency; There would have wanted the manifeſtation of the *variety* and *fulneſs of his goodneſs*. Had all things in the World been Rational Creatures, much of that goodneſs which he hath communicated to Rational Creatures, would not have appear'd: How could Man have ſhew'd his skill in Taming and Managing Creatures more mighty than himſelf? What Materials would there have been to manifeſt the goodneſs of God, beſtowed upon the reaſonable Creatures for framing Excellent Works and Inventions? Much of the Goodneſs of God hath lain wrapt up from Senſe and Underſtanding. All other things partake not of ſo great a Goodneſs as Man; yet they are ſo ſubſervient to that Goodneſs pour'd forth on Man, that little of it could have been ſeen without them. Conſider Man, every Member in his Body hath a goodneſs in it ſelf, but a greater goodneſs, as referred to the whole, without which, the goodneſs of the more Noble Part would not be manifeſted. The Head is the moſt excellent Member, and hath greater Impreſſions of Divine Goodneſs upon it, in regard that it is the Organ of Underſtanding: Were every Member of the Body a Head, what a deform'd Monſter would Man be? If he were all Head, where would be feet for Motion? and Arms for Action? Man would be fit only for Thought, and not for Exerciſe. The goodneſs of God in giving Man ſo noble a part as the Head, could not be known without a Tongue, whereby to expreſs the Conception of his Mind; and without Feet and Hands whereby to act much of what he conceives and determines, and execute the reſolves of his Will: All thoſe have a Goodneſs in themſelves, an Honour, a Comelineſs from the Goodneſs of God, * but not ſo great a Goodneſs as the * 1 Cor. 12. 22, 23. Nobler Part: Yet if you conſider them in their Functions, and refer them to that excellent Member which they ſerve, their Inferiour Goodneſs is abſolutely neceſſary to the goodneſs of the other, without which, the goodneſs of the Head and Underſtanding would lie in Obſcurity, be inſignificant to the whole World, and in a great meaſure to the Perſon himſelf that wants ſuch Members.

3. *The Goodneſs of God is more ſeen in this inequality.* If God were equally good to all, it would deſtroy Commerce, Unity, the Links of Humane Society; damp Charity, and render that uſeleſs which is one of the nobleſt and delightfulleſt Duties to be exerciſed here; It would cool Prayer, which is excited by wants, and is a neceſſary demonſtration of the Creatures dependance on God. But in this inequality, every Man hath enough in his Enjoyments for Praiſe, and in his Wants matter for his Prayer. Beſides, the inequality of the Creature is the Ornament of the World: What pleaſure could a Garden afford, if there were but one ſort of Flowers, or one ſort of Plants? Far leſs than when there is variety to pleaſe the Sight, and every other Senſe.

Again, The freedom of Divine Goodneſs, which is the Glory of it, is evident hereby; Had he been alike good to all, it would have look'd like a neceſſary, not a free Act: But by the inequality, it is manifeſt that he doth not do it by a Natural neceſſity as the Sun ſhines, but by a voluntary Liberty, as being the entire Lord, and free Diſpoſer of his own Goods: And that it is the gift of the Pleaſure of his Will, as well as the Efflux of his Nature; That he hath not a Goodneſs without Wiſdom, but a Wiſdom as rich as his Bounty.

4. *The Goodneſs of God could not be equally communicated to all, after their ſettlement in their ſeveral Beings.* Becauſe they have not a capacity in their Natures for it: He doth beſtow the Marks of his Goodneſs according to that natural Capacity of fitneſs he perceives in his Creatures: As the Water of the Sea fills every Creek and Gulf with different Meaſures, according to the compaſs each have to contain it; And as the Sun doth diſperſe Light to the Stars above, and the places below, to ſome more, to ſome leſs, according to the meaſures of their Reception. God doth not do good to all Creatures according to the greatneſs of his own Power, and the extent of his own Wealth, but according to the Capacity of the Subject: Not ſo much Good as he can do, but ſo much Good as the Creature can receive. The Creature would ſink, if God would pour out all his Goodneſs upon it: As *Moſes* would have periſhed, if God ſhould have ſhewn him all his Glory *. He doth manifeſt more * Exod. 33. 18, 20. Goodneſs to his Reaſonable Creatures, becauſe they

are

are more capable of acknowledging, and ſetting forth his Goodneſs.

5. *God ought to be allow'd the free diſpoſal of his own Goodneſs.* Is not God the Lord of his own Gifts; and will you not allow him the priviledge of having ſome more peculiar Objects of his love and pleaſure, which you allow without blame to Man, and uſe your ſelf without any ſenſe of a Crime? Is a Prince eſteem'd good, tho' he be not equally bountiful to all his Servants, nor equally gracious in pardoning all his Rebels; And ſhall the Goodneſs of the great Soveraign of the World be impeach'd, notwithſtanding thoſe mighty diſtributions of it, becauſe he will act according to his own Wiſdom and Pleaſure, and not according to Mens fancies and humours? Muſt purblind Reaſon be the Judge and Director, how God ſhall diſpoſe of his own, rather than his own Infinite Wiſdom and Soveraign Will? Is God leſs good, becauſe there are numberleſs nothings, which he is able to bring into being? He could create a World of more Creatures than he hath done: Doth he therefore wiſh evil to them by letting them remain in that nothing from whence he could draw them? No, but he denies that good to them, which he is able, if he pleaſed, to confer upon them.

If God doth not give that good to a Creature which it wants by his own demerit, can he be ſaid to wiſh evil to it; or only to deny that goodneſs which the Creature hath forfeited, * and which is at God's liberty to retain or diſperſe? Tho' God cannot but love his own Image where he finds it, yet when this Image is loſt, and the Devil's Image voluntarily received, he may chooſe whether he will manifeſt his Goodneſs to ſuch a one or no. Will you not account that Man liberal, that diſtributes his Alms to a great Company, tho' he rejects ſome? Much more will you account him good, if he rejects none that implore him, but diſpenſeth his Doles to every one upon their Petition: And is he not good, becauſe he will not beſtow a Farthing upon thoſe that Addreſs not themſelves to him? God is ſo good, that he denies not the beſt good to thoſe that ſeek him: He hath promiſed Life and Happineſs to them that do ſo. Is he leſs good, becauſe he will not diſtribute his Goodneſs to thoſe that deſpiſe him? Tho' he be Good, yet his Wiſdom is the Rule of diſpenſing his Goodneſs.

* Camero p. 30.

6. *The ſevere Puniſhment of Offenders, and the Afflictions he inflicts upon his Servants, are no violations of his Goodneſs.* The Notion of God's vindictive Juſtice is as naturally inbred, and implanted in the mind of Man, as that of his Goodneſs, and thoſe two Sentiments never ſhock'd one another. The Heathen never thought him bad becauſe he was Juſt, nor unrighteous becauſe he was Good. God being Infinitely Good, cannot poſſibly intend or act any thing but what is good: *Thou art good, and thou doſt good*; *i. e.* whatſoever thou doſt is good, whatſoever it be, pleaſant or painful to the Creature: * Puniſhments themſelves are not a Moral Evil in the Perſon that inflicts, tho' they are a Natural Evil in the Perſon that ſuffers them. In ordering Puniſhment to the Wicked, Good is added to Evil; In ordering Impunity to the Wicked, Evil is added to Evil. To puniſh Wickedneſs is Right, therefore Good: To leave Men uncontroul'd in their Wickedneſs, is Unrighteous, and therefore Bad. But again, Shall his Juſtice in ſome few Judgments in the World, impeach his Goodneſs, more than his wonderful Patience to Sinners is able to ſilence the Calumnies againſt him? Is not his hand fuller of gracious Doles, than of dreadful Thunderbolts? Doth he not oftner ſeem forgetful of his Juſtice, when he pours upon the Guilty the Streams of his Mercy, than to be forgetful of his Goodneſs, when he ſprinkles in the World ſome Drops of his Wrath?

*Pſal. 119. 68.

Boetius.

Firſt, *God's Judgments in the World, do not infringe his Goodneſs*; For,

1. *The Juſtice of God is a part of the Goodneſs of his Nature.* God himſelf thought ſo, when he told *Moſes*, he would make all his *Goodneſs* paſs before him *: He leaves not out in that enumeration of the parts of it, his Reſolution, by no means to clear the Guilty, but to viſit the Iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children †. 'Tis a property of *Goodneſs* to hate Evil, and therefore a Property of *Goodneſs* to puniſh it: 'Tis no leſs Righteouſneſs to give according to the deſerts of a Perſon in a way of Puniſhment, than to reward a Perſon that obeys his Precepts in a way of Recompence. Whatſoever is Righteous is Good; Sin is evil, and therefore whatſoever doth witneſs againſt it, is good: His Goodneſs therefore ſhines in his Juſtice, for without being Juſt he could not be Good. Sin is a Moral Diſorder in the World: Every Sin is Injuſtice: Injuſtice breaks God's Order in the World; there is a neceſſity therefore of Juſtice to put the World in Order. Puniſhment orders the Perſon committing the Injury, who when he will not be in the order of Obedience, muſt be in the order of ſuffering for God's Honour. The goodneſs of all things which God pronounced ſo, conſiſted in their order and beneficial helpfulneſs to one another: When this order is inverted, the goodneſs of the Creature ceaſeth: If it be a bad thing to ſpoil this order, Is it not a part of Divine Goodneſs to reduce them into order, that they may be reduced in ſome meaſure to their goodneſs? Do we ever account a Governour leſs in goodneſs, becauſe he is exact in Juſtice, and puniſheth that which makes a diſorder in his Government? And is it a diminution of the Divine Goodneſs, to puniſh that which makes a Diſorder in the World? As Wiſdom without Goodneſs would be a Serpentine Craft, and iſſue in Deſtruction; ſo Goodneſs without Juſtice would be impotent Indulgence, and caſt things into Confuſion. When *Abel*'s Blood cried out for Vengeance againſt *Cain*, it ſpake a good thing; Chriſt's Blood ſpeaking better things than the Blood of *Abel*, implies that *Abel*'s Blood ſpake a good thing; the Comparative implies a Poſitive *. If it were the goodneſs of that Innocent Blood to demand Juſtice, it could not be a badneſs in the Soveraign of the World to execute it. How can God ſuſtain the part of a Good and Righteous Judge if he did not preſerve Humane Society? And how would it be preſerved, without manifeſting himſelf by Publick Judgments againſt Publick Wrongs? Is there not as great a neceſſity that Goodneſs ſhould have Inſtruments of Judgment, as that there ſhould be Priſons, Bridewells, and Gibbets in a good Commonwealth? Did not the Thunderbolts of God ſometimes roar in the ears of Men, they would ſin with a higher hand than they do, fly more in the Face of God, make the World as much a Moral, as it was at firſt a Natural Chaos: The Ingenuity of Men would be damp'd, if there were not ſomething to work upon their Fears, to keep them in their due order. Impunity of the nocent Perſon is worſe than any Puniſhment. 'Tis a Miſery to want Medicines for the Cure of a ſharp Diſeaſe; and a Mark of Goodneſs in a Prince to conſult for the Security of the Political Body, by cutting off a Gangreen'd and Corrupting Member: And what Prince would deſerve the noble Title of Good, if he did not reſtrain by Puniſhment thoſe Evils which impair the Publick Welfare? Is it not neceſſary that the Examples of Sin, whereby

* Exod. 33.19.

† Exod. 34.7.

* Hebr. 12. 24.

others

others have been encourag'd to Wickedneſs, ſhould be made Examples of Juſtice, whereby the ſame Perſons, and others, may be diſcourag'd from what before they were greedily inclin'd unto? Is not a Hatred of what is bad and unworthy, as much a part of Divine Goodneſs, as a love to what is Excellent, and bears a Reſemblance to himſelf? Could he poſſibly be accounted Good, that ſhould bear the ſame degree of Affection to a prodigious Vice, as to a ſublime Vertue? And ſhould behave himſelf in the ſame manner of carriage to the Innocent and Culpable? Could you account him Good, if he did always with pleaſure behold Evil, and perpetually ſuffer the Oppreſſions of the Innocent under unpuniſh'd Wickedneſs? How ſhould we know the Goodneſs of the Divine Nature, and his Affection to the goodneſs of his Creature, if he did not by ſome acts of Severity witneſs his implacable averſion againſt Sin, and his care to preſerve the good Government of the World? If corrupted Creatures ſhould always be exempt from the effects of his Indignation, he would declare himſelf not to be Infinitely Good, becauſe he would not be really Righteous. No Man thinks it a Natural Vice in the Sun, by the power of its ſcorching heat, to dry up and conſume the unwholſom Vapours of the Air; nor are the Demonſtrations of Divine Juſtice any Blots upon his Goodneſs, ſince they are both for the defence and glory of his Holineſs, and for the preſervation of the beauty and order of the World.

2. *Is it not part of the Goodneſs of God to make Laws, and annex Threatnings; And ſhall it be an Impeachment of his Goodneſs to ſupport them?* The more ſevere Laws are made for deterring Evil, the better is that Prince accounted, in making ſuch proviſion for the welfare of the Community. The deſign of Laws, and the deſign of upholding the honour of thoſe Laws by the puniſhment of Offenders, is to promote Goodneſs and reſtrain Evil; The Execution of thoſe Laws muſt be therefore purſuant to the ſame deſign of Goodneſs, which firſt ſettled them. Would it not be contrary to Goodneſs, to ſuffer that which was deſign'd for the ſupport of Goodneſs, to be ſcorn'd and ſlighted? It would neither be Prudence nor Goodneſs, but Folly and Vice, to let Laws, which were made to promote Vertue, be broken with Impunity. Would not this be to weaken Vertue, and give a new Life and Vigour to Vice? Not only the Righteouſneſs of the Law it ſelf, but the Wiſdom of the Lawgiver would be expoſed to contempt, if the Violations of it remain'd uncontroul'd, and the Violence offer'd by Men paſſed unpuniſhed. None but will acknowledge the Divine Precepts to be the Image of the Righteouſneſs of God, and beneficial for the common good of the World; * *The Law is holy, juſt and good*, and ſo is every Precept of it: The Law was for no other end, but to keep the Creature in ſubjection to, and dependance on God: This dependance could not be preſerved without a Law, nor that Law be kept in Reputation without a Penalty; nor would that Penalty be ſignificant without an Execution. Every law loſeth the nature of a Law, without a Penalty; and the Penalty loſeth its vigour, without the infliction of it: How can thoſe Laws attain their end, if the Tranſgreſſions of them be not puniſhed? Would not the Wickedneſs of Mens hearts be encouraged by ſuch a kind of uncomely Goodneſs? And all the Threatnings be to no other end, than to engender vain and fruitleſs Fears in the Minds of Men? Is it good for the Majeſty of God to ſuffer it ſelf to be trampled on by his Vaſſals? To ſuffer Men by their Rebellion to level his Law with the wickedneſs of their own hearts; and by Impunity ſlight his own Glory, and incourage their Diſobedience? Who would give any Man, any Prince, any Father that ſhould do ſo, the name of a good Governour? If it were a Fruit of Divine Goodneſs to make Laws, is it contrary to Goodneſs to ſupport the honour of them? 'Tis every whit as rational, and as good to vindicate the honour of his Laws by Juſtice, as at firſt to ſettle them by Authority; As much goodneſs to vindicate it from Contempt, as at firſt to Enact it; As it is as much Wiſdom to preſerve a Law, as at firſt to frame it: Shall his Precepts be thought by him unworthy of a ſupport, that were not thought by him unworthy to be made? The ſame reaſon of Goodneſs that led him to frown them, will lead him to revenge them. Did evil appear odious to him, while he Enacted his Law; and would not his own Goodneſs, as well as his Wiſdom, appear odious to him, if he did never execute it? Would it not be a denial of his own Goodneſs, to be led by the fooliſh and corrupt Judgment of his Creatures, and ſlight his own Law, becauſe his Rebels ſpurn at it? Since he valued it before they could actually contemn it, would he not miſ-judge his own Law and his own Wiſdom, diſcount from the true value of them, condemn his own Acts, cenſure his Precepts as Unrighteous, and therefore Evil and Injurious? Remove the differences between Good and Evil, look upon Vice as Vertue, and Wickedneſs as Righteouſneſs, if he thought his Commands unworthy of a Vindication? How can there be any ſupport to the honour of his Precepts, without ſometimes Executing the ſeverity of his Threatnings?

* Rom. 7. 12.

And as to his Threatnings of Puniſhment for the breach of his Laws, are they not deſigned to diſcourage Wickedneſs, as the Promiſes of Reward were deſigned to encourage Goodneſs? Hath he not multiplyed the one to ſcare Men from Sin, as well as the other to allure Men to Obedience? Is not the ſame Truth engaged to ſupport the one as well as the other? And how could he be abundant in Goodneſs, if he were not abundant in Truth? Both are link'd together; * If he neglected his Truth, he would be out of love with his own Goodneſs; ſince it cannot be manifeſted in performing the Promiſes to the Obedient, if it be not alſo manifeſted in executing his Threatnings upon the Rebellious. Had not God annex'd Threatnings to his Laws, he would have had no care of his own Goodneſs. The Order btween God and the Creature wherein the Declaration of his Goodneſs conſiſted, might have been eaſily broken by his Creature: Man would have freed himſelf from ſubjection to God, been unaccountable to him. Had this conſiſted with that Infinite Goodneſs whereby he loves himſelf, and loves his Creatures? As therefore the annexing Threatnings to his Law, was a part of his Goodneſs; the Execution of them is ſo far from being a blemiſh, that it is the honour of his Goodneſs. The Rewards of Obedience, and the Puniſhment of Diſobedience refer to the ſame end, *viz.* the due manifeſtation of the valuation of his own Law, the glorifying his own Goodneſs, which enjoyned ſo beneficial a Law for Man, and the ſupport of that Goodneſs in the Creatures which by that Law he demands righteouſly and kindly of them.

* Exod. 34. 6.

3. Hence it follows, that *not to puniſh Evil would be a want of Goodneſs to himſelf.* The Goodneſs of God is an indulgent Goodneſs in a way of Wiſdom and Reaſon; not a fond Goodneſs in a way of Weakneſs and Folly: Would it not be a Weakneſs always to bear with the Impenitent? A want of expreſſing a goodneſs to Goodneſs it ſelf? Would not

not Goodneſs have more reaſon to complain for a want of Juſtice to reſcue it, than Men have reaſon to complain for want of Juſtice in the vindication of it? If God eſtabliſh'd all things in Order with Infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs, and God ſilently beheld for ever this Order broken, would he not either charge himſelf with a want of Power, or a want of Will to preſerve the Marks of his own Goodneſs? Would it be a kindneſs to himſelf to be careleſs of the breaches of his own Orders? His Throne would ſhake, yea, ſink from under him, if Juſtice, whereby he Sentenceth, and Judgment, whereby he Executes his Sentence, were not the ſupports of it. * *Juſtice and Judgment are the habitation of thy Throne*, מכון כסאך, the Stability or Foundation of thy Throne; So *Pſal.* 92. 2. Man would forget his Relation to God, God would be unknown to be Soveraign of the World, were he careleſs of the breaches of his own Order. † *The Lord is known by his Judgments which he executes.* Is it not a part of his Goodneſs to preſerve the indiſpenſible order between himſelf and his Creatures? His own Soveraignty, which is good, and the ſubjection of the Creature to him as Soveraign, which is alſo good; the one would not be maintain'd in its due place, nor the other reſtrain'd in due limits without puniſhment. Would it be a goodneſs in him to ſee Goodneſs it ſelf trampled upon conſtantly, without ſome time or other appearing for the relief of it? Is it not a Goodneſs to ſecure his own Honour, to prevent further Evil? Is it not a Goodneſs to diſcourage Men by Judgments, ſometimes from a contempt and ill uſe of his Bounty, as well as ſometimes patiently to bear with them, and wait upon them for a Reformation? Muſt God be bad to Himſelf, to be kind to his Enemies? And ſhall it be accounted an Unkindneſs and a Mark of Evil in him not to ſuffer himſelf to be always outrag'd and defied? The World is wrong'd by Sin, as well as God is injur'd by it. How could God be good to himſelf, if he righted not his own Honour? Or be a good Governor of the World, if he did not ſometimes witneſs againſt the Injuries it receives ſometimes from the works of his hands? Would he be good to himſelf as a God, to be careleſs of his own Honour? Or good as the Rector of the World, and be regardleſs of the Worlds Confuſion?

* Pſal. 89. 14.

† Pſal. 9. 16.

That God ſhould give an Eternal Good to that Creature that declines its Duty, and deſpiſeth his Soveraignty, is not agreeable to the goodneſs of his Wiſdom, or that of his Righteouſneſs; 'Tis a part of God's goodneſs to love himſelf: Would he love his Soveraignty, if he ſaw it daily ſlighted, without ſometimes diſcovering how much he values the *honour* of it? Would he have any eſteem for his own *Goodneſs*, if he beheld it trampled upon, without any Will to vindicate it? Doth Mercy deſerve the name of Cruelty, becauſe it pleads againſt a Creature that hath ſo often abuſed it, and hath refuſed to have any pity exercis'd towards it in a righteous and regular way? Is Soveraignty deſtitute of *Goodneſs*, becauſe it preſerves its Honour againſt one that would not have it reign over him? Would he not ſeem by ſuch a regardleſneſs to renounce his own Eſſence, undervalue and undermine his own *Goodneſs*, if he had not an implacable Averſion to whatſoever is contrary to it? If Men turn Grace into Wantonneſs, is it not more reaſonable he ſhould turn his Grace into Juſtice?

All his Attributes, which are parts of his *Goodneſs*, engage him to puniſh Sin; without it his Authority would be vilified, his Purity ſtain'd, his Power derided, his Truth diſgraced, his Juſtice ſcorned, his Wiſdom ſlighted: He would be thought to have diſſembled in his Laws, and be judg'd, according to the Rules of Reaſon, to be void of true *Goodneſs*.

4. *Puniſhment is not the primary intention of God.* 'Tis his *goodneſs* that he hath no mind to puniſh; and therefore he hath put a bar to Evil by his Prohibitions and Threatnings, that he might prevent Sin, and conſequently any occaſion of ſeverity againſt his Creature *: The Principal Intention of God in his Law, was to encourage *Goodneſs*, that he might reward it; And when by the commiſſion of Evil God is provoked to Puniſh, and takes the Sword into his hand, he doth not act againſt the Nature of his *Goodneſs*, but againſt the firſt intention of his *Goodneſs* in his Precepts, which was to Reward: As a good Judge principally intends in the exerciſe of his Office, to protect good Men from Violence, and maintain the honour of the Laws; yet conſequently to puniſh bad Men, without which the protection of the Good would not be ſecured, nor the honour of the Law be ſupported: And a *good Judge* in the exerciſe of his Office, doth principally intend the encouragement of the *Good*, and wiſheth there were no Wickedneſs that might occaſion Puniſhment; and when he doth Sentence a Malefactor in order to the Execution of him, he doth not act againſt the *goodneſs* of his Nature, but purſuant to the Duty of his Place; but wiſheth he had no occaſion for ſuch Severity. Thus God ſeems to ſpeak of himſelf; † He calls the act of his Wrath, *his Strange Work, his Strange Act*; A Work not againſt his Nature, as the Governor of the World; but againſt his firſt Intention as Creator, which was to manifeſt his *Goodneſs*: Therefore he moves with a ſlow pace in thoſe Acts, brings out his Judgments with relentings of Heart, and ſeems to caſt out his Thunderbolts with a trembling hand: *He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men* ‖: And therefore he *delights not in the death of a Sinner* *: Not in Death as Death, in Puniſhment as Puniſhment, but as it reduceth the ſuffering Creature to the Order of his Precept, or reduceth him into order under his Power, or reforms others who are Spectators of the Puniſhment upon a Criminal of their own Nature: God only hates the Sin, not the Sinner: He deſires only the deſtruction of the one, not the miſery of the other: The Nature of a Man doth not diſpleaſe him, becauſe it is a Work of his own *goodneſs*; but the Nature of the Sinner diſpleaſeth him, becauſe it is a Work of the Sinners own extravagance. Divine Goodneſs pitcheth not its hatred primarily upon the Sinner, but upon the Sin: But ſince he cannot puniſh the Sin, without puniſhing the Subject to which it cleaves, the Sinner falls under his laſh. Who ever regards a good Judge as an Enemy to the Malefactor, but as an Enemy to his Crime, when he doth ſentence and execute him?

* Zarnovecius, *de ſatisfact. Par.* 1. c. 1. *p.* 3, 4.

† Iſaiah 28. 2.

‖ Lam. 3. 3.

* Ezek. 33. 11.

Suarez, *Vol.* 1. *de Deo, lib.* 3. *cap.* 7. *p.* 146.

5. *Judgments in the world have a goodneſs in them, therefore they are no Impeachments of the Goodneſs of God.*

1. *A Goodneſs in their Preparations.* He ſends not Judgments without giving Warnings: His Juſtice is ſo far from extinguiſhing his Goodneſs, that his Goodneſs rather ſhines out in the preparations of his Juſtice: He gives Men time, and ſends them Meſſengers to perſwade them to another temper of mind, that he may change his Hand, and exerciſe his Liberality, where he threatned his Severity. When the *Heathen* had Preſages of ſome Evil upon their Perſons or Countries, they took them for invitations to Repentance, excited themſelves to many acts of Devotion, implor'd his Favor, and often experimented it. The *Ninevites*, upon the Proclamation of the deſtruction of their City by *Jonah*, fell to petitioning him, whereby they ſignified, that they thought

thought him good, tho' he were juſt, and more prone to Pity than Severity; and their humble Carriage caus'd the Arrows he had ready againſt them to drop out of his hands *. When he brandiſheth his Sword, he wiſhes for ſome to ſtand in that Gap to mollifie his anger, that he might not ſtrike the fatal blow; † *I ſought for a man among them that ſhould make up the Hedge, and ſtand in the Gap before me in the Land, that I ſhould not deſtroy it.* He was deſirous that his Creatures might be in a capacity to receive the marks of his bounty ||: This he ſignified, not obſcurely to *Moſes*, *Exod.* 32. 10. when he ſpoke to him to let him alone, that his anger might wax hot againſt the People, after they had made a Golden Calf and worſhipped it. *Let me alone*, ſaid God: Not that *Moſes* reſtrained him, ſaith *Chryſoſtom*, who ſpake nothing to him, but ſtood ſilent before him, and knew nothing of the Peoples Idolatry; but God would give him an occaſion of praying for them, that he might exerciſe his Mercy towards them; yet in ſuch a manner, that the People being ſtruck with a ſenſe of their Crime, and the horror of Divine Juſtice, they might be amended for the future; when they ſhould underſtand that their Death was not averted by their own Merit or Interceſſion, but by *Moſes*'s Patronage of them, and pleading for them. As we ſee ſometimes Maſters and Fathers angry with their Servants and Children, and preparing themſelves to puniſh them, but ſecretly wiſh ſome Friend to intercede for them, and take them out of their hands: There is a *Goodneſs* ſhining in the preparations of his Judgments.

* Jonah 3. 9, 10.

† Ezek. 22. 30.

|| Creſſel *Anthelog. Decad.* 2. *p.* 162.

2. *A Goodneſs in the execution of them.* They are good, as they ſhew God diſaffected to Evil, and conduce to the glory of his Holineſs, and deter others from preſumptuous Sins: * *I will be glorified in all that draw near unto me*; in his Judgment upon *Nadab* and *Abihu*, the Sons of *Aaron*, for offering ſtrange Fire.

* Deut. 10. 3.

By them God preſerves the excellent Footſteps of his own *Goodneſs* in his Creation and his Law; and curbs the Licentiouſneſs of Men, and contains them within the bounds of their Duty. *Thy Judgments are good*, ſaith the *Pſalmiſt* *; *i. e.* Thy Judicial proceedings upon the Wicked: For he deſires God there, to turn away by ſome ſignal act the reproach the Wicked caſt upon him. Can there be any thing more miſerable than to live in a World full of wickedneſs, and void of the Marks of Divine Goodneſs and Juſtice to repreſs it? Were there not Judgments in the World, Men would forget God, be inſenſible of his Government of the World, neglect the Exerciſes of Natural and Chriſtian Duties; Religion would be at its laſt gaſp, and expire among them, and Men would pretend to break God's Precepts by God's Authority. Are they not good then, as they reſtrain the Creature from further Evils, affright others from the ſame Crimes, which they were inclinable to commit? He ſtrikes ſome, to reform others that are Spectators; as *Apollonius* tam'd Pigeons, by beating Dogs before them. Puniſhments are God's gracious Warnings to others, not to venture upon thoſe Crimes which they ſee attended with ſuch Judgments. The Cenſers of *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram* were to be wrought into Plates for a covering of the Altar, to abide there as a *Memento* to others, not to approach to the exerciſe of the Prieſtly Office, without an Authoritative Call from God †; and thoſe Judgments exerciſed in the former Ages of the World, were intended by Divine Goodneſs for Warnings, even in Evangelical times. *Lot*'s Wife was turned into a Pillar of Salt, to prevent Men from Apoſtacy: That uſe Chriſt himſelf makes of it, in the Exhortation againſt *turning back* ||. And * *The righteous ſhall waſh his Feet in the Blood of the wicked.* When God ſhall drench his Sword in the Blood of the Wicked, the Righteous ſhall take occaſion from thence to purifie themſelves, and reform their ways, and look to the paths of their Feet. Would not Impunity be hurtful to the World, and Men receive encouragement to ſin, if Severities ſometimes did not bridle them from the practice of their Inclinations? Sometimes the Sinner himſelf is reform'd, and ſometimes remov'd from being an Example to others. Tho' Thunder be an affrightning noiſe, and Lightning a ſearing flaſh, yet they have a liberal Goodneſs in them, in ſhattering and conſuming thoſe contagious Vapors which burden and infect the Air, and thereby render it more clear and healthful.

Pſal. 39.

† Num. 16. 38, 40.

|| Luke 17. 32, 33.

* Pſal. 58. 10.

Again; There are few acts of Divine Juſtice upon a People, but are in the very execution of them attended with demonſtrations of his *Goodneſs* to others; He is a Protector of his own, while he is a Revenger on his Enemies: When he rides upon his Horſes in anger againſt *ſome*, his Chariots are *Chariots of ſalvation to others* *. Terrour makes way for Salvation: The overthrow of *Pharaoh*, and the ſtrength of his Nation, compleated the deliverance of the *Iſraelites*. Had not the *Egyptians* met with their deſtruction, the *Iſraelites* had unavoidably met with their Ruine, againſt all the Promiſes God had made to them, and to the defamation of his former Juſtice in the former Plagues upon their Oppreſſors. The death of *Herod* was the ſecurity of *Peter*, and the reſt of the malic'd Chriſtians. The gracious deliverance of *Good Men* is often occaſion'd by ſome ſevere ſtroke upon ſome eminent Perſecutor: The deſtruction of the Oppreſſor is the reſcue of the Innocent.

* Hab. 3. 8.

Again; Where is there a Judgment but leaves more Criminals behind than it ſweeps away, that deſerv'd to be involv'd in the ſame fate with the reſt? More *Egyptians* were left behind to poſſeſs and enjoy the goodneſs of their fruitful Land, than they were that were hurried into another World by the overflowing Waves; Is not this a Mark of goodneſs as well as ſeverity?

Again; Is it not a goodneſs in him not to pour out Judgment, according to the greatneſs of his Power? To go gradually to work with thoſe whom he might in a moment blow to deſtruction with one breath of his Mouth?

Again; He ſometimes exerciſeth Judgments upon ſome, to form a new Generation for himſelf; he deſtroy'd an old World, to raiſe a new one more righteous: As a Man pulls down his own Buildings, to erect a ſounder and more ſtately Fabrick. To ſum up what hath been ſaid in this particular, How could God be a Friend to *Goodneſs*, if he were not an Enemy to *Evil*? How could he ſhew his enmity to *Evil*, without revenging the abuſe and contempt of his *Goodneſs*? God would rather have the Repentance of a Sinner, than his Puniſhment; but the Sinner would rather expoſe himſelf to the ſevereſt frowns of God, than purſue thoſe Methods wherein he hath ſettled the Conveyances of his kindneſs; *You will not come to me, that you might have life*, ſaith Chriſt. How is Eternity of Puniſhment conſiſtent with the Goodneſs of God? Nay, How can God be *good* without it? If Wickedneſs always remain in the Nature of Man, Is it not fit the Rod ſhould always remain on the Back of Man? Is it a want of *Goodneſs* that keeps an incorrigible Offender in Chains, in a *Bridewell*? While Sin remains, it's fit it ſhould be puniſh'd: Would not God elſe be an Enemy to his own *Goodneſs*, and ſhew favour to that which doth abuſe it, and is contrary to it? He hath threatned Eternal Flames

to

to Sinners, that he might the more ſtrongly excite them to a Reformation of their Ways, and a Practice of his Precepts.

In thoſe Threatnings he hath manifeſted his *Goodneſs*; And can it be bad in him to defend what his *Goodneſs* hath Commanded, and Execute what his *Goodneſs* hath Threatned? His Truth is alſo a part of his Goodneſs; for it is nothing but his Goodneſs performing that which it oblig'd him to do. That is the firſt thing, Severe Judgments in the World are no Impeachments of his Goodneſs.

2. *The Afflictions God inflicts upon his Servants, are no violations of his Goodneſs.* Sometimes God afflicts Men for their Temporal and Eternal good; for the good of their Grace in order to the good of their Glory; which is a more excellent Good than Afflictions can be an Evil. The Heathens reflected upon *Ulyſſes*'s hardſhip, as a Mark of *Jupiter*'s goodneſs and love to him, that his Virtue might be more conſpicuous. By ſtrong Perſecutions brought upon the Church, her Lethargy is cur'd, her Chaff purg'd, the glorious Fruit of the Goſpel brought forth in the Lives of her Children; the number of her Proſelytes multiply, and the ſtrength of her weak ones is encreaſed, by the Teſtimonies of Courage and Conſtancy which the ſtronger preſent to them in their Sufferings. Do thoſe good Effects ſpeak a want of *Goodneſs in God*, who brings them into this condition? By thoſe he cures his People of their Corruptions, and promotes their Glory, by giving them the honour of ſuffering for the Truth, and raiſeth their Spirits to a divine pitch. The Epiſtles of *Paul* to the *Epheſ. Philipp.* and *Coloſſ.* wrote by him while he was in *Nero*'s Chains, ſeem to have a higher ſtrain than ſome of thoſe he wrote when he was at liberty.

As for Afflictions, they are Marks of a greater meaſure of Fatherly Goodneſs than he diſcovers to thoſe that live in an uninterrupted Proſperity, who are not dignified with that glorious Title of *Sons*, as thoſe are that he *chaſteneth* *. Can any queſtion the *Goodneſs* of the Father that Corrects his Child to prevent his Vice and Ruine, and breed him up to Virtue and Honour? It would be a Cruelty in a Father leaving his Child without Chaſtiſement, to leave him to that Miſery an ill Education would reduce him to, *God judges us that we might not be condemn'd with the World* †. Is it not a *greater Goodneſs* to ſeparate us from the World to Happineſs by his Scourge, than to leave us to the condemnation of the World for our Sins? Is it not a greater *Goodneſs* to make us ſmart here, than to ſee us ſcorcht hereafter? As he is our Shepherd, it is no part of his Enmity or Ill-will to us, to make us feel ſometimes the weight of his Shepherds Crook, to reduce us from our ſtragling. The *viſiting our Tranſgreſſions with Rods, and our Iniquities with Stripes*, is one of the Articles of the Covenant of Grace, wherein the greateſt luſtre of his *Goodneſs* appears ‖. The advantage and gain of our Afflictions is a greater Teſtimony of his *Goodneſs* to us, than the pain can be of his Unkindneſs: The Smart is well recompenced by the acceſſion of clearer Graces.

* Heb. 12. 6, 7.

† 1 Cor. 11. 32.

* Pſal. 89. 33.

It is rather a high Mark of his *Goodneſs*, than an Argument for the want of it, that he treats us as his Children, and will not ſuffer us to run into that Deſtruction we are more ambitious of, than the happineſs he hath prepar'd for us, and by Afflictions he fits us for the partaking of, by *imparting his Holineſs* together with the inflicting his Rod *. That is the third thing, God is Good.

* Heb. 12. 10.

The fourth thing is, *The manifeſtation of this Goodneſs in Creation, Redemption*, and *Providence*.

1. *In Creation.* This is apparent from what hath been ſaid before, That no other Attribute could be the Motive of his *Creating*, but his Goodneſs; His *Goodneſs* was the cauſe that he made any thing, and his *Wiſdom* was the cauſe that he made every thing in order and harmony: He pronounced *every thing good, i. e.* ſuch as became his *Goodneſs* to bring forth into being, and reſted in them more, as they were Stamps of his *Goodneſs*, than as they were Marks of his *Power*, or Beams of his *Wiſdom*: And if all Creatures were able to anſwer to this Queſtion, *What that was which created them?* the Anſwer would be, *Almighty Power*, but employ'd by the motion of *Infinite Goodneſs* *. All the varieties of Creatures are ſo many Apparitions of this *Goodneſs*. Tho' God be one, yet he cannot appear as a God, but in variety. As the greatneſs of Power is not manifeſt but in variety of Works, and an acute Underſtanding not diſcover'd, but in variety of Reaſonings; ſo an Infinite Goodneſs is not ſo apparent, as in variety of Communications.

* Cuſan. p. 228.

1. *The Creation proceeds from Goodneſs.* 'Tis the *Goodneſs* of God to extract ſuch multitude of things from the depths of nothing. Becauſe God is good, things have a Being; if he had not been good, nothing could have been good; Nothing could have imparted that which it poſſeſſed not: Nothing but *goodneſs* could have communicated to things an Excellency, which before they wanted. Being is much more excellent than Nothing. By this *Goodneſs* therefore the whole Creation was brought out of the dark Womb of Nothing: This form'd their Natures, this beautified them with their ſeveral Ornaments and Perfections, whereby every thing was enabled to act for the *good* of the Common World. God did not create things becauſe he was a living Being, but becauſe he was a good Being: No Creature brought forth any thing in the World meerly becauſe it is, but becauſe it is *good*, and by a communicated *goodneſs* fitted for ſuch a Production. If God had been the Creating Principle of things, only as he was a Living Being, or as he was an underſtanding Being, then all things ſhould have partaken of Life and Underſtanding; becauſe all things were to bear ſome Characters of the Deity upon them. If by Underſtanding ſolely God were the Creator of all things, all things ſhould have born the Mark of the Deity upon them, and ſhould have been more or leſs underſtanding; but he Created things as he was *good*, and by *Goodneſs* he renders all things more or leſs like himſelf: Hence every thing is accounted more noble, not in regard of its Being, but in regard of the Beneficialneſs of its Nature. The Being of things was not the End of God in Creating, but the Goodneſs of their Being: God did not reſt from his Works, becauſe they were his Works, *i. e.* becauſe they had a Being, but becauſe they had a *good Being*; * becauſe they were naturally *uſeful* to the Univerſe: Nothing was more pleaſing to him, than to behold thoſe Shadows and Copies of his own *Goodneſs* in his Works.

* Gen. 1.

2. *Creation was the firſt act of Goodneſs without himſelf.* * When he was alone from Eternity, he contented himſelf with himſelf, abounding in his own Bleſſedneſs, delighting in that abundance: He was incomprehenſively rich in the poſſeſſion of an unſtain'd Felicity. † This Creation was the firſt Efflux of his *Goodneſs* without himſelf: For the Work of Creation cannot be called a Work of Mercy: Mercy ſuppoſeth a Creature miſerable; but that which hath no Being, is ſubject to no Miſery: For to be miſerable, ſuppoſeth a Nature in Being, and depriv'd of that *Good* which belongs to the pleaſure and felicity of Nature; but ſince there was no Being, there could be no Miſery: The Creation therefore was not an act of Mercy, but an act of ſole Goodneſs: and therefore it was the Speech of

* Petav. *Theolog. Dogmat. Tom.* 1. *p.* 402.

† Leſſius *de perfect. div.* p. 100.

an *Heathen* ‖ That *when God firſt ſet upon the Creation of the World, he transform'd himſelf into Love and Goodneſs*, Ἐις ἔρωτα μεταβλῆθαι τὸν θεὸν μέλλοντα δημιουργεῖν. This led forth and animated his Power, the firſt moment it drew the Univerſe out of the Womb of Nothing. And,

‖ Pherecydes.

3. *There is not one Creature but hath a Character of his Goodneſs.* The whole World is a Map to repreſent, and a Herald to proclaim this Perfection. 'Tis as difficult not to ſee ſomething of it in every Creature with the Eye of our Minds, as it is not to ſee the Beams of the ſhining Sun with thoſe of our Bodies. * *He is good to all:* He is therefore good in all; not a drop of the Creation, but is a drop of his Goodneſs.

* Pſal. 145. 9.

Theſe are the Colours worn upon the Heads of every Creature. As in every Spark the light of the Fire is manifeſted, ſo doth every grain of the Creation wear the viſible Badges of this Perfection. In all the Lights, the Father of Lights hath made the Riches of Goodneſs apparent; No Creature is ſilent in it, 'tis legible to all Nations in every work of his hands; that as it is ſaid of Chriſt, * *In the Volume of thy Book it is written of me*; In the Volume of the Book of the Scripture 'tis written of me, and my Goodneſs in Redemption: So it may be ſaid of God, In the *Volume* of the Book of the Creature 'tis written of me, and my Goodneſs in Creation. Every Creature is a Page in this Book, whoſe *Line is gone through all the Earth, and their Words to the end of the World* †. Tho' indeed the leſs goodneſs in ſome is obſcur'd by the more reſplendent Goodneſs he hath imparted unto others: What an admirable piece of Goodneſs is it to communicate Life to a Fly? How ſhould we ſtand gazing upon it, till we turn our Eye inwards, and view our own Frame, which is much more raviſhing?

* Pſ. 40. 7.

† Pſ. 19. 4.

But let us ſee the Goodneſs of God in the Creation of Man.

1. *In the Being and Nature of Man.* God hath with a liberal hand conferr'd upon every Creature the beſt Being it was capable of in that Station and Order, and conducing to that end and uſe in the World he intended it for: But when you have run over all the meaſures of Goodneſs God hath poured forth upon other Creatures, you will find a greater fulneſs of it in the Nature of Man, whom he hath placed in a more ſublime condition, and endued with choicer Prerogatives than other Creatures: He was made but little lower than the Angels, and much more loftily crown'd with glory and honour than other Creatures *. Had it not been for Divine Goodneſs, this excellent Creature had lain wrapt up in the Abyſs of nothing; Or if he had call'd it out of nothing, there might have been leſs of Skill, and leſs of Goodneſs diſplay'd in the forming of it, and a leſſer kind of Being imparted to it, than what he hath conferr'd.

* Pſal. 8. 5.

1. *How much of Goodneſs is viſible in his Body?* God drew out ſome part of the Duſt of the Ground, and copy'd out this Perfection, as well as that of his Power, on that mean matter, by erecting it into the form of Man, quickening that Earth by the Inſpiration of a *living Soul* *: Of this Matter he compos'd an excellent Body, in regard of the Majeſty of the Face, Erectneſs of its Stature, and Grace of every part: How neatly hath he wrought this *Tabernacle of Clay, this Earthly Houſe*, as the *Apoſtle* calls it †? A curious wrought piece of Needle-work, a comely Artifice, ‖ an embroider'd Caſe for an Harmonious Lute: What *variety of Members*, with a due proportion, without confuſion, beautiful to ſight, excellent for uſe, powerful for ſtrength? It hath Eyes to conduct its *Motion*, to ſerve in Matter for the *Food* and *Delight* of the Underſtanding: Ears to let in the pleaſure of Sounds, to convey Intelligence of the Affairs of the World, and the Counſels of Heaven to a more noble Mind: It hath a Tongue to expreſs, and ſound forth what the learn'd Inhabitant in it thinks; and Hands, to act what the Inward Counſellor directs; and Feet to ſupport the Fabrick: 'Tis temper'd with a kindly heat and an oily moiſture for *Motion*, and endu'd with conveyances for Air to qualifie the fury of the heat, and nouriſhment to ſupply the decays of moiſture: 'Tis a Cabinet fitted by *Divine Goodneſs* for the encloſing a rich Jewel; a Palace made of Duſt, to lodge in it the Viceroy of the World: An Inſtrument diſpos'd for the Operations of the nobler Soul, which he intended to unite to that refined Matter: What is there in the ſituation of every part, in the proportion of every Member, in the uſefulneſs of every Limb and String to the Offices of the Body, and Service of the Soul? What is there in the whole Structure that doth not inform us of the *Goodneſs of God?*

* Gen. 2. 7.

† 2 Cor. 5. 1.

‖ Pſal. 139. 15.

2. But *what is this to that Goodneſs which ſhines in the Nature of the Soul?* Who can expreſs the Wonders of that Comelineſs that is wrapt up in this Mask of Clay? A *Soul* endu'd with a clearneſs of Underſtanding and freedom of Will: Faculties no ſooner fram'd, but they were able to produce the Operations they were intended for; A Soul that excelled the whole World, that comprehended the whole Creation; A Soul that evidenc'd the extent of its Skill, in giving Names to all that variety of Creatures, which had iſſued out of the hand of Divine Power *; A Soul able to diſcover the Nature of other Creatures, and manage and conduct their motions. In the Ruines of a Palace we may ſee the Curioſity diſplay'd, and the Coſt expended in the building of it; in the Ruines of this fallen Structure, we ſtill find it capable of a mighty Knowledge, a Reaſon able to regulate Affairs, govern States, order more Mighty and Maſſy Creatures, find out witty Inventions: There is ſtill an Underſtanding to irradiate the other Faculties, a Mind to contemplate its own Creator, a Judgment to diſcern the differences between Good and Evil, Vice and Virtue, which the *Goodneſs of God* hath not granted to any lower Creature. Theſe Excellent Faculties, together with the Power of Self-reflection, and the ſwiftneſs of the Mind in running over the things of the Creation, are aſtoniſhing Gleams of the vaſt *Goodneſs* of that Divine Hand which ennobled this Frame. To the other Creatures of this World, God had given out ſome ſmall Mites from his Treaſury; but in the Perfections of Man, he hath open'd the *more ſecret* parts of his Exchequer, and liberally beſtow'd thoſe Doles, which he hath not expended upon the other Creatures on Earth.

* Gen. 2. 19.

3. Beſides this, He did not only make Man ſo noble a Creature in his Frame, but *he made him after his own Image in Holineſs.* He imparted to him a Spark of his own Comelineſs, in order to a communion with himſelf in Happineſs, had Man ſtood his ground in his Tryal, and uſed thoſe Faculties well, which had been the Gift of his Bountiful Creator: *He made Man after his Image*, after his own Image *; that as a Coin bears the Image of the Prince, ſo did the Soul of Man the *Image of God*: Not the Image of Angels, tho' the Speech be in the Plural Number, [*Let us make Man.*] 'Tis not to a Creature, but to a Creator; Let *us* that are his Makers, make him in the Image of his Makers. God created Man, Angels did not create him; God created Man in his *own* Image, not therefore in the Image of Angels: The Nature of God, and the Nature of Angels are not the ſame. Where in the whole Scripture is Man ſaid to be made after the

* Gen. 1. 26, 27.

the Image of Angels? God made Man not in the Image of Angels, to be conformed to them as his Prototype; but in the Image of the Bleſſed God, to be conform'd to the Divine Nature: That as he was conform'd to the Image of his Holineſs, he might alſo partake of the Image of his Bleſſedneſs, which without it could not be attain'd; for as the felicity of God could not be clear without an unſpotted Holineſs, ſo neither can there be a glorious Happineſs without Purity in the Creature; this God provided for in his Creation of Man, giving him ſuch accompliſhments in thoſe two Excellent Pieces of Soul and Body, that nothing was wanting to him but his own Will, to inſtate him in an invariable Felicity. He was poſſeſſed with ſuch a Nature by the hand of Divine Goodneſs, ſuch a loftineſs of Underſtanding, and purity of Faculties, that he might have been for ever happy, as well as the ſtanding Angels: And he was placed in ſuch a condition, that mov'd the envy of fallen Spirits; he had as much Grace beſtow'd upon him, as was proportionable to that Covenant God then made with him: The Tenor of which was, That his Life ſhould continue ſo long as his Obedience, and his Happineſs endure ſo long as his Integrity: And as God by Creation had given him an Integrity of Nature, ſo he had given him a power to perſiſt in it, if he would. Herein is the *Goodneſs of God* diſplay'd, that he made Man after his own Image.

4. As to the Life of Man in this World, *God by an immenſe Goodneſs copied out in him the whole Creation, and made him an Abridgment of the higher and lower World*; a little World in a greater one. The Link of the two Worlds, of Heaven and Earth, as the Spiritual and Corporeal Natures are united in him, the Earth in the Duſt of his Body, and the Heavens in the Cryſtal of his Soul: He hath the upper Springs of the Life of Angels in his Reaſon, and the neather Springs of the Life of Animals in his Senſe. God diſplay'd thoſe Virtues in Man, which he had diſcover'd in the reſt of the lower Creation; but beſides the communication which he had with Earth in his Nature, God gave him a participation with Heaven in his Spirit. A meer Bodily Being he hath given to the Heavens, Earth, Elements: a Vegetative Life, or a Life of Growth he hath vouchſafed to the Plants of the Ground: He hath ſtretched out his Liberality more to Animals and Beaſts by giving them Senſe. All theſe hath his *Goodneſs* link'd in Man, Being, Life, Senſe, with a richer Dole than any of thoſe Creatures have receiv'd in a Rational Intellectual Life, whereby he approacheth to the Nature of Angels. This ſome of the Jews underſtood. * *God breathed into his Noſtrils the Breath of Life, and Man became a living Soul*; חיים Breath of Lives, in the *Hebrew*; not one ſort of Life, but that variety of Lives which he had imparted to other Creatures: All the Perfections ſcatter'd in other Creatures, do unitedly meet in Man: So that *Philo* might well call him *every Creature, the Model of the whole Creation:* His Soul is Heaven, and his Body is Earth †. So that the Immenſity of his *Goodneſs* to Man, is as great as all that *Goodneſs* you behold in Senſitive and Intelligible things.

* Gen. 2. 7.

† Eugubin. lib. 5. cap. 9.

5. *All this was free Goodneſs.* God eternally poſſeſſed his own Felicity in himſelf, and had no need of the Exiſtence of any thing without himſelf for his ſatisfaction. Man before his Being could have no good qualities to invite God to make him ſo excellent a Fabrick; for being nothing, he was as unable to allure and merit, as to bring himſelf into being: Nay, he created a multitude of Men, who he foreſaw would behave themſelves in as ungrateful a manner, as if they had not been his Creatures, but had beſtow'd that rich variety upon themſelves without the hand of a Superiour Benefactor.

How great is this Goodneſs, that hath made us Models of the whole Creation, ty'd together Heaven and Earth in our Nature, when he might have rank'd us among the lower Creatures of the Earth, made us meer Bodies as the Stones, or meer Animals as the Brutes, and denied us thoſe Capacious Souls whereby we might both know him and enjoy him? What could Man have been more, unleſs he had been the Original, which was impoſſible? He could not be *greater*, than to be an Image of the Deity, an Epitome of the whole Creation. Well may we cry out with the Pſalmiſt, * *O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy Name*, the Name of thy Goodneſs *in all the Earth?* How more particularly in Man? *What is Man, that thou art mindful of him?* What is a little Clod of Earth and Duſt, that thou ſhouldſt ennoble him with ſo rich a Nature, and engrave upon him ſuch Characters of thy Immenſe Being?

* Pſal. 8. 1, 4.

6. *The Goodneſs of God appears in the Conveniencies he provided for, and gave to Man.* As God gave him a Being morally perfect in regard of Righteouſneſs, ſo he gave him a Being naturally *perfect* in regard of delightful *Conveniencies*, which was the fruit of *Excellent Goodneſs*; ſince there was no quality in man, to invite God to provide him ſo rich a world, nor to beſtow upon him ſo comely a Being.

1. *The World was made for Man.* Since Angels have not need of any thing in this World, and are above the Conveniencies of Earth and Air, it will follow, that Man being the nobleſt Creature on the Earth, was the more immediate End of the viſible Creation. All inferior things are made to be ſubſervient to thoſe that have a more excellent Prerogative of Nature, and therefore all things for Man, who exceeds all the reſt in Dignity: As Man was made for the honour of God, ſo the World was made for the ſupport and delight of Man, in order to his performing the Service due from him to God. The Empire God ſettl'd Man in as his Lieutenant over the Works of his Hands, when he gave him poſſeſſion of *Paradiſe*, is a clear manifeſtation of it. God put all things under his Feet, and gave him a deputed Dominion over the reſt of the Creatures under himſelf, as the abſolute Sovereign; *Thou madeſt him to have Dominion over the Works of thy Hands, thou haſt put all things under his Feet, all Sheep and Oxen, yea, and the Beaſts of the Field, the Fowl of the Air, and the Fiſh of the Sea, yea, and whatſoever paſſeth through the Paths of the Sea* *. What leſs is witneſs'd to by the Calamity all Creatures were ſubjected to by the Corruption of Man's Nature? Then was the Earth curs'd, and a black Cloud flung upon the Beauty of the Creation, and the ſtrength and vigor of it languiſheth to this day under the Curſe of God †, and *groans under that vanity the Sin of Man ſubjected it to* ‖. The Treaſons of Man againſt God, brought Miſery upon that which was fram'd for the uſe of Man: As when the Majeſty of a Prince is violated by the Treaſon and Rebellion of his Subjects, all that which belongs to them, and was before the free Gift of the Prince to them, is forfeit, their Habitations, Palaces, Cattle, all that belongs to them bear the Marks of his Sovereign Fury: Had not the Delicacies of the Earth been made for the uſe of Man, they had not fain under the Indignation of God upon the Sin of Man.

* Pſal. 8. 6, 7, 8.

† Gen. 2. 17, 18.

‖ Rom. 8. 20, 22.

God crown'd the Earth with his Goodneſs to gratifie Man; gave Man a right to ſerve himſelf of the delightful Creatures he had provided; * yea, and after Man had forfeited all by Sin, and God had waſh'd again the Creature in a Deluge, he renews the Creation, and delivers it again into the hand of Man, binding all Creatures to pay a reſpect to him,

* Gen. 1. 28, 29, 30.

and recognize him as their Lord, either ſpontaneouſly, or by force; † and commiſſions them all to fill the heart of Man with *food and gladneſs*: And he loves all Creatures as they conduce to the good of, and are ſerviceable to his prime Creature which he ſet up for his own glory: And therefore when he loves a Perſon, he loves what belongs to him: He takes care of *Jacob* and his Cattle; of penitent *Nineveh* and their Cattle: ‖ As when he ſends Judgments upon Men, he deſtroys their Goods.

† Gen. 9. 2, 3.

‖ Jonah 4. 11.

2. *God richly furniſh'd the World for Man.* He did not only erect a ſtately Palace for his Habitation, but provided all kind of Furniture as a mark of his Goodneſs for the entertainment of his Creature Man: He arch'd over his Habitation with a beſpangled Heaven, and floor'd it with a ſolid Earth, and ſpread a curious wrought Tapeſtry upon the Ground where he was to tread, and ſeem'd to ſweep all the Rubbiſh of the Chaos to the two uninhabitable Poles. When at the firſt creation of the Matter the Waters cover'd the Earth, and render'd it uninhabitable for Man, God drain'd them into the proper Chanels he had founded for them, and ſet a bound, that they might not paſs over, that they turn not again to *cover the Earth* *: They fled and *haſted away* to their proper Stations, † as if they were ambitious to deny their own Nature, and content themſelves with an Impriſonment for the convenient Habitation of him, who was to be appointed Lord of the World. He hath ſet up ſtanding Lights in the Heaven, to direct our Motion, and to regulate the Seaſons: The Sun was created, that Man might ſee to *go forth to his Labour* *: Both Sun and Moon, tho' ſet in the Heaven, were form'd to *give light* on the Earth *. The Air is his Aviary, the Sea and Rivers his Fiſhponds, the Valleys his Granary, the Mountains his Magazine; The firſt afford Man Creatures for Nouriſhment, the other Metals for Perfection: The Animals were created for the ſupport of the Life of Man, the Herbs of the Ground were provided for the maintenance of their Lives, and gentle Dews and moiſtening Showers, and in ſome places ſlimy Flouds appointed to render the Earth fruitful, and capable to offer to Man and Beaſt what was fit for their nouriſhment. He hath peopled every Element with a variety of Creatures, both for neceſſity and delight; all furniſh'd with uſeful qualities for the ſervice of Man. There is not the moſt deſpicable thing in the whole Creation, but it is endued with a Nature to contribute ſomething for our Welfare; either as Food to nouriſh us when we are healthful, or as Medicine to cure us when we are diſtemper'd, or as a Garment to cloath us when we are naked, and arm us againſt the cold of the Seaſon, or as a refreſhment when we are weary, or as a delight when we are ſad; All ſerve for Neceſſity or Ornament, either to ſpread our Table, beautifie our Dwellings, furniſh our Cloſets, or ſtore our Wardrobes: † *The whole Earth is full of his Riches.* Nothing but by the rich Goodneſs of God is exquiſitely accommodated in the numerous brood of things, immediately or mediately for the uſe of Man; All in the iſſue conſpire together to render the World a delightful Reſidence for Man. And therefore all the living Creatures were brought by God to attend upon Man after his Creation, to receive a Mark of his Dominion over them by the *impoſition of their Names* ‖. He did not only give variety of Senſes to Man, but provided variety of delightful Objects in the World for every Senſe: The Beauties of Light and Colours for our Eye, the Harmony of Sounds for our Ear, the Fragrancy of Odours for our Noſtrils, and a delicious Sweetneſs for our Palates: Some have qualities to pleaſure all, every thing a quality to pleaſure one or other. He doth not only preſent thoſe things to our view, as rich Men do in Oſtentation their Goods: He makes us the Enjoyers as well as the Spectators, and gives us the Uſe as well as the Sight: and therefore he hath not only given us the Sight, but the Knowledge of them. He hath ſet up a Sun in the Heavens, to expoſe their outward Beauty and Conveniencies to our Sight; and the Candle of the Lord is in us, to expoſe their inward qualities and conveniencies to our Knowledge, that we might ſerve our ſelves of, and rejoyce in all this Furniture wherewith he hath garniſh'd the World; and have wherewithal to imploy the inquiſitiveneſs of our Reaſon, as well as gratifie the pleaſure of our Senſe. And particularly, God provided for innocent Man a delightful Manſion-houſe, a place of more ſpecial Beauty and Curioſity, the Garden of *Eden*, a delightful Paradiſe, a Model of the Beauties and Pleaſures of another World, wherein he had placed whatſoever might contribute to the felicity of a Rational, and Animal Life, the Life of a Creature compoſed of Mire and Duſt, of Senſe and Reaſon *: Beſides the other Delicacies conſign'd in that place to the uſe of Man, there was a Tree of Life provided to maintain his Being, and nothing deny'd in the whole compaſs of that Territory but one Tree, that of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, which was no Mark of an Ill-will in his Creator to him, but a Reſerve of God's abſolute Soveraignty, and a Trial of Man's voluntary Obedience. What blur was it to the *Goodneſs of God*, to reſerve one Tree for his own propriety, when he had given to Man in all the reſt ſuch numerous Marks of his rich Bounty and Goodneſs? What *Iſrael* after Man's Fall enjoy'd ſenſibly, *Nehemiah* calls *great Goodneſs* †. How inexpreſſible then was that Goodneſs manifeſted to Innocent Man, when ſo ſmall a part of it indulg'd to the *Iſraelites* after the Curſe upon the Ground, is call'd as truly it merits, ſuch *great Goodneſs?* How can we paſs through any part of this great City, and caſt our Eyes upon the well-furniſh'd Shops, ſtor'd with all kinds of Commodities, without reflections upon this Goodneſs of God, ſtarting up before our Eyes in ſuch varieties, and plainly telling us, that he hath accommodated all things for our uſe, ſuited things both to ſupply our need, content a reaſonable Curioſity, and delight us in our aims at, and paſſage to our Supream End?

* Gen. 1. 9.

† Pſal. 104. 7, 8, 9.

* Pſal. 104. 22, 23.

* Gen. 1. 15, 17.

† Pſal. 104. 24.

‖ Gen. 2. 19, 20.

* Gen. 2. 9.

† Neh. 9. 25.

3. *The Goodneſs of God appears in the Laws he hath given to Man, the Covenant he made with him.* It had not been agreeable to the Goodneſs of God, to let a Creature governable by Law, be without a Law to regulate him, his Goodneſs then which had broke forth in the Creation, had ſuffer'd an eclipſe and obſcurity in his Government. As Infinite Goodneſs was the Motive to create, ſo Infinite Goodneſs was the Motive of his Government. And this appears,

1. *In the fitting the Law to the Nature of Man.* It was rather below than above his ſtrength; he had an Integrity in his Nature to anſwer the Righteouſneſs of the Precept. * God created Man *upright*; his Nature was ſuited to the Law, and the Law to his Nature; it was not above his underſtanding to know it, nor his Will to embrace it, nor his paſſions to be regulated by it: The Law and his Nature were like two exact ſtreight Lines, touching one another in every part when joyn'd together: God exacted no more by his Law, than what was written by Nature in his Heart: He had a knowledge by Creation to obſerve the Law of his Creation, and he fell not for want of a Righteouſneſs in his Nature: He was enabl'd for more than was commanded him, but wilfully indiſpos'd to leſs than he was able to perform. The Precepts *were eaſie*, not only be-

* Eccleſ. 7. 29.

becoming the Authority of a Soveraign to exact, but the Goodneſs of a Father to demand, and the Ingenuity of a Creature and a Son to pay. † *His Commands are not grievous*; the obſervance of them had fill'd the Spirit of Man with an extraordinary Contentment. It had been no leſs a pleaſure and a delightful ſatisfaction to have kept the Law in a Created State, than it is to keep it in ſome meaſure in a renew'd State: The *renew'd Nature* finds a ſuitableneſs in the *Law* to kindle a *delight* ‖: It could not then have any wiſe ſhook the *Nature* of an upright *Creature*, nor have been a burden too heavy for his Shoulders to bear. Tho' he had not a *Grace* given him above *Nature*, yet he had not a Law given him that ſurmounted his Nature: It did not *exceed* his *Created ſtrength*, and was ſuited to the Dignity and Nobility of a Rational Nature: It was a juſt Law *, and therefore not above the Nature of the Subject that was bound to obey it. And had it been impoſſible to be obſerv'd, it had been unrighteous to be Enacted: It had not been a matter of *Divine Praiſe*, and that ſeven times a day; as it is, † *Seven times a day do I praiſe thee, becauſe of thy righteous Judgments.* The Law was ſo righteous, that *Adam* had every whit as much reaſon to bleſs God in his *Innocence* for the *Righteouſneſs* of it, as *David* had with the Relicks of Enmity againſt it: His Goodneſs ſhines ſo much in his Law, as merits our Praiſe of him, as he is a ſovereign Lawgiver, as well as a gracious Benefactor in the imparting to us a Being.

† 1 John 5. 3.

Pſal. 1. 2.

* Rom. 7. 12.

† Pſal. 119. 164.

2. *In fitting it for the Happineſs of Man.* For the ſatisfaction of his Soul, which finds a *Reward* in the very act of *keeping* it, * *Great peace* in the *loving* it; for the *preſervation* of Human Society, wherein conſiſts the External felicity of Man. It had been inconſiſtent with Divine Goodneſs to enjoyn Man any thing that ſhould be oppreſſive and uncomfortable. *Bitterneſs* cannot come from that which is altogether *ſweet*: Goodneſs would not have oblig'd the Creature to any thing, but what is not only free from damaging him, but wholly conducing to his Welfare, and Perfective of his Nature. Infinite Wiſdom could not order any thing, but what was *agreeable* to Infinite Goodneſs. As his Laws are the moſt rational, as being the contrivance of Infinite Wiſdom; ſo they are the beſt, as being the Fruit of Infinite Goodneſs. His Laws are not only the acts of his Sovereign Authority, but the Effluxes of his Loving Kindneſs, and the Conductors of Man to an enjoyment of a greater Bounty. He minds as well the promotion of his Creatures Felicity, as the aſſerting his own Authority: As good Princes make Laws for their Subjects benefit, as well as their own honour. What was ſaid of a more difficult and burdenſome Law long after Man's Fall, may much more be ſaid of the eaſie Law of Nature in the ſtate of Man's Innocence, that it was *for our good*†. He never pleaded with the *Iſraelites* for the obſervation of his Commands upon the account of his Authority, ſo much as upon the ſcore of their *benefit* by them.

* Pſal. 119. 165.

† Deut. 10. 12, 13. Deut. 4. 40.

And when his *Precepts* were broken, he ſeems ſometimes to be more griev'd for Mens impairing their own Felicity by it, than for their violating his Authority; * *Oh that thou hadſt hearken'd to my Commandments, then had thy Peace been as a River!* Goodneſs cannot preſcribe a thing prejudicial; whatſoever it enjoyns, is beneficial to the Spiritual and Eternal Happineſs of the Rational Creature: This was both the deſign of the Law given, and the end of the Law. Chriſt in his Anſwer to the Young Man's Queſtion, refers him to the Moral Law, (which was the Law of Nature in *Adam*) as that whereby Eternal Life was to be gain'd: which evidenceth, that when the Law was firſt given as the Covenant of Works, it was for the happineſs of Man; and the end of giving it was, that Man might have Eternal Life by it: There would elſe be no ſtrength or truth in that Anſwer of Chriſt to that Ruler. And therefore *Stephen* calls the Law given by *Moſes*, which was the ſame with the Law of Nature in *Adam*, † *The Living Oracles*: He enjoyned Mens Services to them not ſimply for his own Glory, but his Glory in Mens Welfare: As if there were any Being better than himſelf, his Goodneſs and Righteouſneſs would guide him to love that better than himſelf; becauſe it is good and righteous to love that beſt which is moſt amiable: So if there were any that could do us more good, and ſhowre down more happineſs upon us than himſelf, he would be content we ſhould obey that as Soveraign, and ſteer our courſe according to his Laws: ‖ *If God be God, follow him; but if* Baal, *then follow him*: If the obſervance of the Precepts of *Baal* be more beneficial to you; if you can advance your Nature by his Service, and gain a more mighty Crown of Happineſs than by mine, follow him with all my Heart: I never intended to enjoyn you any thing to impair, but encreaſe your Happineſs. The chief deſign of God in his Law, is the Happineſs of the Subject; and Obedience is intended by him, as a means for the attaining of Happineſs, as well as preſerving his own Soveraignty. This is the reaſon why he wiſh'd that *Iſrael* had walk'd *in his ways, that their time might have endured for ever*, Pſal. 81. 13, 15, 16. And by the ſame reaſon this was his intendment in his Law given to Man, and his Covenant made with Man at the Creation, that he might be fed with the fineſt part of his Bounty, and be ſatisfied with Honey out of the Eternal Rock of Ages. To paraphraſe his Expreſſion there. The Goodneſs of God appears further,

† Acts 7. 38.

‖ 2 Kin. 18. 21.

3. *In engaging Man to Obedience by Promiſes and Threatnings.* A Threatning is only mention'd, *Gen.* 2. 17. but a Promiſe is imply'd: If Eternal Death were fixed for Tranſgreſſion, Eternal Life was thereby deſign'd for Obedience: And that it was ſo, the Anſwer of Chriſt to the Ruler evidenceth, that the firſt intendment of the *Precept* was the Eternal Life of the Subject, order'd to obey it.

1. *God might have acted in ſetling his Law only as a Sovereign.* Tho' he might have dealt with Man upon the ſcore of his abſolute Dominion over him as his Creature, and ſignified his pleaſure upon the right of his Sovereignty, threatning only a Penalty if Man tranſgreſs'd, without the promiſing a bountiful acknowledgment of his Obedience by a Reward as a Benefactor: yet he would treat with Man in gentle Methods, and rule him in a tract of *Sweetneſs* as well as *Sovereignty*; He would preſerve the Rights of his Dominion in the Authority of his Commands, and honour the condeſcenſions of his Goodneſs in the allurements of a Promiſe. He that might have ſolely demanded a compliance with his Will, would kindly Article with him, to oblige him to obſerve him out of love to himſelf as well as Duty to his Creator; that he might have both the intereſt of avoiding the threatned Evil to affright him, and the intereſt of attaining the promiſed Good to allure him to Obedience. How doth he value the Title of *Benefactor* above that of a *Lord!* when he ſo kindly ſolicits, as well as commands, and engageth to reward that Obedience which he might have abſolutely claim'd as his due, by enforcing fears of the *ſevereſt Penalty*. His *Sovereignty* ſeems to ſtoop below it ſelf for the elevation of his *Goodneſs*; and he is pleas'd to have his Kindneſs more taken notice of than his Authority. Nothing imported more condeſcenſion than his

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bringing forth his Law in the nature of a Covenant, whereby he ſeems to humble himſelf, and veil his Superiority to treat with Man as his equal, that the very manner of his Treatment might oblige him in the richeſt Promiſes he made to draw him, and the ſtartling Threatnings he pronounc'd to link him to his Obedience: And therefore is it obſervable, that when after the Tranſgreſſion of *Adam* God comes to deal with him, he doth not do it in that thundring Rigor, which might have been expected from an enrag'd Soveraign, but in a gentle Examination, * *Haſt thou eaten of the Tree whereof I commanded thee, that thou ſhouldſt not eat?* To the Woman he ſaid no more than, *What is this that thou haſt done?* And in the Scripture we find, when he cites the *Iſraelites* before him for their Sin, he expoſtulates with them not ſo much upon the abſolute right he had to challenge their Obedience, as upon the equity and reaſonableneſs of his Law, which they had tranſgreſt; that by the ſame Argument of *Sweetneſs* wherewith he would attract them to their Duty, he might ſhame them after their *Offence* †.

* Gen. 3. 11, 13.

† Iſa. 1. 2. Ezek. 18. 25.

2. *By the Threatnings he manifeſts his Goodneſs, as well as by his Promiſes.* He promiſes that he might be a Rewarder, and threatens that he might not be a Puniſher; the one is to elevate our *Hope*, and the other to excite our *Fear*, the two Paſſions whereby the Nature of Man is manag'd in the World. He imprints upon Man Sentiments of a Miſery by Sin in his thundring Commination, that he might engage him the more to embrace and be guided by the Motives of Sweetneſs in his gracious Promiſes. The deſign of them was to preſerve Man in his due bounds, that God might not have occaſion to blow upon him the Flames of his Juſtice; to ſuppreſs thoſe irregular Paſſions, which the Nature of Man (tho' created without any diſorder) was capable of entertaining upon the appearance of ſuitable Objects; and to keep the Waves from ſwelling upon any turning Wind, that ſo Man being modeſt in the uſe of the Goodneſs God had allow'd him, might ſtill be capable of freſh ſtreams of Divine Bounty, without ever falling under his Righteous Wrath for any Tranſgreſſion. What a proſpect of Goodneſs is in this proceeding, to diſcloſe Mans Happineſs to be as durable as his Innocence; and ſet before a Rational Creature the extreameſt Miſery due to his Crime, to affright him from neglecting his Creator, and making unworthy Returns to his Goodneſs? What could be done more by Goodneſs to ſuit that paſſion of fear which was implanted in the Nature of Man, than to aſſure him he ſhould not degenerate from the Righteouſneſs of his Nature, and violate the Authority of his Creator, without falling from his own Happineſs, and ſinking into the moſt deplorable Calamity?

3. *The Reward he promiſed manifeſts yet further his Goodneſs to Man.* It was his Goodneſs to intend a Reward to Man: No Neceſſity could oblige God to reward Man, had he continu'd obedient in his created State: For in all Rewards which are truly merited, beſides ſome kind of equality to be conſider'd between the Perſon doing Service, and the Perſon Rewarding, and alſo between the Act perform'd, and the Reward beſtow'd, there muſt alſo be conſider'd the condition of the Perſon doing the Service, that he is not oblig'd to do it as a Duty, but is at his own choice whether to offer it or no: But Man being wholly dependent on God in his Being and Preſervation, having nothing of his own, but *what he had receiv'd* from the hands of Divine Bounty, * his Service was due by the ſtrongeſt Obligation to God: But there was no natural Engagement on God to return a Reward to him; for Man could return nothing of his own, but that only which he had receiv'd from his Creator: It muſt be pure Goodneſs that gives a gracious Reward for a due Debt, to receive his own from Man, and return more than he had receiv'd. A Divine Reward doth far ſurmount the value of a Rational Service.

* 1 Cor. 4. 7.

It was therefore a mighty Goodneſs to ſtipulate with man, that upon his Obedience he ſhould enjoy an Immortality in that Nature. * The Article on man's part was Obedience, which was neceſſarily juſt, and founded in the Nature of man: He had been unjuſt, ungrateful, and violated all Laws of Righteouſneſs, had he committed any act unworthy of one that had been ſo great a Subject of Divine Liberality: But the Article on God's part of giving a perpetual Bleſſedneſs to Innocent Man, was not founded upon Rules of ſtrict Juſtice and Righteouſneſs, for that would have argu'd God to be a Debtor to Man; but that God cannot be to the Work of his hands, that had receiv'd the Materials of his Being and Acting from him, as the Veſſel doth from the Potter. But this was founded only on the Goodneſs of the Divine Nature, whereby he cannot but be kind to an innocent and holy Creature. The Nature of God inclin'd him to it by the Rules of *Goodneſs*, but the Service of Man could not claim it by the Rules of Juſtice without a ſtipulation: So that the Covenant whereby God oblig'd himſelf to continue the Happineſs of Man upon the continuance of his Obedience, in the original of it, ſprings from pure Goodneſs, tho' the performance of it upon the fulfilling the Condition requir'd in the Creature, was founded upon the Rules of Righteouſneſs and Truth, after Divine Goodneſs had brought it forth.

* Amyral. *Diſſertat.* p. 637, 638.

God did create Man for a Reward and Happineſs. Now God's implanting in the Nature of Man a deſire after Happineſs, and ſome higher Happineſs than he had in Creation inveſted him in, doth evidence, that God did not create Man only for his own Service, but for his attaining a greater Happineſs. All Rational Creatures are poſſeſs'd with a Principle of ſeeking after Good, the higheſt Good, and God did not plant in Man this Principle in vain: It had not been Goodneſs to put this Principle in Man, if he had deſign'd never to beſtow a Happineſs on Man for his Obedience: This had been repugnant to the *Goodneſs* and *Wiſdom of God*; and the *Scripture* doth very emphatically expreſs the Felicity of man to be the deſign of God in the firſt forming him and moulding a Creature, as well as working him a new Creature, * *He that hath wrought us for the ſelf-ſame thing, is God:* He fram'd this Earthly Tabernacle for a Reſidence in an Eternal Habitation, and a better Habitation than an Earthly Paradiſe. What we expect in the *Reſurrection*, that very ſame thing God did in Creation intend us for; but ſince the Corruption of our Natures, we muſt undergo a diſſolution of our Bodies, and may have juſt reaſon of a deſpondency, ſince Sin hath ſeem'd to change the courſe of God's Bounty, and brought us under a Curſe. He hath given us the Earneſt of his Spirit, as an aſſurance that he will perform that very ſelf-ſame thing, the conferring that Happineſs upon *renew'd Creatures*, for which he firſt form'd man in Creation, when he compacted his Earthly Tabernacle of the Duſt of the Ground, and rear'd it up before him.

* 2 Cor. 5. 1, 5.

4. *It was a mighty Goodneſs that God ſhould give Man an Eternal Reward.* That an Eternity of Reward was promis'd, is imply'd in the Death that was threatned upon Tranſgreſſion: Whatſoever you conceive the threatned Death to be, either for nature or duration upon Tranſgreſſion; of the ſame nature and duration you muſt ſuppoſe the *Life* to be, which is imply'd upon his conſtancy in his Integrity.

grity. As Sin would render him an Eternal Object of God's hatred, ſo his Obedience would render him an Eternally amiable Object to his Creator, as the ſtanding Angels are preſerved and confirmed in an intire Felicity and Glory. Though the Threatning be only expreſt by God, * yet the other is implied, and might eaſily be concluded from it by *Adam*. And one reaſon why God only expreſt the Threatning, and not the Promiſe, was, becauſe Man might collect ſome Hopes and Expectations of a perpetual Happineſs from that Image of God which he beheld in himſelf, and from the large Proviſion he had made for him in the World, and the Commiſſion given him to Increaſe and Multiply, and to Rule as a Lord over his other Works; whereas he could not ſo eaſily have imagined himſelf capable of being expos'd to ſuch an extraordinary Calamity as an Eternal Death, without ſome ſignification of it from God. 'Tis eaſily concludable, That Eternal Life was ſuppoſed to be promiſed, to be conferr'd upon him if he ſtood, as well as Eternal Death to be inflicted on him if he rebell'd †. Now this Eternal Life was not due to his Nature, but it was a pure Beam, and Gift of Divine Goodneſs: For there was no proportion between Man's Service in his Innocent Eſtate, and a Reward ſo great both for Nature and Duration: It was a higher Reward than can be imagined either due to the Nature of Man, or upon any Natural Right claimable by his Obedience. All that could be expected by him, was but a Natural Happineſs, not a Supernatural: As there was no neceſſity upon the accounnt of Natural Righteouſneſs, ſo there was no neceſſity upon the account of the Goodneſs of God to elevate the Nature of Man to a Supernatural Happineſs, meerly becauſe he created him: For tho' it be neceſſary for God, when he would create, in regard of his Wiſdom, to create for ſome End, yet it was not neceſſary that End ſhould be a Supernatural End and Happineſs, ſince a Natural Bleſſedneſs had been ſufficient for Man. And tho' God in creating Angels and Men Intellectual and Rational Creatures, did make them neceſſarily for himſelf and his own Glory, yet it was not neceſſary for him to order either Angels or Men to ſuch a Felicity as conſiſts in a clear Viſion, and ſo high a Fruition of himſelf: 'for all other things are made by him for himſelf, and yet not for the Viſion of himſelf. God might have created Man only for a Natural Happineſs, according to the Perfection of his Natural Faculties, and had dealt bountifully with him, if he had never intended him a Supernatural Bleſſedneſs, and an Eternal Recompence: But what a largeneſs of Goodneſs is here, to deſign Man in his Creation for ſo rich a Bleſſedneſs as an Eternal Life, with the Fruition of Himſelf? He hath not only given to Man all things which are neceſſary, but deſign'd for Man that which the poor Creature could not imagine: He garniſht the Earth for him, and garniſht him for an Eternal Felicity, had he not by ſlighting the Goodneſs of God ſtript himſelf of the preſent, and forfeited his future Bleſſedneſs.

2. *The Second thing is the manifeſtation of this Goodneſs in Redemption:* The whole Goſpel is nothing but one entire Mirror of Divine Goodneſs: The whole of Redemption is wrapt up in that one Expreſſion of the Angels Song, *Luke* 2. 14. *Good will towards Man.* The Angels Sang but one Song before, which is upon Record, but the Matter of it ſeems to be the Wiſdom of God chiefly in Creation, *Job* 38. 7. *compar. 9. v.* 5, 6, 8, 9. The Angels are there meant by the *Morning Stars*; The viſible Stars of Heaven were not diſtinctly form'd, when the Foundations of the Earth were laid: And the Title of the Sons of God verifies it, ſince none but Creatures of Underſtanding are dignified in Scripture with that Title. There they Celebrate his Wiſdom in Creation; here his *Goodneſs in Redemption*, which is the intire Matter of the Song.

1. *Goodneſs was the Spring of Redemption.* All and every part of it owes only to this Perfection the appearance of it in the World. This only excited Wiſdom to bring forth from ſo great an Evil as the Apoſtacy of Man, ſo great a Good as the Recovery of him. When Man fell from his created Goodneſs, God would evidence that he could not fall from his Infinite Goodneſs: That the greateſt Evil could not ſurmount the Ability of his Wiſdom to contrive, nor the Riches of his Bounty to preſent us a Remedy for it. Divine Goodneſs would not ſtand by a Spectator, without being Reliever of that Miſery Man had plung'd himſelf into; but by aſtoniſhing Methods it would recover him to Happineſs, who had wreſted himſelf out of his hands, to fling himſelf into the moſt deplorable Calamity: And it was the greater, ſince it ſurmounted thoſe Natural Inclinations, and thoſe ſtrong Provocations, which he had to ſhower down the Power of his Wrath. What could be the Source of ſuch a Procedure, but this Excellency of the Divine Nature; Since no Violence could force him, nor was there any Merit to perſwade to ſuch a Reſtoration? This under the name of his Love, is render'd the ſole cauſe of the Redeeming Death of the Son: It was to *commend his Love* with the higheſt Gloſs, and in ſo ſingular a manner that had not its parallel in Nature, nor in all his other Works, and reaches in the brightneſs of it beyond the manifeſted extent of any other Attribute *. It muſt be only a miraculous Goodneſs that induced him to expoſe the Life of his Son to thoſe difficulties in the World, and Death upon the Croſs for the freedom of ſordid Rebels: His great End was to give ſuch a demonſtration of the liberality of his Nature, as might be attractive to his Creature, remove its ſhakings and tremblings, and encourage its approaches to him. 'Tis in this he would not only manifeſt his Love, but aſſume the name of *Love*. By this Name the Holy Ghoſt calls him in relation to this good will manifeſted in his Son, † *God is Love. In this is manifeſt the Love of God towards us, becauſe that God ſent his only begotten Son into the World, that we might live through him.* He would take the Name he never expreſt himſelf in before. He was *Jehovah* in regard of the truth of his Promiſe; ſo he would be known of old: He is Goodneſs in regard of the grandeur of his Affection in the miſſion of his Son: And therefore he would be known by the Name of *Love* now in the days of the Goſpel.

2. *It was a Pure Goodneſs.* He was under no obligation to pity our Miſery, and repair our Ruines: He might have ſtood to the terms of the firſt Covenant, and exacted our Eternal Death, ſince we had committed an infinite Tranſgreſſion: He was under no Tie to put off the Robes of a Judge for the Bowels of a Father, and erect a Mercy Seat above his Tribunal of Juſtice *. The reparation of Man had no neceſſary connexion with his Creation; It follows not, that becauſe Goodneſs had extracted us from nothing by a mighty Power, that it muſt lift us out of wilful Miſery by a mighty Grace. Certainly that God who had no need of Creating us, had far leſs need of Redeeming us: For ſince he Created one World, he could have as eaſily deſtroyed it and rear'd another. It had not been unbecoming the Divine Goodneſs or Wiſdom, to have let Man perpetually wallow in that Sink wherein he had plung'd himſelf, ſince he was Criminal by his own Will, and therefore Miſerable by

*Gen. 2. 17.

† Suarez. *de Gratia, Vol. 1. p. 126, 127.*

* Rom. 5. 8

† 1 John 4. 8, 9.

* Rada *Controverſ. Part 3. p. 363.*

by his own Fault: Nothing could neceſſitate this Reparation. If Divine Goodneſs could not be oblig'd by the Angelical Dignity to repair that Nature, he is further from any Obligation by the meanneſs of Man to repair Humane Nature. There was leſs neceſſity to reſtore Man, than to reſtore the fallen Angels: What could Man do to oblige God to a reparation of him, ſince he could not render him a Recompence for his Goodneſs manifeſted in his Creation? He muſt be much more impotent to render him a Debtor for the Redemption of him from Miſery. Could it be a Salary for any thing we had done? Alas! we are ſo far from meriting it, that by our daily Demerits, we ſeem ambitious to put a ſtop to any further Effuſioni of it: We could not have complain'd of him, if he had left us in the Miſery we had courted, ſince he was bound by no Law to beſtow upon us the Recovery we wanted. When the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks of the Goſpel of *Redemption*, he giveth it the Title of the *Goſpel of the bleſſed God* †. It was the Goſpel of a God abounding in his own Bleſſedneſs, which receiv'd no addition by Man's Redemption; If he had been bleſſed by it, it had been a goodneſs to himſelf, as well as to the Creature: It was not an Indigent Goodneſs needing the receiving any thing from us: but it was a pure Goodneſs, ſtreaming out of it ſelf, without bringing any thing into it ſelf for the Perfection of it: There was no Goodneſs in us to be the Motive of his Love, but his Goodneſs was the Fountain of our Benefit.

† 2 Tim. 1. 11.

3. *It was a diſtinct Goodneſs of the whole Trinity.* In the Creation of Man we find a general Conſultation,* without thoſe diſtinct Labours and Offices of each Perſon; and without thoſe rais'd Expreſſions and Marks of Joy and Triumph as at Man's Reſtoration. In this there are diſtinct Functions: The Grace of the *Father*, the Merit of the *Son*, and the Efficacy of the *Spirit*: The Father makes the Promiſe of Redemption, the Son Seals it with his Blood, and the Spirit applies it; the Father adopts us to be his Children, the Son Redeems us to be his Members, and the Spirit Renews us to be his Temples. In this the Father teſtifies himſelf well-pleaſed in a Voice; The Son proclaims his own delight to do the Will of God; and the Spirit haſtens with the Wing of a Dove to fit him for his Work; And afterwards in his Apparition in the likeneſs of Fiery Tongues, manifeſts his Zeal for the propagation of the Redeeming Goſpel.

* Gen. 1. 26.

4. *The Effects of it proclaim his great Goodneſs.* 'Tis by this we are deliver'd from the Corruption of our Nature, the Ruine of our Happineſs, the deformity of our Sins, and the puniſhment of our Tranſgreſſions: He frees us from the Ignorance wherewith we were darkned, and from the Slavery wherein we were fetter'd. When he came to make *Adam*'s Proceſs after his Crime, inſtead of pronouncing the Sentence of Death he had merited, he utters a Promiſe that Man could not have expected: His Kindneſs ſwells above his provoked Juſtice, and while he chaſeth him out of Paradiſe, he gives him hopes of regaining the ſame or a better Habitation; and is in the whole, more ready to prevent him with the *Bleſſings of his Goodneſs*, than charge him with the horrour of his Crimes *: 'Tis a Goodneſs that pardons us more Tranſgreſſions than there are Moments in our Lives; and overlooks as many Follies as there are Thoughts in our Heart: He doth not only relieve our wants, but reſtores us to our Dignity. 'Tis a greater Teſtimony of Goodneſs to inſtate a Perſon in the higheſt Honour, than barely to ſupply his preſent Neceſſity; 'Tis an admirable Pity, whereby he was inclin'd to Redeem us, and an incomparable Affection whereby he was reſolv'd to exalt us. What can be deſir'd more of him than his Goodneſs hath granted? He hath ſought us out when we were loſt, and Ranſom'd us when we were Captives: He hath pardon'd us when we were Condemn'd, and rais'd us when we were Dead. In Creation he rear'd us from Nothing, in *Redemption* he delivers our Underſtanding from Ignorance and Vanity, and our Wills from Impotence and Obſtinacy, and our whole Man from a Death worſe than that Nothing he drew us from by Creation.

* Gen. 3. 15.

5. Hence we may conſider the *height of this Goodneſs in Redemption to exceed that in Creation.* He gave Man a Being in Creation, but did not draw him from unexpreſſible Miſery by that act. His Liberality in the Goſpel doth infinitely ſurpaſs what we admire in the Works of Nature: His Goodneſs in the latter is more aſtoniſhing to our Belief, than his Goodneſs in Creation is viſible to our Eye. There is more of his Bounty expreſt in that one *Verſe*, (* *So God loved the World that he gave his only begotten Son*) than there is in the whole Volume of the World: 'Tis an incomprehenſible *So*; a *So*, that all the Angels in Heaven cannot Analyze, and few Comment upon, or underſtand the Dimenſions of this *So*. In Creation he form'd an Innocent Creature of the Duſt of the Ground; in *Redemption* he reſtores a Rebellious Creature by the Blood of his Son: It is greater than that Goodneſs manifeſted in Creation.

* Joh. 3. 16

1. *In regard of the difficulty of effecting it.* In Creation meer nothing was vanquiſht, to bring us into Being; In Redemption ſullen Enmity was conquer'd for the enjoyment of our Reſtoration; In Creation he ſubdued a Nullity to make us Creatures; In Redemption his Goodneſs overcomes his Omnipotent Juſtice to reſtore us to Felicity; A word from the Mouth of Goodneſs inſpir'd the Duſt of Mens Bodies with a living Soul; but the Blood of his Son muſt be ſhed, and the Laws of Natural Affection ſeem to be overturn'd, to lay the Foundation of our renew'd Happineſs. In the firſt, Heaven did but ſpeak, and the Earth was form'd; In the ſecond, Heaven it ſelf muſt ſink to Earth, and be clothed with duſty Earth to reduce Man's Duſt to its Original State.

2. This Goodneſs is greater than that manifeſted in Creation, *in regard of its Coſt.* This was a more expenſive Goodneſs than what was laid out in Creation; *The Redemption of one Soul is precious* *, much more coſtly than the whole Fabrick of the World, or as many Worlds as the underſtandings of Angels in their utmoſt extent can conceive to be created: For the effecting of this God parts with his deareſt Treaſure, and his Son Eclipſes his choiceſt Glory; for this God muſt be made Man, Eternity muſt ſuffer Death, the Lord of Angels muſt weep in a Cradle, and the Creator of the World muſt hang like a Slave; he muſt be in a Manger in *Bethlehem*, and die upon a Croſs on *Calvary*: Unſpotted Righteouſneſs muſt be made Sin, and unblemiſht Bleſſedneſs be made a Curſe. He was at no other Expence than the Breath of his Mouth to form Man; the Fruits of the Earth could have maintained Innocent Man without any other Coſt; but his broken Nature cannot be heal'd without the invaluable Medicine of the Blood of God. View Chriſt in the Womb, and in the Manger, in his weary Steps and hungry Bowels, in his Proſtrations in the Garden, and in his clodded drops of Bloody Sweat; View his Head pierced with a Crown of Thorns, and his Face beſmeared with the Soldiers Slabber; View him in his march to *Calvary*, and his Elevation on the painful Croſs with his Head hang'd down, and his Side ſtreaming Blood; View him pelted with

* Pſ. 49. 8.

with the Scoffs of the Governours, and the Deriſions of the Rabble; and ſee in all this, what Coſt Goodneſs was at for Man's Redemption. In *Creation* his Power made the Sun to ſhine upon us, and in *Redemption* his Bowels ſent a Son to die for us.

3. This Goodneſs of God in Redemption is greater than that manifeſted in Creation, *in regard of Man's deſert of the contrary.* In the Creation, as there was nothing without him to allure him to the Expreſſions of his Bounty, ſo there was nothing that did damp the Inclinations of his Goodneſs: The nothing from whence the World was drawn, could never merit nor demerit a Being, becauſe it was nothing: As there was nothing to engage him, ſo there was nothing to diſoblige him: As his Favor could not be merited, ſo neither could his Anger be deſerved. But in this he finds Ingratitude againſt the former Marks of his Goodneſs, and Rebellion againſt the ſweetneſs of his Sovereignty: Crimes unworthy of the Dews of Goodneſs, and worthy of the ſharpeſt ſtrokes of Vengeance: And therefore the Scripture advanceth the honour of it above the title of meer Goodneſs, to that of *Grace**, becauſe Men were not only unworthy of a Bleſſing, but worthy of a Curſe. An innocent Nothing more deſerves Creation, than a culpable Creature deſerves an exemption from Deſtruction. When Man fell, and gave occaſion to God to repent of his Created Work, his raviſhing Goodneſs ſurmounted the occaſions he had of repenting, and the provocations he had to the deſtruction of his Frame.

*Rom. 5. 2. Tit. 2. 11.

6. It was a greater Goodneſs than was expreſs'd towards the Angels.

1. *A greater Goodneſs than was expreſt towards the ſtanding Angels.* The Son of God did no more expoſe his Life for the confirmation of thoſe that ſtood, than for the reſtoration of thoſe that fell: The Death of Chriſt was not for the holy Angels, but for ſinful Man; they needed the Grace of God to confirm them, but not the Death of Chriſt to reſtore or preſerve them; They had a beloved Holineſs to be eſtabliſh'd by the powerful Grace of God, but not any abominable Sin to be expiated and blotted out by the Blood of God: They had no Debt to pay but that of Obedience; but we had both a Debt of Obedience to the Precepts, and a Debt of Suffering to the Penalty after the Fall. Whether the Holy Angels were confirm'd by Chriſt, or no, is a *queſtion:* Some think they were, from *Coloſ.* 1. 20. where *things in Heaven* are ſaid to be reconcil'd; but ſome think that place ſignifies no more than the Reconciliation of things in Heaven, if meant of the Angels, to things on Earth, with whom they were at enmity in the Cauſe of their Soveraign; or the reconciliation of things in Heaven to God, is meant the glorified Saints, who were once in a ſtate of Sin, and whom the Death of Chriſt upon the Croſs reached, tho' dead long before. But if *Angels* were confirm'd by Chriſt, it was by him not as a ſlain Sacrifice, but as the Soveraign Head of the whole Creation, appointed by God to gather all things into one, which ſome think to be the intendment of, *Epheſ.* 1. 10. where all things, as well thoſe in Heaven, as thoſe on Earth are ſaid to be *gather'd together in one in Chriſt.* Where is a Syllable in Scripture of his being crucified for Angels, but only for Sinners? Not for the confirmation of the one, but the reconciliation of the other; ſo that the Goodneſs whereby God continued thoſe Bleſſed Spirits in Heaven thro' the effuſions of his Grace, is a ſmall thing to the reſtoring us to our forfeited Happineſs through the Streams of Divine Blood. The preſerving a Man in Life, is a little thing, and a ſmaller Benefit than the raiſing a Man from Death. The reſcuing a Man from an ignominious Puniſhment, lays a greater Obligation than barely to prevent him from committing a capital Crime. The preſerving a Man ſtanding upon the top of a ſteep Hill is more eaſie, than to bring a Cripled and Ptyſical Man from the bottom to the top. The continuance God gave to the Angels, is not ſo ſignal a Mark of Goodneſs, as the deliverance he gave to us, ſince they were not ſunk into Sin, nor by any Crime fallen into Miſery.

2. *His Goodneſs in Redemption is greater than any Goodneſs expreſs'd to the Fallen Angels.* 'Tis the wonder of his Goodneſs to us, that he was mindful of Fall'n Man, and careleſs of Fall'n Angels; that he ſhould viſit Man, wallowing in Death and Blood with the Day-ſpring from on high, and never turn the *Ægyptian* darkneſs of Devils into a chearful day: When they ſinn'd, Divine Thunder daſh'd them into Hell; when Man ſinn'd, Divine Blood wafts the fallen Creature from his Miſery: The Angels wallow in their own Blood for ever, while Chriſt is made partaker of our Blood, and wallows in his Blood, that we might not for ever corrupt in ours; they tumbled down from Heaven, and Divine Goodneſs could not vouchſafe to catch them: Man tumbles down, and Divine Goodneſs holds out a hand drencht in the Blood of him that was from the Foundations of the World, to lift us up, *Heb.* 2. 16. He ſpared not thoſe dignified Spirits, when they revolted; and ſpared not puniſhing his Son for duſty Man, when he offended, when he might as well for ever have let Man lie in the Chains wherein he had entangled himſelf, as them. We were as fit Objects of Juſtice as they, and they as fit Objects of Goodneſs as we: they were not more wretched by their Fall than we, and the poverty of our Nature render'd us more unable to recover our ſelves, than the dignity of theirs did them: They were his *Reuben*, his Firſt-born, they were his Might, and the beginning of his Strength, yet thoſe Elder Sons he neglected to prefer the Younger; They were the Prime and Golden Pieces of Creation, not laden with groſs matter, yet they lie under the Ruines of their Fall, while Man, Lead in compariſon of them, is refin'd for another World.

They ſeem'd to be fitter Objects of Divine Goodneſs, in regard of the eminency of their Nature above the Humane: One Angel excelled in Endowments of Mind and Spirit, vaſtneſs of Underſtanding, greatneſs of Power, all the Sons of Men; they were more capable to praiſe him, more capable to ſerve him, and becauſe of the acuteneſs of their Comprehenſion, more able to have a due Eſtimate of ſuch a Redemption, had it been afforded them; yet that Goodneſs which had created them ſo comely, would not lay it ſelf out in reſtoring the Beauty they had defaced. The Promiſe was of bruiſing the Serpent's Head for us, not of lifting up the Serpent's Head with us; Their Nature was not aſſum'd, nor any command given them to believe or repent: Not one Devil ſpar'd, not one Apoſtate Spirit recover'd, not one of thoſe eminent Creatures reſtor'd; every one of them hath only a proſpect of Miſery, without any glimps of Recovery: They were ruin'd under one Sin, and we repair'd under many. All his Redeeming Goodneſs was laid out upon Man, *Pſal.* 144. 3. *What is Man that thou takeſt knowledge of him, and the Son of Man, that thou makeſt account of him?* Making account of him above Angels; As they fell without any tempting them, ſo God would leave them to riſe without any aſſiſting them. I know the Schools trouble themſelves to find out the Reaſons of this peculiarity of Grace to Man, and not to them; becauſe the whole Humane Nature fell, but only a part of the Angelical; The one ſinned

by a Seduction, and the other by a Sullenness without any Tempter: Every Angel sinned by his own proper Will, whereas *Adam*'s Posterity sinned by the Will of the first Man, the common Root of all. God would deprive the Devil of any Glory in the satisfaction of his envious desire to hinder Man from attainment and possession of that Happiness which himself had lost. The weakness of Man below the Angelical Nature might excite the Divine Mercy: And since all the things of the lower World were created for Man, God would not lose the Honour of his Works, by losing the immediate End for which he framed them. And finally, because in the Restoration of Angels, there would have been only a restoration of one Nature, that was not comprehensive of the Nature of Inferiour Things: But after all such Conjectures, Man must sit down, and acknowledge Divine Goodness to be the only Spring without any other Motive. Since Infinite Wisdom could have contriv'd a way for Redemption for Fallen Angels, as well as for Fallen Man, and restor'd both the one and the other, why might not Christ have assum'd their Nature as well as ours into the Unity of the Divine Person, and suffer'd the Wrath of God in their Nature for them, as well as in his Humane Soul for us? 'Tis as conceivable that two Natures might have been assum'd by the Son of God, as well as three Souls be in Man distinct, as some think there are.

3. To enhance this Goodness yet higher; *It was a greater Goodness to us, than was for a time manifested to Christ himself.* To demonstrate his Goodness to Man in preventing his Eternal Ruine, he would for a while *with-hold* his Goodness from his Son, by exposing his Life as the price of our Ransom; not only subjecting him to the derisions of Enemies, desertions of Friends, and malice of Devils, but to the unexpressible bitterness of his own Wrath in his Soul, as made an offering for Sin.

The Particle *so*, *John* 3. 16. seems to intimate this Supremacy of Goodness: *He so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son.* He so loved the World, that he seem'd for a time not to love his Son in comparison of it, or equal with it. The Person to whom a Gift is given, is in that regard accounted more valuable than the Gift or Present made to him: Thus God valued our Redemption above the Worldly Happiness of the Redeemer, and sentenceth him to an Humiliation on Earth, in order to our Exaltation in Heaven: He was desirous to hear him groaning, and see him bleeding, that we might not groan under his Frowns, and bleed under his Wrath: He spared not him, that he might spare us; refused not to strike him, that he might be well pleas'd with us; drench'd his Sword in the Blood of his Son, that it might not for ever be wet with ours; but that his Goodness might for ever triumph in our Salvation: He was willing to have his Son made Man, and die, rather than Man should perish, who had delighted to ruine himself; He seem'd to degrade him for a time from what he was *: But since he could not be united to any but to an intellectual Creature, he could not be united to any viler and more sordid Creature than the Earthly Nature of Man. And when this Son in our Nature pray'd, *That the Cup might pass from him*, Goodness would not suffer it, to shew how it valued the manifestation of it self in the Salvation of Man, above the preservation of the Life of so dear a Person.

* Lingeud. *de Eucharist.* p. 84, 85.

In particular wherein this *Goodness* appears;

1. *The first Resolution to Redeem, and the means appointed for Redemption, could have no other inducement but Divine Goodness.* We cannot too highly value the Merit of Christ; but we must not so much extend the Merit of Christ, as to draw a Veil to eclipse the Goodness of God: Tho' we owe our Redemption, and the Fruits of it, to the Death of Christ, yet we owe not the first Resolutions of Redemption, and assumption of our Nature, the means of Redemption, to the merit of Christ. Divine Goodness only, without the association of any Merit, not only of Man, but of the Redeemer himself, begat the first purpose of our Recovery: He was singl'd out, and predestinated to be our Redeemer, before he took our Nature to merit our Redemption. *God sent his Son*, is a frequent Expression in the Gospel of St. *John* †. To what end did God send Christ, but to redeem? ‖ The purpose of Redemption therefore preceded the pitching upon Christ as the means and procuring cause of it, *i. e.* of our actual Redemption, but not of the Redeeming Purpose; the end is always in intention before the means. *God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son*; The love of God to the World was first in Intention and the Order of Nature, before the will of giving his Son to the World. His Intention of saving was before the Mission of a Saviour: So that this Affection rose not from the Merit of Christ, but the Merit of Christ was directed by this Affection. It was the Effect of it, not the Cause. Nor was the Union of our Nature with his merited by him; All his meritorious acts were perform'd in our Nature: The Nature therefore wherein he perform'd it was not merited; that Nature which was not, could not merit what it was: He could not merit that Humanity, which must be assum'd before he could merit any thing for us, because all Merit for us must be offer'd in the Nature which had offended. 'Tis true, *Christ gave himself*, but by the order of Divine Goodness; he that begat him pitch'd upon him, and call'd him to this great Work: * He is therefore call'd, *The Lamb of God*, as being set apart by God to be a propitiating and appeasing Sacrifice. He is the *Wisdom of God*, since from the Father he reveals the Councel and Order of Redemption. In this regard he calls God, *his God*, in the Prophet †, and in the Evangelist ‖; tho' he was big with affection for the accomplishment, yet he came not to do his *own Will*, but the Will of Divine Goodness: His own Will it was too, but not principally, as being the first Wheel in Motion, but subordinate to the Eternal Will of Divine Bounty. It was by the Will of God that he came, and by his Will he drank the dreggy Cup of Bitterness. Divine Justice laid *upon him the iniquity of us all*, but Divine Goodness intended it for our rescue: Divine Goodness singl'd him out, and set him apart: Divine Goodness invited him to it: Divine Goodness commanded him to effect it, and put a Law into his Heart, to bias him in the performing of it. Divine Goodness sent him, and Divine Goodness moved Justice to bruise him; and after his Sacrifice, Divine Goodness accepted him, and cares'd him for it. So earnest was it for our Redemption, as to give out special and irreversible orders: Death was commanded to be endured by him for us, and Life commanded to be imparted by him to us *. If God had not been the Mover, but had receiv'd the Proposal from another, he might have heard it, but was not bound to grant it: His Soveraign Authority was not under any Obligation to receive another's Sponsion for the miserable Criminal. As Christ is the Head of Man, so *God is the Head of Christ* *; He did nothing but by his directions, as he was not a Mediator but by the constitution of Divine Goodness. As a *libe-*

† John 3. 34. Joh. 5. 24. Joh. 17. 3. ‖ Leffius.

* Heb. 5. 5.

† Isa. 49. 4. ‖ John 20. 17.

* John 10. 16, 18.

† 1 Cor. 11. 3.

*Iſa. 2. 8. *a liberal man deviſeth liberal things* *, ſo did a bountiful God deviſe a bountiful act, wherein his kindneſs and love as a Saviour appear'd: He was poſſeſt with the reſolutions to manifeſt his Goodneſs in † Prov. 8. 22, 23. Chriſt *in the beginning of his way* †, before he deſcended to the act of Creation. This intention of Goodneſs preceded his making that Creature Man, who he foreſaw would fall, and by his fall disjoynt and entangle the whole Frame of the World without ſuch a proviſion.

2. *In God's giving Chriſt to be our Redeemer, he gave the higheſt Gift that it was poſſible for Divine Goodneſs to beſtow.* As there is not a greater God than himſelf to be conceiv'd, ſo there is not a greater Gift for this great God to preſent to his creatures: Never did God go farther in any of his excellent Perfections than this. 'Tis ſuch a Dole that cannot be tranſcended with a choicer: He is as it were come to the laſt Mite of his Treaſure. And tho' he could create Millions of Worlds for us, he cannot give a greater Son to us. He could abound in the Expreſſions of his Power in new Creations of Worlds, which have not yet been ſeen, and in the luſtre of his Wiſdom in more ſtately Structures; but if he ſhould frame as many Worlds as there are Mites of Duſt and Matter in this, and make every one of them as bright and glorious as the Sun; tho' his Power and Wiſdom would be more ſignaliz'd, yet his Goodneſs could not, ſince he hath not a choicer Gift to bleſs thoſe brighter Worlds withal, than he hath conferr'd upon this. Nor can Immenſe Goodneſs contrive a richer means to conduct thoſe worlds to Happineſs, than he hath both invented for this World, and preſented it with. It cannot be imagin'd, that it can extend it ſelf farther, than to give a Gift equal with himſelf, a Gift as dear to him as himſelf. His Wiſdom, had it ſtudied millions of Eternities, (excuſe the Expreſſion, ſince Eternity admits of no millions, it being an interminable duration) it could have found out no more to give, this Goodneſs could have beſtow'd no more, and our Neceſſity could not have requir'd a greater Offering for our relief. When God intended in Redemption the manifeſtation of his higheſt Goodneſs, it could not be without the Donation of the choiceſt Gift. As when he would enſure our Comfort, he ſwears *by himſelf*, becauſe he cannot ſwear *by a greater* * Heb. 6. 12 * : So when he would inſure our Happineſs, he gives us his Son, becauſe he cannot give a greater, being equal with himſelf. Had the Father given himſelf in Perſon, he had given one firſt in order, but not greater in Eſſence and glorious Perfections: It could have been no more than the Life of God, that ſhould then have been laid down for us; and ſo it was now, ſince the Human Nature did not ſubſiſt but in his Divine Perſon.

1. *'Tis a greater Gift than Worlds, or all things purchaſed by him.* What was this Gift but *the Image* * Heb. 1. 3. *of his Perſon, and the brightneſs of his Glory* *? What was this Gift, but one as rich as Eternal Bleſſedneſs could make him? What was this Gift, but one that poſſeſs'd the fulneſs of Earth, and the more Immenſe Riches of Heaven? 'Tis a more valuable Preſent, than if he preſented us with thouſands of Worlds of Angels and inferior Creatures, beeauſe his Perſon is incomparably greater, not only than all conceivable, but inconceivable Creations: We are more obliged to him for it, than if he had made us Angels of the higheſt rank in Heaven, becauſe it is a Gift of more value than the whole Angelical Nature, becauſe he is an Infinite Perſon, and therefore infinitely tranſcends whatſoever is finite, tho' of the higheſt Dignity. The Wounds of an Almighty God for us are a greater Teſtimony of Goodneſs, than if we had all the other Riches of Heaven and Earth. This Perfection had not appeared in ſuch an aſtoniſhing grandeur, had it pardon'd us without ſo rich a ſatisfaction; that had been pardon to our Sin, not a God of our Nature. *God ſo loved the World*, that he pardon'd it, had not founded ſo great and ſo good, as *God ſo loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son. Eſt aliquid in Chriſto formoſius Servatore.* There is ſomething in Chriſt more excellent and comely than the Office of a Saviour, the greatneſs of his Perſon is more excellent than the Salvation procur'd by his Death: It was a greater gift than was beſtow'd upon innocent *Adam*, or the holy Angels. In the Creation, his Goodneſs gave us Creatures for our uſe: In our Redemption, his Goodneſs gives us what was deareſt to him for our ſervice; our Soveraign in Office to benefit us, as well as in a Royalty to govern us.

2. *It was a greater gift, becauſe it was his own Son.* Not an Angel. It had been a mighty Goodneſs to have given one of the lofty Seraphims; a greater Goodneſs to have given the whole Corporation of thoſe glorious Spirits for us, thoſe Children of the moſt High: But he gave that Son, whom he commands *all the Angels to worſhip* *; and all * Heb. 1. 6. Men to adore, and pay the *loweſt Homage to* †; that † Pſal. 2. 12. *Son* that is to be *honour'd* by us, as we *honour the Father* ‖; that *Son* which was his *delight*, his *delights* ‖ Joh. 5. 23. in the *Hebrew*, wherein all the delights of the Father were gather'd in one, as well as of the whole Creation; and not ſimply a *Son*, but an *only begotten Son*, upon which Chriſt lays the ſtreſs with an *Emphaſis* †. He had but one *Son* in Heaven or Earth, † John 3. 16. one Son from an unviewable Eternity, and that one Son he gave for a degenerate World; this Son he conſecrated for *evermore a Prieſt* ‖. *The word of* ‖ Heb. 7. 28. *the Oath makes the Son a Prieſt*; The peculiarity of his Sonſhip heightens the Goodneſs of the Donor. It was no meaner a Perſon that he gave to empty himſelf of his Glory, to fulfill an Obedience for us, that we might be render'd happy partakers of the Divine Nature. Thoſe that know the natural affection of a Father to a Son, muſt judge the affection of God the Father to the Son infinitely greater than the affection of an Earthly Father to the Son of his Bowels. It muſt be an unparallel'd Goodneſs, to give up a Son that he loved with ſo ardent an Affection, for the Redemption of Rebels: Abandon a glorious Son to a diſhonourable Death, for the ſecurity of thoſe that had violated the Laws of Righteouſneſs, and endeavour'd to pull the Soveraign Crown from his Head. Beſides, being an only Son, all thoſe Affections center'd in him, which in Parents would have been divided among a multitude of Children: So then, as it was a Teſtimony of the higheſt Faith and Obedience in *Abraham, to offer up* * Heb. 11. 17. *his only begotten Son to God* *; ſo it was the Triumph of Divine Goodneſs, to give ſo great, ſo dear a Perſon for ſo little a thing as Man; and for ſuch a piece of nothing and vanity, as a Sinful World.

3. And this *Son given to reſcue us by his Death.* It was a gift to us; for our ſakes he deſcended from his Throne, and dwelt on Earth; for our ſakes he was *made Fleſh*, and infirm Fleſh; for our ſakes he was *made a Curſe*, and ſcorch'd in the Furnace of his Father's Wrath; for our ſakes he went naked, arm'd only with his own Strength, into the Liſts of that Combat with the Devils, that led us Captive. Had he given him to be a Leader for the conqueſt of ſome Earthly Enemies, it had been a great Goodneſs to diſplay his Banners, and bring us under his Conduct; but he ſent him to lay down his Life in the bittereſt and moſt inglorious manner, and expoſed him to a curſed Death for our redemption from that dreadful Curſe which would have broken us

to pieces, and irreparably have cruſh'd us. He gave him to us, to ſuffer for us as a Man, and redeem us as a God; to be a Sacrifice to expiate our Sin, by tranſlating the Puniſhment upon himſelf which was merited by us. Thus was he made low to exalt us, and debaſed to advance us, *made poor to enrich us* *, and eclipſed to brighten our ſullied Natures, and wounded that he might be a *Phyſician* for our Languiſhments: He was order'd to taſte the bitter Cup of Death, that we might drink of the Rivers of Immortal Life, and Pleaſures: To ſubmit to the frailties of the Humane Nature, that we might poſſeſs the Glories of the Divine: He was order'd to be a Sufferer, that we might be no longer Captives, and to paſs thro' the Fire of Divine Wrath, that he might purge our Nature from the droſs it had contracted. Thus was the Righteous given for Sin, the Innocent for Criminals, the Glory of Heaven for the Dregs of Earth, and the Immenſe Riches of a Deity expended to reſtock Man.

* 2 Cor. 8. 9.

4. And *a Son that was exalted for what he had done for us by the order of Divine Goodneſs.* The Exaltation of Chriſt was no leſs a ſignal Mark of his miraculous Goodneſs to us, than of his Affection to him; ſince he was *obedient* by Divine Goodneſs to die for us, his advancement was for his *Obedience* to thoſe Orders. * The *Name* given to him *above every Name*, was a *repeated Triumph* of this *Perfection*; ſince his Paſſion was not for himſelf, he was wholly Innocent, but for us who were Criminal. His advancement was not only for himſelf as Redeemer, but for us as redeem'd: Divine Goodneſs center'd in him, both in his Croſs and in his Crown; for it was for the *purging our Sins he ſate down on the Right Hand of the Majeſty on high* †: And the whole Bleſſed Society of Principalities and Powers in Heaven admire this Goodneſs of God, and aſcribe to him *Honour, Glory, and Power* for advancing the *Lamb ſlain* ‖. Divine Goodneſs did not only give him to us, but gave him Power, Riches, Strength, and Honor, for manifeſting this Goodneſs to us, and opening the Paſſages for its fuller conveyances to the Sons of Men. Had not God had thoughts of a perpetual Goodneſs, he would not have ſetled him ſo near him, to manage our Cauſe, and teſtified ſo much Affection to him on our behalf. This Goodneſs gave him to be debas'd for us, and order'd him to be enthron'd for us: As it gave him to us bleeding, ſo it would give him to us triumphing; that as we have a ſhare by Grace in the Merits of his Humiliation, we might partake alſo of the Glories of his Coronation, that from firſt to laſt we may behold nothing but the Triumphs of Divine Goodneſs to fallen Man.

* Phil. 2. 8, 9.

† Heb. 1. 3.

‖ Revel. 5. 11, 12, 13.

5. *In beſtowing this Gift on us, Divine Goodneſs gives whole God to us.* Whatſoever is great and excellent in the Godhead, the Father gives us, by giving us his Son: The Creator gives himſelf to us in his Son Chriſt. In giving Creatures to us, he gives the Riches of Earth; in giving himſelf to us, he gives the Riches of Heaven, which ſurmount all Underſtanding: 'Tis in this Gift he becomes our God, and paſſeth over the Title of all that he is, for our uſe and benefit, that every Attribute in the Divine Nature may be claim'd by us; not to be imparted to us, whereby we may be deify'd, but imploy'd for our welfare, whereby we may be bleſſed. He gave himſelf in Creation to us, in the Image of his Holineſs; but in Redemption, he gave himſelf in the Image of his Perſon: He would not only communicate the Goodneſs without him, but beſtow upon us the infinite Goodneſs of his own Nature; That that which was his own End and Happineſs, might be our End and Happineſs, *viz.* Himſelf.

By giving his Son, he hath given himſelf; and in both Gifts he hath given all things to us: The Creator of all things is eminently all things: *He hath given all things into the hands of his Son* *, and by conſequence given all things into the Hands of his *Redeem'd Creatures*, by giving them him to whom he gave all things: Whatſoever we were inveſted in by Creation, whatſoever we were depriv'd of by Corruption, and more, he hath depoſited in ſafe hands for our Enjoyment: And what can Divine Goodneſs do more for us? What further can it give unto us, than what it hath given, and in that Gift deſign'd for us?

* Joh. 3. 35.

3. *This Goodneſs is enhanc'd by conſidering the State of Man in the firſt Tranſgreſſion, and ſince.*

1. *Mans firſt Tranſgreſſion.* If we ſhould rip up every Vein of that firſt Sin, ſhould we find any want of Wickedneſs to excite a juſt Indignation? What was there but Ingratitude to Divine Bounty, and Rebellion againſt Divine Soveraignty? The Royalty of God was attempted, the Supremacy of Divine Knowledge, above Man's own Knowledge, envy'd; the Riches of Goodneſs whereby he lived and breathed, ſlighted: There is a diſcontent with God upon an unreaſonable Sentiment, that God had deny'd a Knowledge to him, which was his right and due; when there ſhould have been an humble acknowledgment of that unmerited Goodneſs, which had not only given him a Being above other Creatures, but placed him the Governor and Lord of thoſe that were inferiour to him: What alienation of his Underſtanding was there from knowing God, and of his Will from loving him? A Debauch of all his Faculties; a Spiritual Adultery, in preferring not only one of God's Creatures, but one of his deſperate Enemies before him; thinking him a wiſer Counſellor than Infinite Wiſdom, and imagining him poſſeſs'd with kinder Affections to him, than that God who had newly created him. Thus he joyns in League with Hell againſt Heaven, with a Fallen Spirit againſt his Bountiful Benefactor, and enters into Society with Rebels, that juſt before commenc'd a War againſt his and their common Soveraign: He did not only falter in, but caſt off the Obedience due to his Creator; endeavour'd to purloin his Glory, and actually murder'd all thoſe that were vertually in his Loins. * *Sin enter'd into the World by him, and Death by Sin, and paſſed upon all men*, taking them off from their ſubjection to God, to be Slaves to the Damn'd Spirits, and Heirs of their Miſery: And after all this, he adds a foul Imputation on God, taxing him as the Author of his Sin, and thereby ſtains the Beauty of his Holineſs. But notwithſtanding all this, God ſtops not up the Flood-gates of his Goodneſs, nor doth he entertain Fiery Reſolutions againſt Man, but brings forth a healing Promiſe, and ſends not an Angel upon Commiſſion to reveal it to him, but preaches it himſelf to this Forlorn and Rebellious Creature †.

* Rom. 5. 12.

† Gen. 3. 15.

2. *Could there be any thing in this Fallen Creature to allure God to the Expreſſion of his Goodneſs?* Was there any good Action in all his Carriage, that could plead for a readmiſſion of him to his former ſtate? Was there one good Quality left, that could be an Orator to perſwade Divine Goodneſs to ſuch a gracious Procedure? Was there any Moral Goodneſs in Man after this Debauch, that might be an Object of Divine Love? What was there in him that was not rather a Provocation than an Allurement? Could you expect, that any Perfection in God ſhould find a Motive in this ungrateful Apoſtate, to open a Mouth for him, and be an Advocate to ſupport him, and bring him off from a juſt Tribunal? Or after Divine Goodneſs had begun to pity and plead for

for Man, is it not wonderful that it ſhould not diſcontinue the Plea, after it found Man's Excuſe to be as black as his Crime *; and his Carriage, upon his Examination, to be as diſobliging as his firſt Revolt? It might well be expected, that all the Perfections in the Divine Nature, would have entred into an Aſſociation, eternally, to treat this Rebel according to his Deſerts. What Attractives were there in a ſilly Worm, much leſs in ſuch compleat Wickedneſs, inexcuſable Enmity, infamous Rebellion, to deſign a Redeemer for him, and ſuch a Perſon as the Son of God to a Fleſhy Body, an Eclipſe of Glory, and an Ignominious Croſs? The Meanneſs of Man was further from alluring God to it, than the Dignity of Angels.

* Gen. 3. 12.

3. *Was there not a World of Demerit in Man, to animate Grace as well as Wrath againſt him?* We were ſo far from deſerving the opening any Streams of Goodneſs, that we had merited Floods of devouring Wrath. What were all Men, but Enemies to God in a high manner? Every Offence was infinite, as being committed againſt a Being of infinite Dignity; it was a ſtroke at the very Being of God; a reſiſtance of all his Attributes; it would degrade him from the height and perfection of his Nature; it would not, by its good will, ſuffer God to be God. If *he that hates his Brother, is a Murtherer of his Brother*, he that hates his Creator, is a Murtherer of the Deity; *and every *carnal mind is enmity* to God †: Every Sin envies him his Authority, by breaking his Precept; and envies him his Goodneſs, by defacing the Marks of it: Every Sin comprehends in it more than Men or Angels can conceive: That God who only hath the clear Apprehenſions of his own Dignity, hath the ſole clear Apprehenſions of Sins Malignity. All Men were thus by Nature; thoſe that ſinned before the coming of the Redeemer, had been in a State of Sin; thoſe that were to come after him, would be in a State of Sin by their Birth, and be Criminals as ſoon as ever they were Creatures. All Men, as well the Glorify'd as thoſe in the Fleſh, at the coming of the Redeemer, and thoſe that were to be born after, were conſider'd in a State of Sin by God, when he bruis'd the Redeemer for them: All were filthy and unworthy of the Eye of God: All had employ'd the Faculties of their Souls, and the Members of their Bodies, which they enjoyed by his Goodneſs, againſt the Intereſt of his Glory. Every rational Creature had made himſelf a Slave to thoſe Creatures over whom he had been appointed a Lord; ſubjected himſelf as a Servant to his Inferior, and ſtrutted as a Superior againſt his liberal Sovereign, and by every Sin rendred himſelf more a Child of Satan, and Enemy of God, and more worthy of the Curſes of the Law, and the Torments of Hell: Was it not now a mighty Goodneſs, that would ſurmount thoſe high Mountains of Demerit, and elevate ſuch Creatures by the depreſſion of his Son? Had we been poſſeſſed of the higheſt Holineſs, a Reward had been the natural Effect of Goodneſs: It was not poſſible that God ſhould be unkind to a righteous and innocent Creature: His Grace would have crown'd that, which had been ſo agreeable to him: He had been a Denyer of himſelf, had he numbred innocent Creatures in the Rank of the miſerable. But to be kind to an Enemy; to run Counter to the vaſtneſs of Demerit in Man, was a ſuperlative Goodneſs; a Goodneſs triumphing above all the Provocations of Men, and Pleas of Juſtice. It was an abounding Goodneſs of Grace: *Where Sin abounded, Grace did much more abound*, ὑπερεπερίσσευσεν. It ſwell'd above the Heights of Sin, and triumphed more than all his other Attributes.

* 1 John 3. 15. † Rom. 8. 7.

* Rom. 5. 20.

4. *Man was reduced to the loweſt Condition.* Our Crimes had brought us to the loweſt Calamity; we were brought to the Duſt, and prepar'd for Hell. *Adam* had not the boldneſs to Requeſt, and therefore we may judge he had not the leaſt hopes of Pardon; he was ſunk under Wrath, and could have expected no better an Entertainment than the Tempter, whoſe Sollicitations he ſubmitted to: We had caſt the Diadem from our Heads, and loſt all our Original Excellency: We were loſt to our own Happineſs, and loſt to our Creator's Service, when he was ſo kind as to ſend his Son to ſeek us, *Mat.* 18. 11. and ſo liberal as to expend his Blood for our Cure and Preſervation. How great was that Goodneſs that would not abandon us in our Miſery, but remit our Crimes, and reſcue our Perſons, and ranſom our Souls by ſo great a Price from the Rights of Juſtice, and Horrors of Hell, we were ſo fitted for?

5. *Every Age multiplied Provocations.* Every Age of the World proved more degenerate; the Traditions, which were purer and more lively among *Adam*'s immediate Poſterity, were more dark among his further Deſcendents. Idolatry, whereof we have no Marks in the old World before the Deluge, was frequent afterwards in every Nation: Not only the Knowledge of the true God was loſt, but the Natural Reverential Thoughts of a Deity were expelled. Hence Gods were dubb'd according to Mens Humors; and not only human Paſſions, but bruiſh Vices aſcrib'd to them: As by the Fall we were become leſs than Men, ſo we would fancy God no better than a Beaſt, ſince Beaſts were worſhipped as Gods *; yea, fancied God no better than a Devil; ſince that Deſtroyer was worſhipped inſtead of the Creator, and a Homage paid to the Powers of Hell that had ruin'd them, which was due to the Goodneſs of that Benefactor, who had made them and preſerved them in the World. The vileſt Creatures were Deifi'd; Reaſon was debas'd below Common Senſe; and Men ador'd one end of a *Log*, while they *warmed themſelves with the other* †; as if that which was ordain'd for the Kitchin, were a fit Repreſentation for God in the Temple. Thus were the Natural Notions of a Deity deprav'd; the whole World drench'd in Idolatry: And tho' the *Jews* were free from that groſs abuſe of God, yet they were ſunk alſo into loathſom Superſtitions, when the Goodneſs of God brought in his deſign'd Redeemer and Redemption into the World.

* Rom. 1. 21.

† Iſa. 44. 14, 16, 17.

6. *The Impotence of Man enhanceth this Goodneſs.* Our own Eye did ſcarce pity us, and it was impoſſible for our own Hands to relieve us; we were inſenſible of our Miſery, in love with our Death; we courted our Chains, and the Noiſe of our fettering Luſts were our Muſick, *ſerving diverſe Luſts and Pleaſures.* Our Luſts were our Pleaſures; Satan's Yoke was as delightful to us to bear, as to him to impoſe: Inſtead of being his Oppoſers in his Attempts againſt us, we were his voluntary Seconds, and every whit as willing to embrace, as he was to propoſe his ruining Temptations. As no Man can recover himſelf from Death, ſo no Man can recover himſelf from Wrath; he is as unable to Redeem, as to Create himſelf; he might as ſoon have ſtripp'd himſelf of his Being, as put an end to his Miſery; his Captivity would have been endleſs, and his Chains remedileſs, for any thing he could do to knock them off, and deliver himſelf; he was too much in love with the Sink of Sin, to leave wallowing in it, and under too powerful a Hand, to ceaſe frying in the Flames of Wrath. As the Law could not be obeyed by Man, after a corrupt Principle had enter'd into him, ſo neither

* Tit. 3. 3.

neither could Justice be satisfied by him after his Transgression. The Sinner was indebted, but Bankrupt; as he was unable to pay a Mite of that Obedience he owed to the Precept, because of his Enmity; so he was unable to satisfie what he owed to the Penalty, because of his Feebleness: He was as much without Love to observe the one, as *without Strength* to bear the other: † He could not, because of his *Enmity, be subject to the Law*, or compensate for his Sin, because he was * *without Strength*. His Strength to offend was great; but to deliver himself, a meer nothing. Repentance was not a thing known by Man after the Fall, 'till he had hopes of Redemption; And if he had known and exercised it, what Compensation are the Tears of a Malefactor, for an Injury done to the Crown, and attempting the Life of his Prince? How great was Divine Goodness; not only to pity Men in this State, but to provide a strong Redeemer for them? *O Lord, my Strength, and my Redeemer*, said the *Psalmist* †: When he found out a Redeemer for our Misery, he found out a Strength for our Impotency.

†Rom. 8. 7.

* Rom. 5. 6.

† Psal. 19. 14.

To conclude this: Behold the *Goodness of God*, when we had thus unhandsomely dealt with him; had nothing to allure his Goodness, Multitudes of Provocations to incense him, were reduced to a Condition as low as could be, fit to be the Matter of his Scoffs, and the Sport of Divine Justice, and so weak that we could not repair our own Ruines; then did he open a Fountain of fresh Goodness in the Death of his Son, and sent forth such delightful Streams, as in our Original Creation we could never have tasted: Not only overcame the Resentments of a provoked Justice, but magnified it self by our lowness, and strengthned it self by our weakness: His Goodness had before Created an Innocent, but here it saves a Malefactor; and sends his Son to die for us, as if the Holy of Holies were the Criminal, and the Rebel the Innocent. It had been a pompous Goodness, to have given him as a King; but a Goodness of greater Grandeur, to expose him as a Sacrifice for Slaves and Enemies: Had *Adam* remain'd innocent, and prov'd thankful for what he had received, it had been great Goodness to have brought him to Glory; but to bring filthy and rebellious *Adam* to it, surmounts by unexpressible degrees, that sort of Goodness he had experimented before; since it was not from a light Evil, a tolerable Curse unawares brought upon us, but from the Yoke we had willingly submitted to, from the Power of Darkness we had courted, and the Furnace of Wrath we had kindled for our selves. What are we, dead Dogs, that he should behold us with so gracious an Eye? This Goodness is thus enhanced, if you consider the State of Man in his first Transgression, and after.

4. *This Goodness further appears, in the high advancement of our Nature, after it had so highly offended.* By Creation, we had an Affinity with Animals in our Bodies, with Angels in our Spirits, with God in his Image; but not with God in our Nature, 'till the Incarnation of the Redeemer. *Adam* by Creation was the Son of God, * but his Nature was not one with the Person of God: He was his Son as created by him, but had no Affinity to him by Vertue of Union with him: But now Man doth not only see his Nature in multitudes of Men on Earth, but by an astonishing Goodness, beholds his Nature united to the Deity in Heaven: That as he was the Son of God by Creation, he is now the Brother of God by Redemption; for with such a Title doth that Person, who was the *Son* of God, as well as the *Son* of Man, honour his Disciples †: And because he is of the same Nature with them, he *is not ashamed to call them brethren*, Heb. 2. 11.

*Luk. 3. 38.

† John 20. 17.

Our Nature, which was Infinitely distant from, and below the Deity, now makes one Person with the Son of God. What Man sinfully aspired to, God hath graciously granted, and more: Man aspired to a Likeness in Knowledge, and God hath granted him an Affinity in Union. It had been astonishing Goodness to Angelize our Natures; but in Redemption, Divine Goodness hath acted higher, in a sort to Deifie our Natures. In Creation, our Nature was exalted above other Creatures on Earth; in our Redemption, our Nature is exalted above all the Host of Heaven: We were higher than the Beasts, as Creatures, but *lower than the Angels*; * but by the Incarnation of the Son of God, our Nature is elevated many Steps above them. After it had sunk it self by Corruption below the Bestial Nature, and as low as the Diabolical, the *fulness of the Godhead dwells in our Nature bodily*, † but never in the Angels, Angelically. The Son of God descended to dignifie our Nature, by assuming it, and ascended with our Nature to have it crown'd above those standing Monuments of Divine Power and Goodness. * That Person that descended in our Nature into the Grave, and in the same Nature was raised up again, is in that same Nature set at the right Hand of God in Heaven, *far above all Principality, and Power, and Might, and Dominion, and every Name that is named.* Our refined Clay, by an indissoluble Union with this Divine Person, is honoured to sit for ever upon a Throne, above all the Tribes of Seraphims and Cherubins; and the Person that wears it, is the Head of the good Angels, and the Conquerour of the bad; the one are put under his Feet, and the other commanded to adore him, *that purged our Sins in our Nature* †: That Divine Person in our Nature, receives Adoration from the Angels; but the Nature of Man is not ordered to pay any Homage and Adorations to the Angels. How could Divine Goodness to Man more magnifie it self? As we could not have a lower Descent than we had by Sin, how could we have a higher Ascent, than by a substantial Participation of a Divine Life in our Nature, in the Unity of a Divine Person? Our earthly Nature is joyned to a heavenly Person; our undone Nature united to *one equal with God* *. It may truly be said, that Man is God, which is infinitely more glorious for us, than if it could be said, Man is an Angel. If it were Goodness to advance our innocent Nature above other Creatures, the Advancement of our degenerate Nature above Angels, deserves a higher Title than meer Goodness. 'Tis a more gracious Act, than if all Men had been transformed into the pure Spiritual Nature of the loftiest Cherubins.

* Psal. 8. 5.

† Col. 2. 9.

* Ephes. 1. 20, 21.

† Heb. 1. 3, 6.

* Phil. 2. 6.

5. This Goodness is manifest in *the Covenant of Grace made with us, whereby we are freed from the Rigour of that of Works.* God might have insisted upon the Terms of the old Covenant, and requir'd of Man the Improvement of his Original Stock; but God hath condescended to lower Terms, and offer'd Man more gracious Methods, and mitigated the Rigor of the first, by the Sweetness of the second.

1. *'Tis Goodness, that he should condescend to make another Covenant with Man.* To stipulate with Innocent and Righteous *Adam* for his Obedience, was a stoop of his Sovereignty: Tho' he gave the Precept as a Sovereign Lord, yet in his Covenanting, he seems to descend to some kind of equality with that Dust and Ashes with whom he treated. Absolute Sovereigns do not usually Covenant with their People, but exact Obedience and Duty,

without binding themſelves to beſtow a Reward; and if they intend any, they reſerve the purpoſe in their own Breaſts, without treating their Subjects with a ſolemn declaration of it. There was no Obligation on God to enter into the *firſt Covenant*, much leſs after the violation of the firſt, to the ſettlement of a new. If God ſeem'd in ſome ſort to equal himſelf to Man in the firſt, he ſeem'd to deſcend below himſelf, in treating with a Rebel upon more condeſcending Terms in the ſecond. If his Covenant with Innocent *Adam* was a ſtoop of his Sovereignty, this with Rebellious *Adam* ſeems to be a ſtripping himſelf of his Majeſty, in favour of his Goodneſs; as if his Happineſs depended upon us, and not ours upon him. 'Tis a *Humiliation of himſelf to behold the things in Heaven*, the glorious Angels, as well as *things on Earth*, mortal Men; † much more to bind himſelf in gracious Bonds to the glorious Angels, and much more if to Rebel Man. In the firſt Covenant there was much of Sovereignty as well as Goodneſs; in the ſecond there is leſs of Sovereignty, and more of Grace: In the firſt there was a righteous Man for a holy God; in the ſecond, a polluted Creature for a pure and provoked God: In the firſt he holds his Scepter in his Hand, to rule his Subjects: In the ſecond, he ſeems to lay by his Scepter, to Court and *eſpouſe a Beggar*: * In the firſt he is a *Lord*; in the ſecond a *Husband*, and binds himſelf upon gracious Conditions to become a Debtor. How ſhould this Goodneſs fill us with an humble aſtoniſhment, as it did *Abraham*, when he *fell on his Face*, when he heard God ſpeaking of making a Covenant with him! † And if God ſpeaking to *Iſrael* out of the Fire, and making them to hear his Voice out of Heaven, that he might inſtruct them, was a Conſideration whereby *Moſes* would heighten their admiration of Divine Goodneſs, and engage their affectionate *Obedience* to him *; How much more admirable is it, for God to ſpeak ſo kindly to us, through the pacifying Blood of the Covenant, that ſilenc'd the Terrors of the Old, and ſettled the Tenderneſs of the New?

† Pſ. 113. 6.
* Hoſea 2. 18, 19, 20.
† Gen. 17. 2, 3.
* Deut. 4. 32, 36, 40.

2. His Goodneſs is ſeen *in the Nature and Tenor of the new Covenant*. There are in this richer Streams of Love and Pity. The Language of one was, *Die* if thou Sin; that of the other, *Live* if thou Believeſt †: The Old Covenant was founded upon the Obedience of Man; the New is not founded upon the Inconſtancy of Man's Will, but the Firmneſs of Divine Love, and the valuable Merit of Chriſt. The *Head* of the Firſt Covenant was *Humane* and mutable; the *Head* of the Second is *Divine* and immutable. The Curſe due to us by the Breach of the *firſt*, is taken off by the Indulgence of the *ſecond*: * We are by it ſnatch'd from the Jaws of the Law, to be wrapt up in the Boſom of *Grace*: † For you *are not under the Law, but under Grace*; from the Curſe and Condemnation of the Law, to the Sweetneſs and Forgiveneſs of Grace. Chriſt bore the one, being *made a Curſe for us*, * that we might enjoy the Sweetneſs of the other; by this we are brought from Mount *Sinai*, the Mount of Terror, to Mount *Sion*, the Mount of Sacrificing, the Type of the Great *Sacrifice* †: That Covenant brought in *Death upon one Offence*, this Covenant offers Life after many *Offences* *: That involved us in a Curſe, and this enricheth us with a Bleſſing: The Breaches of that expell'd us out of *Paradiſe*, and the embracing of this admits us into Heaven. This Covenant demands, and admits of that Repentance, whereof there was no mention in the firſt: That demanded Obedience, not Repentance upon a failure; and tho' the Exerciſes of it had been never ſo deep in the fall'n Creature, nothing of the Law's Severity had been remitted by any Vertue of it. Again, the firſt Covenant demanded exact Righteouſneſs, but conveyed no Cleanſing Vertue upon the contracting any Filth. The firſt, demands a continuance in the Righteouſneſs conferr'd in Creation; the ſecond, imprints a gracious Heart in Regeneration. *I will pour clean water upon you; I will put a new Spirit within you*, was the Voice of the ſecond Covenant, not of the firſt. Again, as to Pardon: *Adam*'s Covenant was to puniſh him, not to pardon him if he fell; that threatned Death upon Tranſgreſſion, this remits it; that was an Act of Divine Sovereignty, declaring the Will of God; this is an Act of Divine Grace, paſſing an Act of Oblivion on the Crimes of the Creature: That, as it demanded no Repentance upon a failure, ſo it promiſed no Mercy upon Guilt: That convened our Sin, and condemned us for it; this clears our Guilt, and comforts us under it. The firſt Covenant related us to God as a Judge; every Tranſgreſſion againſt it forfeited his Indulgence as a Father: The ſecond delivers us from God as a condemning Judge, to bring us under his Wing as an affectionate Father: In the one there was a dreadful Frown to ſcare us; in the other, a healing Wing to cover and relieve us. Again, in regard of Righteouſneſs: That demanded our performance of a Righteouſneſs in and by our ſelves, and our own ſtrength; this demands our acceptance of a Righteouſneſs higher than ever the ſtanding Angels had: The Righteouſneſs of the firſt Covenant, was the Righteouſneſs of a Man; the Righteouſneſs of the ſecond, is the *Righteouſneſs* of a God †. Again, in regard of that Obedience it demands, it exacts not of us, as a neceſſary Condition, the perfection of Obedience, but the ſincerity of Obedience; an uprightneſs in our Intention, not an unſpottedneſs in our Action; an Integrity in our Aims, and an Induſtry in our Compliance with Divine Precepts, * *Walk before me, and be thou perfect*, *i. e.* ſincere. What is hearty in our Actions is accepted, and what is defective is over-looked, and not charg'd upon us, becauſe of the Obedience and Righteouſneſs of our Surety. The firſt Covenant rejected all our Services after Sin; the Services of a Perſon under the Sentence of Death, are but dead Services; this accepts our imperfect Services after Faith in it; that adminiſtred no ſtrength to obey, but ſuppoſed it; this ſuppoſeth our inability to obey, and confers ſome ſtrength for it, † *I will put my Spirit within you, and cauſe you to walk in my Statutes*. Again, in regard of the Promiſes; * the Old Covenant hath good, but the new hath *better Promiſes* of Juſtification after Guilt, and Sanctification after Filth, and Glorification at laſt of the whole Man. In the firſt, there was proviſion againſt Guilt, but none for the removal of it: Proviſion againſt Filth, but none for the cleanſing of it: Promiſe of Happineſs implied, but not ſo great a one as that *Life and Immortality* in Heaven, *brought to light by the Goſpel*. † Why ſaid to be *brought to light* by the Goſpel? Becauſe it was not only buried upon the Fall of Man under the Curſes of the Law, but it was not ſo obvious to the Conceptions of Man in his innocent State. Life indeed was implied to be promiſed upon his ſtanding, but not ſo glorious an Immortality diſcloſed, to be reſerved for him, if he ſtood. As it is a Covenant of better Promiſes, ſo a Covenant of ſweeter Comforts: Comforts more choice, and Comforts more durable; an *everlaſting Conſolation, and a good Hope*, are the Fruits of *Grace*, *i. e.* the Covenant of Grace *: In the whole there is ſuch a Love diſcloſed, as cannot be expreſt; the Apoſtle leaves it to every Man's Mind

† Turretti. ſer. p. 33.
* Rom. 8. 1.
† Rom. 6. 14.
* Gal. 3. 13.
† Heb. 12. 18, 22.
* Rom. 5. 16, 17.
† 2 Cor. 5. 21.
* Gen. 17. 1
† Ezek. 36. 27.
* Heb. 8. 6.
† 2 Tim. 1. 10.
* 2 Theſ. 2. 16.

to

to conceive it, if he could, *what manner of Love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be* †1 Joh. 3. 1. *call'd the Sons of God* †. It instates us in such a manner of the Love of God, as he bears to his Son, * Joh. 17. 23. the Image of his Person; * *That the World may know, that thou hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.*

3. This Goodness appears *in the choice Gift of himself, which he hath made over in this Covenant.* You know how it runs in Scripture, *I will be* † Gen. 17. 7. *their God, and they shall be my People* †: A Propriety in the Deity is made over by it. As he gave the Blood of his Son to Seal the Covenant, so he gave himself as the Blessing of the Covenant; *He* * Jer. 32. 38. *is not ashamed to be called their God.* * Tho' he be environ'd with Millions of Angels, and presides Heb. 11. 16. over them in an unexpressible Glory, he is not ashamed of his Condescensions to Man, and to pass over Himself as the Propriety of his People, as well as to take them to be his. 'Tis a diminution of the sense of the place, to understand it of God as Creator; What reason was there for God to be asham'd of the Expressions of his Power, Wisdom, Goodness, in the Works of his Hands? But we might have reason to think, there might be some ground in God, to be ashamed in making himself over in a Deed of Gift to a mean Worm, and a filthy Rebel; this might seem a disparagement to his Majesty; but God is not asham'd of a Title so mean, as the God of his despis'd People. A Title below those others, of the *Lord of Hosts, glorious in Holiness, fearful in Praises, doing Wonders, riding on the Wings of the Wind, walking in the Circuits of Heaven.* He is no more asham'd of this Title of being our God, than he is of those other that sound more glorious: He would rather have his Greatness vail to his Goodness, than his Goodness be confin'd by his Majesty. He is not only our God, but our God as he is the God of Christ. He is not asham'd to be our Propriety, and Christ is not asham'd to own his People in a Partnership † John 20. 17. with him in this Propriety; † *I ascend to my God, and your God.* This of God's being our God, is the Quintessence of the Covenant, the Soul of all the Promises: In this he hath promised whatsoever is Infinite in him, whatsoever is the Glory and Ornament of his Nature for our use: Not a part of him, or one single Perfection, but the whole vigour and strength of all. As he is not a God without Infinite Wisdom, and Infinite Power, and Infinite Goodness, and Infinite Blessedness, &c. so he passes over in this Covenant, all that which presents him as the most adorable Being to his Creatures: He will be to them as Great, as Wise, as Powerful, as Good as he is in himself. And the assuring us in this Covenant to be our God, imports also that he will do as much for us, as we would do for our selves, were we furnish'd with the same Goodness, Power, and Wisdom: In being our God, he testifies 'tis all one, as if we had the same Perfections in our own power to employ for our use: For he being possessed with with them, 'tis as much, as if we our selves were possessed them for our own advantage, according to the Rules of Wisdom, and the several Conditions we pass through for his Glory; but this must be taken with a relation to that Wisdom, which he observes in his proceedings with us as Creatures, and according to the several Conditions we pass through for his Glory. Thus God's being ours, is more than if all Heaven and Earth were ours besides: 'Tis more than if we were fully our own, and at our own disposé; it makes * 1 Cor. 3. 22. *all things that God hath ours* *. And therefore not only all Things he hath created, but all Things that he can create: Not only all Things that he hath contrived, but all Things that he can contrive: For in being ours, his Power is ours, his possible Power as well as his active Power; his Power, whereby he can effect more than he hath done; and his Wisdom, whereby he can contrive more than he hath done; so that if there were need of employing his Power to create many Worlds for our good, he would not stick at it; for if he did, he would not be our God in the extent of his Nature, as the Promise intimates. What a rich Goodness, and a fulness of Bounty is there in this short Expression, as full as the Expression of a God can make it to be intelligible to such Creatures as we are?

4. This Goodness is further manifest *in the Confirmation of the Covenant.* His Goodness did not only condescend to make it for our Happiness, after we had made our selves Miserable, but further condescended to ratifie it in the solemnest manner for our assurance, to over-rule all the Despondencies Unbelief could raise up in our Souls. The reason why he confirmed it by an Oath, was to shew *the Immutability of his glorious Counsel*; not to tie himself to keep it: For his Word and Promise is in it self as immutable as his Oath: They were *two immutable things*, *his Word*, and *his Oath*, one as unchangeable as the other; but for the strength of our Consolation, that it might have no reason to shake and totter *: He would condescend as low *Heb. 6. 17, 18. as was possible for a God to do, for the satisfaction of the dejected Creature. When the first Covenant was broken, and it was impossible for Man to fulfil the Terms of it, and mount to Happiness thereby, he makes another: And, as if we had reason to distrust him in the first, he solemnly ratifies it in a higher manner than he had done the other, and swears by himself, that he will be true to it, not so much out of an Affection of himself, as the Object of the Oath. † *Because he could not* †Heb. 6. 13 *swear by a greater, he swears by Himself*; whereby the Apostle clearly intimates, that Divine Goodness was raised to such a height for us, that if there had been any thing else more sacred than Himself, or that could have punished him if he had broken it, that he would have sworn by, to silence any diffidence in us, and confirm in us the reality of his Intentions. Now if it were a mighty Mark of Goodness, for God to stoop to a Covenanting with us; it was more for a Sovereign to bind himself so solemnly, to be our Debtor in a Promise, as well as he was our Sovereign in the Precept, and stoop so low in it to satisfie the Distrusts of that Creature, that deserved for ever to lie soaking in his own Ruines, for not believing his bare Word. What Absolute Prince would ever stoop so low, as to Article with Rebellious Subjects, whom he could in a moment set his Foot upon and crush; much less countenance a causeless distrust of his Goodness, by the addition of his Oath, and thereby bind his own Hands, which were unconfin'd before, and free to do what he pleased with them?

5. This Goodness of God is remarkable also *in the Condition of this Covenant, which is Faith.* This was the easiest Condition in its own Nature, that could be imagin'd: No difficulty in it but what proceeds from the Pride of Man's Nature, and the Obstinacy of his Will: It was not impossible in its self; it was not the old Condition of perfect Obedience: It had been mighty Goodness to set us up again upon our old Stock, and restore us to the Tenor and Condition of the Covenant of Works, or to have requir'd the burdensom Ceremonies of the Law. Nor is it an exact knowledge he requires of us; all Mens Understandings being of a different

 size,

ſize, they had not been capable of this. It was the moſt reaſonable Condition, in regard of the Excellency of the Things propoſed, and the Effects following upon it; nay, it was neceſſary. It had been a want of Goodneſs to himſelf, and his own Honour; he had caſt that off, had he not inſiſted on this Condition of Faith; it being the loweſt he could condeſcend to, with a *Salvo* for his Glory. And it was a Goodneſs to us; 'tis nothing elſe he requires, but a willingneſs to accept what he hath contrived, and acted for us: And no Man can be happy againſt his Will; without this belief at leaſt, Man could never voluntarily have arriv'd to his Happineſs. The Goodneſs of God is evidenced in that,

Firſt, *'Tis an eaſie Condition, not impoſſible.*

1. *It was not the Condition of the Old Covenant.* The Condition of that, was an entire Obedience to every Precept, with a Man's whole ſtrength, and without any flaw or crack. But the Condition of the Evangelical Covenant, is a ſincere, tho' weak Faith; he hath ſuited this Covenant to the Miſery of Man's fall'n Condition: He conſiders our weakneſs, and that we are but Duſt, and therefore exacts not of us an entire, but a ſincere Obedience. Had God ſent Chriſt to expiate the Crime of *Adam*, reſtore him to his Paradiſe Eſtate, and repair in Man the ruin'd Image of Holineſs, and after this to have renewed the Covenant of Works for the future, and ſetled the ſame Condition in exacting a compleat Obedience for the time to come; Divine Goodneſs had been above any Accuſation, and had deſerv'd our higheſt Admiration in the Pardon of former Tranſgreſſions, and giving out to us our firſt Stock. But Divine Goodneſs took larger ſtrides: He had tried our firſt Condition, and found his mutable Creature quickly to violate it: Had he demanded the ſame now, 'tis likely it had met with the ſame iſſue as before, in Man's Diſobedience and Fall; we ſhould have been *as Men, as Adam,* * *tranſgreſſing the Covenant*, and then we muſt have lain groaning under our Diſeaſe, and wallowing in our Blood, unleſs Chriſt had come to die for the Expiation of our new Crimes; for every Tranſgreſſion had been a Violation of that Covenant, and a Forfeiture of our Right to the Benefits of it. * If we had broke it but in one tittle, we had rendred our ſelves uncapable to fulfil it for the future; that one Tranſgreſſion had ſtood as a Bar againſt the Pleas of After-Obedience. But God hath wholly laid that Condition aſide as to us, and ſettled that of Faith, more eaſie to be perform'd, and to be renew'd by us. 'Tis infinite Grace in him, that he will accept of Faith in us, inſtead of that perfect Obedience, he requir'd of us in the Covenant of Works.

* Hoſ. 6.7.

2. It is eaſie, not like *the burdenſome Ceremonies appointed under the Law.* He exacts not now the legal Obedience, expenſive Sacrifices, troubleſom Purifications and Abſtinencies, that *Yoke of Bondage*, † which they were *not able to bear.* * He treats us not as Servants, or Children in their Nonage, under the Elements of the World, nor requires thoſe innumerable bodily Exerciſes that he exacted of them: He demands not a thouſand *of Lambs*, and *Rivers of Oyl*; but he requires a *ſincere* Confeſſion and Repentance, in order to our Abſolution; an *unfeign'd Faith*, in order to our Bleſſedneſs, and Elevation to a glorious Life. He requires only, that we ſhould believe what he ſaith, and have ſo good an Opinion of his Goodneſs and Veracity, as to perſwade our ſelves of the reality of his Intentions, confide in his Word, and rely upon his Promiſe, cordially embrace his crucified Son, whom he hath ſet forth as the means of our Happineſs and have a ſincere reſpect to all the Diſcoveries of his Will. What can be more eaſie than this? Tho' ſome in the Days of the Apoſtles, and others ſince, have endeavoured to introduce a multitude of legal Burthens, as if they envied God the Expreſſions of his Goodneſs, or thought him guilty of too much Remiſneſs, in taking off the Yoke, and treating Man too favourably.

† Gal. 5.1.
* Acts 15. 10.

3. *Nor is it a clear knowledge of every Revelation*, that is the Condition of this Covenant. God in his kindneſs to Man, hath made Revelations of himſelf, but his Goodneſs is manifeſted in obliging us to believe him, not fully to underſtand him. He hath made them by ſufficient Teſtimonies as clear to our Faith, as they are incomprehenſible to our Reaſon: He hath reveal'd a Trinity of Perſons, in their diſtinct Offices, in the Buſineſs of Redemption, without which Revelation of a Trinity, we could not have a right Notion and Scheme of Redeeming Grace. But ſince the clearneſs of Mens Underſtanding is ſullied by the Fall, and hath loſt its Wings, to fly up to a Knowledge of ſuch ſublime Things as that of the Trinity, and other Myſteries of the Chriſtian Religion: God hath manifeſted his Goodneſs, in not obliging us to underſtand them, but to believe them; and hath given us reaſon enough to believe it to be his Revelation (both from the Nature of the Revelation it ſelf, and the way and manner of propagating it; which, is wholly Divine, exceeding all the Methods of Humane Art) tho' he hath not extended our Underſtandings to a Capacity to know them, and render a reaſon of every Myſtery. He did not require of every *Iſraelite*, or of any of them that were ſtung by the fiery Serpents, that they ſhould underſtand, or be able to diſcourſe of the Nature and Qualities of that Braſs of which the Serpent upon the Pole was made, or by what Art that Serpent was formed, or in what manner the ſight of it did operate in them for their Cure; it was enough, that they did believe the Inſtitution and Precept of God, and that their own Cure was aſſured by it: It was enough, if they caſt their Eyes upon it, according to the Direction. The Underſtandings of Men are of ſeveral Sizes and Elevations, one higher than another: If the Condition of this Covenant had been a greatneſs of Knowledge, the moſt acute Men had only enjoyed the Benefits of it. But it is Faith, which is as eaſie to be performed by the Ignorant and Simple, as by the Strongeſt and moſt Towring Mind: 'Tis that which is within the compaſs of every Man's Underſtanding. God did not require, that every one within the Verge of the Covenant, ſhould be able to diſcourſe of it to the Reaſons of Men: He requir'd not that every Man ſhould be a Philoſopher, or an Orator, but a Believer. What could be more eaſie than to lift up the Eye to the Brazen Serpent, to be cur'd of a fiery Sting? What could be more facile than a Glance, which is done without any pain, and in a moment? 'Tis a Condition may be perform'd by the weakeſt, as well as the ſtrongeſt: Could thoſe that were bitten in the moſt Vital part, caſt up their Eyes, tho' at the laſt Gaſp, they would ariſe to Health by the Expulſion of the Venom.

2. As 'tis eaſie, ſo 'tis *reaſonable.* Repent and believe, is that which is requir'd by Chriſt and the Apoſtles, for the enjoyment of the Kingdom of Heaven: 'Tis very reaſonable, that Things ſo great and glorious, ſo beneficial to Men, and reveal'd to them by ſo ſound an Authority, and an unerring Truth, ſhould be believed. The Excellency of the thing diſclos'd, could admit of no lower a Condition than to be believ'd and embrac'd. There is a ſort of Faith, that is a Natural Condition in every

thing: All Religion in the World, tho' never ſo falſe, depends upon a ſort of it; for unleſs there be a belief of future Things, there would never be a hope of Good, or a fear of Evil, the two great Hinges upon which Religion moves. In all kinds of Learning, many things muſt be believ'd, before a progreſs can be made. Belief of one another is neceſſary in all Acts of Humane Life; without which, Humane Society would be unlink'd and diſſolv'd: What is that Faith that God requires of us in this Covenant, but a *willingneſs* of Soul to take God for our God, Chriſt for our Mediator, and the Procurer of our Happineſs *? What Prince could require leſs upon any Promiſe he makes his Subjects, than to be believed as true, and depended on as good? That they ſhould accept his Pardon and other gracious Offers, and be ſincere in their Allegiance to him, avoiding all things that may offend him, and purſuing all things that may pleaſe him: Thus God, by ſo ſmall and reaſonable a Condition as Faith, lets in the Fruits of Chriſt's Death into our Soul, and wraps us up in the fruition of all the Priviledges purchas'd by it. So much he hath condeſcended in his Goodneſs, that upon ſo ſlight a Condition we may plead his Promiſe, and humbly challenge by vertue of the Covenant, thoſe good Things he hath promiſed in his Word: 'Tis ſo reaſonable a Condition, that if God did not require it in the Covenant of Grace, the Creature were obliged to perform it: For the publiſhing any Truth from God, naturally calls for Credit to be given it by the Creature, and an Entertainment of it in Practice. Could you offer a more reaſonable Condition your ſelves, had it been left to your choice? Should a Prince proclaim a Pardon to a profligate Wretch, would not all the World cry ſhame of him, if he did not believe it upon the higheſt Aſſurances? And if Ingenuity did not make him ſorry for his Crimes, and careful in the Duty of a ſubject, ſurely the World would cry ſhame of ſuch a Perſon.

* Rev. 22. 17.

3. 'Tis *a neceſſary Condition.*

1. *Neceſſary for the Honour of God.* A Prince is diſparag'd, if his Authority in his Law, and if his Graciouſneſs in his Promiſes be not accepted and believed. What Phyſician would undertake a Cure, if his Precepts may not be credited? 'Tis the firſt thing in the Order of Nature, that the Revelation of God ſhould be believed, that the reality of his Intentions, in inviting Man to the acceptance of thoſe Methods he hath preſcribed for their attaining their chief Happineſs, ſhould be acknowledged. 'Tis a debaſing Notion of God, that he ſhould give a Happineſs, purchaſed by Divine Blood, to a Perſon that hath no value for it, nor any abhorrency of thoſe Sins that occaſion'd ſo great a Suffering, nor any will to avoid them: Should he not vilifie himſelf, to beſtow a Heaven upon that Man, that will not believe the offers of it, nor walk in thoſe ways that leads to it? That walks ſo, as if he would declare, there was no Truth in his Word, nor Holineſs in his Nature? Would not God by ſuch an Act verifie a Truth in the Language of their Practice, *viz.* That he were both falſe and impure, careleſs of his Word, and negligent of his Holineſs? As God was ſo deſirous to enſure the Conſolation of Believers, that if there had been a greater Being than himſelf to atteſt, and for him to be reſponſible to, for the confirmation of his Promiſe, he would willingly have ſubmitted to him, and have made him the Umpire: * *He ſwore by himſelf, becauſe he could not ſwear by a greater.* By the ſame reaſon, had it ſtood with the Majeſty and Wiſdom of God to ſtoop to lower Conditions in this Covenant, for the reducing of Man to his Duty and Happineſs, he would have done it; but his Goodneſs could not take lower ſteps with the preſervation of the Rights of his Majeſty, and the Honour of his Wiſdom. Would you have had him wholly ſubmitted to the obſtinate Will of a rebellious Creature, and be ruled only by his Terms? Would you have had him receiv'd Men to Happineſs, after they had heightned their Crimes by a contempt of his Grace, as well as of his Creating Goodneſs, and have made them bleſſed under the Guilt of their Crimes, without an acknowledgment? Should he glorifie one that will not believe what he hath reveal'd, nor repent of what himſelf hath committed; and ſo ſave a Man after a repeated Unthankfulneſs to the moſt immenſe Grace that ever was, or can be diſcovered and offer'd, without a deteſtation of his Ingratitude, and a voluntary acceptance of his Offers? 'Tis neceſſary for the Honour of God, that Man ſhould accept of his Terms, and not give Laws to him, to whom he is obnoxious as a guilty Perſon, as well as Subject as a Creature.

*Heb. 6. 19.

Again: It was very equitable and neceſſary for the Honour of God, that ſince Man fell by an unbelief of his Precept and Threatning, he ſhould not riſe again without a belief of his Promiſe, and caſting himſelf upon his Truth in that: Since he had vilified the Honour of his Truth in the Threatning: Since Man in his Fall would lean to his own Underſtanding againſt God, 'tis fit that in his Recovery, the higheſt Powers of his Soul, his Underſtanding and Will ſhould be ſubjected to him in an entire Reſignation. Now, whereas Knowledge ſeems to have a Power over its Object, *Faith* is a full ſubmiſſion to that which is the Object of it. Since Man intended a glorying in himſelf; the Evangelical Covenant directs its whole Battery againſt it, that Men may *glory in nothing* but Divine Goodneſs †. Had Man perform'd exact Obedience by his own Strength, he had had ſomething in himſelf as the Matter of his Glory. And tho' after the Fall, Grace made it ſelf illuſtrious, in ſetting him up upon a new Stock, yet had the ſame Condition of exact Obedience been ſettled in the ſame manner; Man would have had ſomething to glory in, which is ſtruck off wholly by Faith; whereby Man in every Act muſt go out of himſelf for a ſupply, to that Mediator which Divine Goodneſs and Grace hath appointed.

† Cor. 1. 29, 30, 31.

2. 'Tis *neceſſary for the Happineſs of Man.* That can be no contenting Condition wherein the Will of Man doth not concur. He that is forced to the moſt delicious Diet, or to wear the braveſt Apparel, or to be ſtor'd with abundance of Treaſure, cannot be happy in thoſe things without an eſteem of them, and delight in them: If they be nauſeous to him, the Indiſpoſition of his Mind is a dead Fly in thoſe Boxes of precious Ointment. Now *Faith* being a ſincere willingneſs to accept of Chriſt, and to come to God by him; and *Repentance* being a deteſtation of that, which made Man's ſeparation from God, 'tis impoſſible he could be voluntarily happy without it: Man cannot attain and enjoy a true Happineſs, without an operation of his Underſtanding about the Object propoſed, and the Means appointed to enjoy it: There muſt be a knowledge of what is offer'd, and of the way of it, and ſuch a knowledge as may determine the Will, to affect that end; and embrace thoſe means; which the Will can never do, 'till the Underſtanding be fully perſwaded of the Truth of the Offerer, and the Goodneſs of the Propoſal it ſelf, and the Conveniency of the Means for the attaining of it. 'Tis neceſſary in the nature of the thing, that what is reveal'd, ſhould be believ'd to be a Divine Revelation. God muſt be judged true in the promiſing

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Juſtification and Sanctification, the means of Happineſs; and if any Man deſires to be partaker of thoſe Promiſes, he muſt deſire to be ſanctified; and how can he deſire that which is the Matter of thoſe Promiſes, if he wallow in his own Luſts, and deſire to do ſo, a thing repugnant to the Promiſe it ſelf? Would you have God force Man to be happy againſt his Will? Is it not very reaſonable he ſhould demand the conſent of his reaſonable Creature, to that Bleſſedneſs he offers him? The new Covenant is a *Marriage Covenant* *, which implies a conſent on our parts, as well as a conſent on God's part; That is no Marriage that hath not the conſent of both parties. Now Faith is our actual Conſent, and Repentance and ſincere Obedience are the Teſtimonies of the truth and reality of this Conſent.

* Hoſ. 2. 16, 19, 20.

6. *Divine Goodneſs is eminent in his Methods of treating with Men to embrace this Covenant.* They are Methods of gentleneſs and ſweetneſs: 'Tis a wooing *Goodneſs*, and a bewailing *Goodneſs*: His Expreſſions are with ſtrong motions of affection: He carrieth not on the Goſpel by force of Arms: He doth not ſolely menace Men into it, as Worldly Conquerors have done: He doth not as *Mahomet*, plunder Mens Eſtates, and wound their Bodies, to imprint a Religion on their Souls: He doth not erect Gibbets, and kindle Faggots, to ſcare Men to an entring into Covenant with him. What multitudes might he have rais'd by his Power, as well as others? What Legions of *Angels* might he have rendezvouz'd from Heaven, to have beaten Men into a profeſſion of the Goſpel? Nor doth he only interpoſe his Soveraign Authority in the Precept of Faith, but uſeth Rational Expoſtulations to move Men voluntarily to comply with his Propoſals *: *Come now, ſaith the Lord, let us reaſon together.* He ſeems to call Heaven and Earth to be judge, whether he had been wanting in any reaſonable ways of Goodneſs to overcome the perverſity of the Creature; † *Hear, O Heavens, and give ear, O Earth, I have nouriſhed and brought up Children.* What various encouragements doth he uſe agreeable to the Nature of Men, endeavouring to perſwade them with all tenderneſs, not to deſpiſe their own Mercies, and be Enemies to their own Happineſs? He would allure us by his Beauty, and win us by his Mercy. He uſes the Arms of his own Excellency, and our neceſſity to prevail upon us, and this after the higheſt provocations. When *Adam* had trampled upon his Creating Goodneſs, it was not cruſht; and when Man had caſt it from him, it took the higher rebound: When the Rebels provocation was freſh in his Mind, he ſought him out with a Promiſe in his Hand, tho' *Adam fled from him out of enmity*, as well as *fear* ||. And when the *Jews* had outrag'd his Son, whom he lov'd from Eternity, and made the Lord of Heaven and Earth bow down his Head like a Slave on the Croſs, yet in that place where the moſt horrible Wickedneſs had been committed, muſt the Goſpel be preached: The *Law* muſt *go forth out of that Sion*, and the *Apoſtles* muſt not ſtir from thence till they had receiv'd the Promiſe of the Spirit, and publiſh'd the Word of Grace in that ungrateful City, whoſe Inhabitants yet ſwelled with Indignation againſt the Lord of Life, and the Doctrine he had preached among them: * He would overlook their Indignities out of tenderneſs to their Souls; and expoſe the Apoſtles to the peril of their Lives, rather than expoſe his Enemies to the fury of the Devil.

* Iſa. 1. 18.

† Iſa. 1. 2.

|| Gen. 3.

* Luke 24. 47.

† Acts 1. 4, 5.

1. *How affectionately doth he invite Men?* What multitudes of alluring Promiſes, and preſſing Exhortations are there every where ſprinkled in the Scripture, and in ſuch a paſſionate manner, as if God were ſolely concern'd in our good, without a glance on his own glory? How tenderly doth he wooe flinty Hearts, and expreſs more pity to them, than they do to themſelves? With what affection do his Bowels riſe up to his Lips in his Speech in the Prophet, * *Hearken to me, O my People, and give ear unto me, O my Nation, my People, my Nation!* Melting Expreſſions of a tender God, ſolliciting a rebellious People to make their retreat to him: He never emptied his hand of his Bounty, nor diveſted his Lips of thoſe charitable Expreſſions. He ſent *Noah* to move the wicked of the old World to an embracing of his Goodneſs, and frequent Prophets to the provoking *Jews*; and as the World continued, and grew up to a taller ſtature in Sin, he ſtoops more in the manner of his Expreſſions. Never was the World at a higher pitch of Idolatry, than at the firſt publiſhing the Goſpel; yet when we ſhould have expected him to be a puniſhing, he is a beſeeching God. The Apoſtle fears not to uſe the Expreſſion for the glory of Divine Goodneſs, *We are Ambaſſadors for Chriſt, as though God did beſeech you by us* †. The beſeeching voice of God is in the voice of the Miniſtry, as the voice of the Prince is in that of the *Herald*: 'Tis as if Divine Goodneſs did kneel down to a Sinner with wringed Hands and blubber'd Cheeks, entreating him not to force him to re-aſſume a Tribunal of Juſtice in the nature of a Judge, ſince he would treat with Man upon a Throne of Grace in the nature of a Father; yea, he ſeems to put himſelf into the poſture of the Criminal, that the offending Creature might not feel the puniſhment due to a Rebel. 'Tis not the condeſcenſion, but the intereſt of a Traytor to creep upon his knees in Sackcloth to his Sovereign, to beg his Life: But it is a miraculous Goodneſs in the Sovereign to creep in the loweſt poſture to the Rebel, to importune him not only for an amity to him, but a love to his own Life and Happineſs: This he doth not only in his general proclamations, but in his particular wooings, thoſe inward courtings of his Spirit, ſolliciting them with more diligence (if they would obſerve it) to their Happineſs, than the Devil tempts them to the ways of their Miſery. As he was firſt in Chriſt, reconciling the World, when the World looked not after him; ſo he is firſt in his Spirit, wooing the World to accept of that Reconciliation, when the World will not liſten to him. How often doth he flaſh up the Light of Nature, and the Light of the Word in Mens hearts, to move them not to lye down in ſparks of their own kindling, but to aſpire to a better happineſs, and prepare them to be ſubject to a higher Mercy; if they would improve his preſent Entreaties to ſuch an end? And what are his Threatnings deſign'd for, but to move the Wheel of our Fears, that the Wheel of our Deſire and Love might be ſet on motion for the embracing his Promiſe? They are not ſo much the Thunders of his Juſtice, as the loud Rhetorick of his Good-Will, to prevent Mens Miſery under the Viols of Wrath. 'Tis his kindneſs to ſcare Men by Threatnings, that Juſtice might not ſtrike them with the Sword: 'Tis not the deſtruction, but the preſerving reformation that he aims at: *He hath no pleaſure in the death of the Wicked*; This he confirms by his Oath. || His Threatnings are gracious Expoſtulations with them, *Why will ye die, O houſe of Iſrael?* They are like the noiſe a favourable Officer makes in the Street, to warn the Criminal he comes to ſeize upon to make his eſcape: He never uſed his Juſtice to cruſh Men, till he had uſed his Kindneſs to allure them. All the dreadful deſcriptions of a future Wrath, as well as the lively deſcriptions of the happineſs of another World, are deſigned to perſwade Men: The Honey of his Goodneſs is in

* Iſa. 51. 4.

† 2 Cor. 5. 20.

|| Ezek. 33. 11.

the Bowels of those roaring Lions; such pains doth Goodness take with Men, to make them Candidates for Heaven.

2. *How readily doth he receive Men, when they do return?* We have *David*'s Experience for it *; *I said, I will confess my Transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my Sin, Selah.* A sincere look from the Creature draws out his Arms, and opens his Bosom; he is ready with his Physick to heal us, upon a resolution to acquaint him with our Disease, and by his Medicines prevents the putting our Resolution into a Petition. The *Psalmist* adds a *Selah* to it, as a special Note of Thankfulness for Divine Goodness. He doth not only stand ready to receive our Petitions, while we are speaking, but *answers us before we call*; † listning to the Motions of our Hearts, as well as to the Supplications of our Lips: He is the true Father, that hath a quicker pace in meeting, than the Prodigal hath in returning; who would not have his Embraces and Caresses interrupted by his Confession; ‖ The Confession follows, doth not precede the Father's Compassion. How doth he rejoyce in having an opportunity to express his Grace, when he hath prevail'd with a Rebel to throw down his Arms and lie at his Feet; and this because *he delights in mercy?* * He delights in the Expressions of it from himself, and the acceptance of it by his Creature.

* Psa. 32. 5.

† Isa. 65. 24.

‖ Luke 15. 20, 21, 22.

* Mic. 7. 18.

3. *How meltingly doth he bewail Man's wilful refusal of his Goodness?* 'Tis a mighty Goodness to offer Grace to a Rebel, a mighty Goodness to give it him after he hath a while stood off from the terms: An astonishing Goodness to regret and lament his wilful Perdition. He seems to utter those words in a sigh; † *Oh that my People had hearkened unto me, and* Israel *had walked in my way!* 'Tis true, God hath not Humane Passions, but his Affections cannot be express'd otherwise in a way intelligible to us: The Excellency of his Nature is above the Passions of Men, but such Expressions of himself manifest to us the Sincerity of his Goodness; and that were he capable of our Passions, he would express himself in such a manner as we do. And we find incarnate Goodness bewailing with Tears and Sighs the ruine of *Jerusalem:* ‖ By the same reason that when a Sinner returns, there is Joy in Heaven, upon his obstinacy there is Sorrow on Earth. The one is as if a Prince should cloath all his Court in triumphant Scarlet upon a Rebel's repentance; and the other, as if a Prince should put himself and his Court in Mourning for a Rebel's obstinate refusal of a Pardon, when he lies at his Mercy. Are not now these affectionate invitations, and deep bewailings of their perversity high Testimonies of Divine Goodness? Do not the unwearied repetitions of Gracious Encouragements deserve a higher Name than that of meer *Goodness?* What can be a stronger Evidence of the sincerity of it, than the sound of his saving voice in our enjoyments, the motion of his Spirit in our hearts, and his Grief for the neglect of all? These are not Testimonies of any want of Goodness in his Nature to answer us, or willingness to express it to his Creature. Hath he any mind to deceive us, that thus entreats us? The Majesty of his Nature is too great for such shifts; or if it were not, the despicableness of our condition would render him above the using any. Who would charge that Physician with want of kindness, that freely offers his Sovereign Medicine, importunes Men by the love they have to their health to take it, and is dissolved into tears and sorrow, when he finds it rejected by their peevish and conceited Humor?

† Psal. 81. 13.

‖ Luke 19. 42.

7. *Divine Goodness is evident in the Sacraments he hath affix'd to this Covenant, especially in the Lord's Supper.* As he gave himself in his Son, so he gives his Son in the Sacrament: He doth not only give him as a Sacrifice upon the Cross for the expiation of our Crimes, but as a Feast upon the Table for the nourishment of our Souls: In the one he was given to be offer'd; in this he gives him to be partaked of, with all the Fruits of his Death: Under the Image of the Sacramental Signs, every Believer doth eat the Flesh, and drink the Blood of the great Mediator of the Covenant. The words of Christ, *This is my Body, and this is my Blood*, are true to the end of the World *. This is the most delicious Viand of Heaven, the most exquisite dainty food God can feed us with; the delight of the Deity, the admiration of Angels: A Feast with God is great, but a Feast on God is greater. Under those Signs that Body is presented; that which was conceiv'd by the Spirit, inhabited by the Godhead, bruised by the Father to be our Food, as well as our Propitiation, is presented to us on the Table: That Blood which satisfied Justice, wash'd away our guilt on the Cross, and pleads for our Persons at the Throne of Grace: That Blood which silenc'd the Curse, pacify'd Heaven, and purg'd Earth, is given to us for our refreshment. This is the *Bread sent from Heaven*, the true *Manna*; the Cup is the *Cup of Blessing*, and therefore a Cup of *Goodness* †. 'Tis true, Bread doth not cease to be Bread, nor the Wine cease to be Wine; neither of them lose their Substance, but both acquire a Sanctification, by the relation they have to that which they represent, and give a nourishment to that Faith that receives them. In those God offers us a remedy for the sting of Sin, and troubles of Conscience: He gives us not the Blood of a meer Man, or the Blood of an incarnate Angel, but of God blessed for ever: A Blood that can secure us against the Wrath of Heaven, and the tumults of our Consciences: a *Blood* that can wash away our *sins*, and beautify our *souls*: a *Blood* that hath more strength than our Filth, and more prevalency than our Accuser: A Blood that secures us against the Terrors of Death, and purifies us for the Blessedness of Heaven. The *Goodness of God* complies with our Senses, and condescends to our weakness: He instructs us by the Eye, as well as by the Ear: He lets us see, and taste, and feel him, as well as hear him: He veils his Glory under Earthly Elements, and informs our Understanding in the Mysteries of Salvation by Signs familiar to our Senses; and because we cannot with our bodily Eyes behold him in his Glory, he presents him to the Eyes of our Minds in Elements, to affect our Understandings in the representations of his Death. The Body of Christ crucified is more visible to our Spiritual sense, than the invisible Deity could be visible in his Flesh upon Earth: And the Power of his Body and Blood is as well experimented in our Souls, as the Power of his Divinity was seen by the *Jews* in his miraculous actions in his Body in the World. 'Tis the Goodness of God, to mind us frequently of the great things Christ hath purchased; that as himself would not let them be out of his mind, to communicate them to us, so he would give us means to preserve them in our minds, to adore him for them, and request them of him; whereby he doth evidence his own solicitousness, that we should not be depriv'd by out own forgetfulness of that Grace Christ hath purchas'd for us: It was to remember the *Redeemer*, and *shew his Death till he came* ‖.

* Mat. 26. 26, 28.

† 1 Cor. 10. 15.

‖ 1 Cor. 11. 25, 26.

1. *His Goodness is seen in the end of it, which is a sealing the Covenant of Grace.* *. The common Nature and End of Sacraments is to seal the Covenant they belong to, and the truths of the Promises of it. The legal Sacraments of Circumcision and the Passover sealed the legal Promises and the Covenant in the Judaical Administration of it: And

* Amyral. *Irenicum*, p. 16, 17.

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the Evangelical Sacraments ſeal the Evangelical Promiſes, as a Ring confirms a contract of Marriage, and a Seal the Articles of a Compact: By the ſame reaſon Circumciſion is call'd *a Seal of the Righteouſneſs of Faith* †, other Sacraments may have the ſame Title: God doth atteſt, that he will remain firm in his Promiſe; and the Receiver atteſts, he will remain firm in his Faith. In all Reciprocal Covenants there are mutual Engagements, and that which ſerves for a Seal on the part of the one, ſerves for a Seal alſo on the part of the other: God obligeth himſelf to the performance of the Promiſe, and Man engageth himſelf to the performance of his Duty. The thing confirm'd by this Sacrament is the perpetuity of this Covenant in the Blood of Chriſt, whence it is call'd *the New Teſtament*, or *Covenant in the Blood of Chriſt* ‖. In every repetition of it, God by preſenting confirms his reſolution to us, of ſticking to this Covenant for the Merit of Chriſt's Blood; and the Receiver by eating the Body, and drinking the Blood, engageth himſelf to keep cloſe to the Condition of Faith, expecting a full Salvation, and a bleſſed Immortality upon the Merit of the ſame Blood alone. This *Sacrament* could not be call'd the *New Teſtament* or *Covenant*, if it had not ſome relation to the Covenant; and what it can be but this, I do not underſtand. The Covenant it ſelf was confirm'd *by the Death of Chriſt* *, and thereby made unchangeable both in the Benefits to us, and the Condition requir'd of us; but he ſeals it to our ſenſe in a Sacrament to give us ſtrong conſolation: Or rather the Articles of the Covenant of Redemption between the Father and the Son, agreed on from Eternity, were accompliſh'd on Chriſt's part by his Death, on the Father's part by his Reſurrection; Chriſt perform'd what he promis'd in the one, and God acknowledg'd the validity of it, and performs what he had promis'd in the other. The Covenant of Grace founded upon this Covenant of Redemption is ſealed in the Sacrament; God owns his ſtanding to the terms of it, as ſeal'd by the Blood of the Mediator, by preſenting him to us under thoſe Signs, and gives us a right upon Faith to the enjoyment of the Fruits of it: As the right of a Houſe is made over by the delivery of the Key, and the right of Land tranſlated by the delivery of a Turf, whereby he gives us aſſurance of his reality; and a ſtrong ſupport to our confidence in him; not that there is any vertue and power of ſealing in the *Elements themſelves*, no more than there is in a Turf, to give an Infeoffment in a parcel of Land; but as the power of the one is deriv'd from the Order of the Law, ſo the confirming power of the Sacrament is deriv'd from the Inſtitution of God. As the Oyl wherewith Kings were anointed did not of it ſelf confer upon them that Royal Dignity, but it was a ſign of their inveſtiture into Office, order'd by Divine Inſtitution. We can with no reaſon imagin, that God intended them as naked Signs or Pictures, to pleaſe our Eyes with the Image of them, to repreſent their own Figures to our Eyes, but to confirm ſomething to our underſtanding by the Efficacy of the Spirit accompanying them †: They convey to the believing Receiver what they repreſent, as the Great Seal of a Prince fixed to the Parchment doth the Pardon of the Rebel as well as its own figure. Chriſt's Death and the Grace of the Covenant is not only ſignified, but the Fruits and Merit of that Death communicated alſo. Thus doth Divine Goodneſs evidence it ſelf, not only in making a gracious Covenant with us, but fixing Seals to it; not to ſtrengthen his own Obligation, which ſtood ſtronger than the Foundations of Heaven and Earth, upon the Credit of his Word, but to ſtrengthen our weakneſs, and ſupport our ſecurity, by ſomething which might appear more formal and ſolemn than a bare word. By this the *Divine Goodneſs* provides againſt our ſpiritual faintings, and ſhews us by real Signs as well as verbal Declarations, that the Covenant ſealed by the Blood of Chriſt, is unalterable; and thereby would fortifie and mount our hopes to degrees in ſome meaſure ſuitable to the kindneſs of the Covenant, and the dignity of the Redeemer's Blood. And it's yet a further degree of his Goodneſs, that he hath appointed us ſo often to celebrate it, whereby he ſhews how careful he is to keep up our tottering Faith, and preſerve us conſtant in our Obedience; obliging us to the payment of our Duty.

† Rom. 4. 11.

‖ Luke 22. 20.

* Heb. 9. 15.

† Daille, *Melang. part* 1. *p.* 153.

2. His *Goodneſs* is ſeen in the Sacrament *in giving us in it an Union and Communion with Chriſt*. There is not only a *Commemoration* of Chriſt dying, but a *Communication* of Chriſt living. The Apoſtle ſtrongly aſſerts it by way of Interrogation, * *The Cup of Bleſſing which we bleſs, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Chriſt? The Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Chriſt?* In the Cup there is a communication of the Blood of Chriſt, a conveyance of a Right to the Merits of his Death, and the Bleſſedneſs of his Life: We are not leſs by this made one Body with Chriſt, than we are by *Baptiſm:* † And *put on Chriſt* living in this, as well as in Baptiſm; ‖ That as his taking our infirm Fleſh was a real Incarnation, ſo the giving us his Fleſh to eat, is a Myſtical Incarnation in Believers, whereby they become one Body with him as Crucified, and one Body with him as Riſen; for if Chriſt himſelf be receiv'd by Faith in the Word, * He is no leſs receiv'd by Faith in the Sacrament. When the Holy Ghoſt is ſaid to be receiv'd, the Graces or Gifts of the Holy Ghoſt are receiv'd; So when Chriſt is receiv'd, the Fruits of his Death are really partaked of. The *Iſraelites* that eat of the Sacrifices, did *partake of the Altar* †, *i. e.* had a communion with the God of *Iſrael*, to whom they had been ſacrific'd; and thoſe that *eat of the Sacrifices* offer'd to Idols had a *fellowſhip with Devils*, to whom thoſe Sacrifices were offer'd, *Ver.* 20. Thoſe that partake of the Sacraments in a due manner, have a communion with that God to whom 'twas ſacrific'd, and a communion with that Body which was ſacrificed to God: not that the ſubſtance of that Body and Blood is wrapped up in the Elements, or that the Bread and Wine are transform'd into the Body and Blood of Chriſt, but as they repreſent him, and by virtue of the Inſtitution are in Eſtimation himſelf, his own Body and Blood; by the ſame reaſon as he is call'd *Chriſt our Paſſover*, he may be call'd *Chriſt our Supper* ‖: For as they are ſo reckon'd to an unworthy Receiver, as if they were the real Body and Blood of Chriſt, becauſe by his not diſcerning the Lord's Body in it, or making light of it as common Bread, he is judg'd *guilty of the Body and Blood of Chriſt*, guilty of treating him in as baſe a manner as the *Jews* did when they crown'd him with Thorns: * By the ſame reaſon they muſt be reckon'd to a worthy Receiver, as the very Body and Blood of Chriſt: So that as the unworthy Receiver *eats and drinks Damnation*, the worthy Receiver *eats and drinks Salvation*. It would be an empty Myſtery, and unworthy of an Inſtitution by *Divine Goodneſs*, if there were not ſome communion with Chriſt in it: There would be ſome kind of deceit in the Precept, *Take, eat, and drink, this is my Body and Blood*, if there were not a conveyance of ſpiritual vital influences to our Souls: for the natural End of eating and drinking is the nouriſhment and increaſe of the Body, and preſervation of Life, by that which we eat and drink. The infinite

* 1 Cor. 10. 16.

† 1 Cor. 12. 13. ‖ Gal. 3. 27.

* Col. 2. 6.

† 1 Cor. 10. 18.

‖ 1 Cor. 5. 7.

* 1 Cor. 11. 27, 29.

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wiſe, gracious and true God, would never give us empty Figures without accompliſhing that which is ſignified by them, and ſuitable to them. How great is this Goodneſs of God? He would have his Son in us, one with us, ſtraitly joyn'd to us, as if we were his proper Fleſh and Blood: In the Incarnation *Divine Goodneſs* united him to our Nature, in the Sacrament it doth in a ſort unite him with his purchas'd Priviledges to our Perſons; we have not a communion with a part or a Member of his Body, or a drop of his Blood, but with his whole Body and Blood repreſented in every part of the Elements. The Angels in the Heaven enjoy not ſo great a priviledge; they have the honour to be under him as their Head, but not that of having him for their Food; they behold him, but they do not taſt him. And certainly that Goodneſs that hath condeſcended ſo much to our weakneſs, would impart it to us in a very glorious manner, were we capable of it. But becauſe a Man cannot behold the Light of the Sun in its full ſplendor, by reaſon of the infirmities of his Eyes, he muſt behold it by the help of a Glaſs, and ſuch a communication thro' a colour'd and Opake-Glaſs, is as real from the Sun it ſelf, tho' not ſo glorious, but more ſhrowded and obſcure; 'tis the ſame light that ſhines thro' that Medium, as ſpreads it ſelf glorioufly in the open Air, tho' the one be mask'd, and the other open-fac'd.

To conclude this, by the way we may take notice of the *neglect of this Ordinance:* If it be a token of Divine Goodneſs to appoint it, 'tis no ſign of our eſtimation of Divine Goodneſs to neglect it. He that values the kindneſs of his friend will accept of his invitation, if there be not ſome ſtrong impediments in the way, or ſo much familiarity with him, that his refuſal upon a light occaſion would not be unkindly taken. But tho' God put on the diſpoſition of a friend to us, yet he loſeth not the Authority of a Sovereign; and the humble familiarity he invites us to doth not diminiſh the condition and duty of a Subject. A Sovereign Prince would not take it well, if a Favourite ſhould refuſe the offer'd honour of his Table. The Viands of God are not to be ſlighted. Can we live better upon our poor pittance, than upon his Dainties? Did not Divine Goodneſs condeſcend in it to the weakneſs of our Faith, and ſhall we conceit our Faith ſtronger than God thinks it? If he thought fit by thoſe Seals to make a Deed of Gift to us, ſhall we be ſo unmannerly to him, and ſuch Enemies to the Security he offers us over and above his Word, as not to accept it? Are we unwilling to have our Souls enflamed with love, our Hearts filled with comfort, and arm'd againſt the attempts of our Enemies? 'Tis true, there is a guilt of the Body and Blood of Chriſt contracted by a ſlightneſs in the manner of attending; is it not alſo contracted by a refuſal and neglect? What is the Language of it? If it ſpeaks not the death of Chriſt in vain, it ſpeaks the inſtitution of this Ordinance as a remembrance of his death to be a Vanity, and no mark of Divine Goodneſs. Let us therefore put ſuch a value upon *Divine Goodneſs* in this Affair, as to be willing to receive the conveyances of his Love, and freſh Engagements of our Duty; the one is due from us to the kindneſs of our friend, and the other belongs to our Duty, as his Subjects.

8. *By this Redemption God reſtores us to a more excellent condition than* Adam *had in Innocence.* Chriſt was ſent by *Divine Goodneſs* not only to reſtore the Life *Adam*'s ſin had ſtript us of, but to give it more abundantly than *Adam*'s ſtanding could have convey'd it to us, * *I am come that they might have Life, and that they might have it more abundantly.* More abundantly for ſtrength, more abundantly for duration, a life abounding with greater felicity and glory: The ſubſtance of thoſe better Promiſes of the *New Covenant*, than what attended the old. There are fuller ſtreams of Grace by Chriſt than flow'd to *Adam*, or could flow from *Adam.* As Chriſt never reſtor'd any to health and ſtrength while he was in the World, but he gave them a greater meaſure of both than they had before; ſo there is the ſame kindneſs, no queſtion, manifeſted in our ſpiritual condition. *Adam*'s Life might have preſery'd us, but *Adam*'s Death could not have reſcued either Himſelf or his Poſterity; but in our Redemption we have a Redeemer, who hath *died to expiate our Sins*, and ſo crowned with Life to ‖ ſave, and for ever preſerve our Perſons, † *Becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo*, So that by *Redeeming Goodneſs* the Life of a *Believer* is as perpetual as the Life of the *Redeemer* Chriſt. *Adam*, tho' Innocent, was under the danger of periſhing; a Believer, tho' culpable, is above the fears of Mutability. *Adam* had a Holineſs in his Nature, but capable of being loſt; by *Chriſt* Believers have a Holineſs beſtow'd, not capable of being rifled, but which will remain till it be at laſt fully perfected: Tho' they have a power to change in their Nature, yet they are above an actual final change by the indulgence of Divine Grace. *Adam* ſtood by himſelf, *Believers* ſtand in a Root impoſſible to be ſhaken or corrupted; by this means the *Promiſe is ſure to all the Seed.* * Chriſt is a ſtronger Perſon than *Adam*, who can never break Covenant with God, and the Truth of God will never break Covenant with him. We are united to a more excellent Head than *Adam.* Inſtead of a Root meerly Human, we have a Root Divine, as well as Humane. In him we had the Righteouſneſs of a Creature meerly Humane; in this we have a Righteouſneſs Divine, the Righteouſneſs of God-man; the ſtock is no longer in our own hands, but in the hands of one that cannot imbezzle it, or forfeit it. *Divine Goodneſs* hath depoſited it ſtrongly for our ſecurity. The ſtamp we receive by the *Divine Goodneſs* from the ſecond *Adam*, is more noble than that we ſhould have receiv'd from the firſt, had he remain'd in his *created ſtate: Adam* was formed of the Duſt of the Earth, and the New Man is form'd by the incorruptible Seed of the Word. And at the Reſurrection the Body of Man ſhall be endu'd with better qualities than *Adam* had at Creation. They ſhall be like that glorious Body which is in Heaven in union with the Perſon of the *Son of God.* † *Adam* at the beſt had but an Earthly Body, but the Lord from Heaven hath a *Heavenly Body*, the Image of which ſhall be born by the Redeem'd Ones, as they have born the *Image* of the Earthly ‖. *Adam* had the Society of Beaſts, Redeemed ones expect by Divine Goodneſs in Redemption a commerce with Angels; as they are reconcil'd to them by his Death, they ſhall certainly come to converſe with them at the conſummation of their Happineſs. As they are made of one Family, ſo they will have a peculiar intimacy. *Adam* had a Paradiſe, and Redeem'd Ones a Heaven provided for them, a happier place with a richer Furniture. 'Tis much to give ſo compleat a Paradiſe to innocent *Adam*; but more to give Heaven to an ungrateful *Adam*, and his Rebellious Poſterity. It had been abundant Goodneſs to have reſtor'd us to the ſame condition in that Paradiſe from whence we were ejected; but a ſuperabundant Goodneſs to beſtow upon us a better Habitation in Heaven, which we could never have expected. How great is that Goodneſs, when by ſin we were fallen to be worſe than nothing, that he ſhould raiſe us to be more than what we were! That reſtor'd us, not to the firſt ſtep of our Creation, but to many degrees of elevation beyond it. Not only

* John 10. 10.

‖ John 14. 19.

† Rom. 5. 19.

* Rom. 4. 16.

† Phil. 3. 21.

‖ 1 Cor. 15. 47, 48, 49.

only reſtores us, but prefers us, not only ſtriking off our Chains, to ſet us free, but cloathing us with a Robe of Righteouſneſs, to render us honourable. Not only quenching our Hell, but preparing a Heaven; not re-garniſhing an earthly, but providing a richer Palace: His Goodneſs was ſo great, that after it had reſcued us, it would not content it ſelf with the old Furniture, but makes all new for us in another World; a new Wine to drink, a new Heaven to dwell in, a more magnificent Structure for our Habitation: Thus hath Goodneſs prepared for us a ſtraiter Union, a ſtronger Life, a purer Righteouſneſs, an unſhaken Standing, and a fuller Glory. All more excellent than was within the compaſs of innocent *Adam*'s Poſſeſſion.

9. *This Goodneſs in Redemption extends it ſelf to the lower Creation.* It takes in not only Man, but the whole Creation, except the fallen Angels, and gives a participation of it to inſenſible Creatures; upon the Account of this Redemption, the Sun, and all kind of Creatures were preſerv'd, which otherwiſe had ſunk into Deſtruction upon the Sin of Man, and ceas'd from their Being, as Man had utterly ceas'd from his Happineſs. * *By him all things conſiſt.* The Fall of Man brought not only a Miſery upon himſelf, but a Vanity upon the Creature: The Earth groaned under a Curſe for his ſake. They were all created for the Glory of God, and the ſupport of Man in the performance of his Duty, who was obliged to uſe them for the Honour of him that created them both. Had Man been true to his Obligations, and uſed the Creatures for that end, to which they were dedicated by the Creator; as God would have then rejoyced in his Works, ſo his Works would have rejoyced in the honour of anſwering ſo excellent an end. But when Man loſt his Integrity, the Creatures loſt their Perfection; the honour of them was ſtain'd, when they were debas'd to ſerve the Luſts of a Traitor, inſtead of ſupporting the Duty of a Subject, and employed in the defence of the Vices of Men, againſt the Precepts and Authority of their common Sovereign. This was a vilifying the Creature, as it would be a vilifying the Sword of a Prince, which is for the maintenance of Juſtice, to be uſed for the Murder of an Innocent; and a diſhonouring a Royal Manſion, to make it a Store-houſe for a Dunghil. Had thoſe things the benefit of Senſe, they would groan under this Diſgrace, and riſe up in Indignation againſt them, that offered them this Affront, and turned them from their proper end. When Sin entred, the Heavens that were made to ſhine upon Man, and the Earth that was made to bear and nouriſh an innocent Creature, were now ſubjected to ſerve a rebellious Creature. And as Man turn'd againſt God, ſo he made thoſe Inſtruments againſt God, to ſerve his Enmity, Luxury, Senſuality. Hence the Creatures are ſaid to groan, * *The whole Creation groans, and travels in pain together until now.* They would really groan, had they Underſtanding to be ſenſible of the Outrage done them.

*Col. 1. 17.

* Rom. 8. 21.

The whole Creation: 'Tis the Pang of Univerſal Nature, the Agony of the whole Creation, to be alienated from the Original Uſe for which they were intended, and be diſ-joynted from their end, to ſerve the Diſloyalty of a Rebel. The Drunkard's Cup, and the Glutton's Table, the Adulterer's Bed, and the proud Man's Purple, would groan againſt the Abuſer of them. But when all the Fruits of Redemption ſhall be compleated, the Goodneſs of God ſhall pour it ſelf upon the Creatures, deliver them from the *Bondage of Corruption, into the glorious Liberty of the Children of God* *, they ſhall be reduced to their true End, and return'd in their Original Harmony. As the Creation doth paſſionately groan under its Vanity, ſo it doth *earneſtly expect and wait for its deliverance, at the time of the manifeſtation of the Sons of God.* The manifeſtation of the Sons of God, is the attainment of the liberty of the Creature. They ſhall be freed from the Vanity under which they are enſlav'd. As it entred by Sin, it ſhall vaniſh upon the total removal of Sin. What uſe they were deſign'd for in Paradiſe, they will have afterwards, except that of the nouriſhment of Men, who ſhall be as *Angels, neither eating nor drinking.* The Glory of God ſhall be ſeen and contemplated in them. It can hardly be thought, that God made the World to be a little moment after he had rear'd it, ſullied by the Sin of Man, and turn'd from its original End, without thoughts of a Reſtoration of it to its true End, as well as Man to his loſt Happineſs. The World was made for Man: Man hath not yet enjoyed the Creature, in the firſt intention of them; Sin made an interruption in that Fruition. As *Redemption* reſtores Man to his true end, ſo it reſtores the Creatures to their true uſe. The reſtoration of the World to its Beauty and Order, was the deſign of the Divine Goodneſs in the coming of Chriſt, as it is intimated in *Iſa.* 11. 6, 7, 8, 9. As he *came not to deſtroy the Law, but to fulfil it*; ſo he came not to deſtroy the Creatures, but to repair them. To reſtore to God the Honour and Pleaſure of the Creation, and reſtore to the Creatures their Felicity in reſtoring their Order. The Fall corrupted it, and the full Redemption of Men reſtores it. The laſt time is called not a time of Deſtruction, but a *time of Reſtitution*, and that *of all Things* *, of univerſal Nature, the main part of the Creation at leaſt. All thoſe things which were the Effects of Sin, will be aboliſh'd; the removal of the Cauſe beats down the Effect. The diſorder and unrulineſs of the Creature, ariſing from the Venom of Man's Tranſgreſſion, all the fierceneſs of one Creature againſt another ſhall vaniſh. The World ſhall be nothing but an Univerſal Smile. Nature ſhall put on triumphant Veſtments: There ſhall be no affrighting Thunders, choaking Miſts, venemous Vapours, or poiſonous Plants. It would not elſe be a Reſtitution of all Things. They are now ſubject to be waſted by Judgments for the Sin of their Poſſeſſor; but the perfection of Man's Redemptions ſhall free them from every Miſery. They have an advancement at the preſent; for they are under a more glorious Head, as being the poſſeſſion of *Chriſt*, the heavenly *Adam*, much ſuperiour to the firſt: As it's the Glory of a Perſon to be a Servant to a Prince, rather than a Peaſant. And afterwards they ſhall be elevated to a better ſtate, ſharing in Man's Happineſs, as well as they did in his Miſery; as Servants are intereſted in the good Fortune of their Maſter, and better'd by his advance in his Prince's Favour. As Man in his firſt Creation was mutable and liable to ſin, ſo the Creatures were liable to Vanity: But as Man by Grace ſhould be freed from the Mutability, ſo ſhall the Creatures be freed from the fears of an Invaſion, by the Vanity that ſully'd them before. The Condition of the Servants ſhall be ſuited to that of their Lord, for whom they were deſign'd: Hence all Creatures are call'd upon to *rejoyce* upon the Perfection of Salvation, and the appearance of Chriſt's Royal Authority in the World. * If they were to be deſtroyed, there would be no ground to invite them to triumph. Thus doth Divine Goodneſs ſpread its kind Arms over the whole Creation.

* Rom. 8. 21.

*Acts 3. 21.

* Pſal. 96. 11, 12. Pſal. 98. 7, 8

v. 19.

3. *The third thing is the Goodneſs of God in his Government.* That Goodneſs that deſpiſed not their Creation, doth not deſpiſe their Conduct. The ſame

ſame Goodneſs that was the Head that fram'd them, is the Helm that guides them; his Goodneſs hovers over the whole Frame, either to prevent any wild Diſorders unſuitable to his Creating-end, or to conduct them to thoſe Ends, which might illuſtrate his Wiſdom and Goodneſs to his Creatures. His Goodneſs doth no leſs incline him to provide for them, than to frame them. 'Tis the natural Inclination of Man to love what is purely the Birth of his own Strength or Skill. He is fond of preſerving his own Inventions, as well as laborious in inventing them. 'Tis the Glory of a Man to preſerve them, as well as to produce them. God loves every thing which he hath made, which Love could not be without a continued Diffuſiveneſs to them, ſuitable to the End for which he made them. It would be a vain Goodneſs, if it did not intereſt it ſelf in *managing* the World, as well as *erecting* it: Without his Government, every thing in the World would juſtle againſt one another: The Beauty of it would be more defaced, it would be an unruly Maſs, a confus'd Chaos, rather than a Κόσμος, a comely World. If Divine Goodneſs reſpected it when it was as nothing, it would much more reſpect it when it was ſomething, by the ſole Virtue of his Power and Good Will to it, without any Motive from any thing elſe than Himſelf, becauſe there was nothing elſe but Himſelf. But ſince he ſees his own Stamp in things without Himſelf in the Creature, which is a kind of Motive, or moving Object to Divine Goodneſs to preſerve it, when there was nothing without Himſelf, that could be any Motive to him, to create it: As when God hath created a Creature, and it falls into Miſery, that Miſery of the Creature, thou' it doth not neceſſitate his Mercy, yet meeting with ſuch an Affection as Mercy in his Nature, is a moving Object to excite it: As the Repentance of *Nineveh* drew forth the Exerciſe of his Pity and preſerving Goodneſs. Certainly ſince God is Good, he is Bountiful; and if Bountiful, he is Provident. He would ſeem to envy and malign his Creatures, if he did not provide for them, while he intends to uſe them: But infinite Goodneſs cannot be affected with Envy: For all Envy implies a want of that Good in our ſelves, which we regard with ſo evil an Eye in another. But God being infinitely bleſſed, hath not the want of any Good, that can be a Riſe to ſuch an uncomly Diſpoſition. The *Jews* thought that Divine Goodneſs extended only to them in an immediate and particular Care, and left all other Nations and Things to the Guidance of Angels. But the *Pſalmiſt*, Pſal. 107. a *Pſalm* calculated for the Celebration of this Perfection, in the continued Courſe of his *Providence*, throughout all Ages of the World, aſcribes to Divine Goodneſs, immediately, all the Advantages Men meet with. He helps them in their Actions, preſides over their Motions, inſpects their ſeveral Conditions, labours Day and Night in a perpetual Care of them. The whole Life of the World is link'd together by *Divine Goodneſs*. Every thing is order'd by him in the place where he hath ſet it, without which the World would be ſtript of that Excellency it hath by Creation.

1. Firſt, *This Goodneſs is evident in the Care he hath of all Creatures.* There is a peculiar Goodneſs to his People; but this takes not away his general Goodneſs to the World: Tho' a Maſter of a Family hath a choicer Affection to thoſe that have an Affinity to him in Nature, and ſtand in a nearer Relation, as his Wife, Children, Servants; yet he hath a regard to his Cattle, and other Creatures, he nouriſheth in his Houſe. All things are not only before his Eyes, but in his Boſom; he is the Nurſe of all Creatures, ſupplying their Wants, and ſuſtaining them from that Nothing they tend to. * *The Earth is full of his Riches*, not a Creek or Cranny but partakes of it; abundant Goodneſs daily hovers over it, as well as hatch'd it. *The whole World ſwims in the rich Bounty of the Creator, as the Fiſh do in the Largeneſs of the Sea, and Birds in the Spaciouſneſs of the Air. The Goodneſs of God is the River that waters the whole Earth. As a lifeleſs Picture caſts its Eye upon every one in the Room, ſo doth a living God upon every thing in the World. And as the Sun illuminates all Things which are capable of partaking of its Light, and diffuſeth its Beams to all Things which are capable of receiving them; ſo doth God ſpread his Wings over the whole Creation, and neglects nothing, wherein he ſees a Mark of his firſt Creating Goodneſs.

His Goodneſs is ſeen, 1. *In preſerving all things.* * *Oh Lord thou preſerveſt Man and Beaſt.* Not only Man, but Beaſts, and Beaſts as well as Men. Man, as the moſt excellent Creature, and Beaſts as being ſerviceable to Man, and Inſtruments of his worldly Happineſs. He continues the Species of all Things, concurs with them in their diſtinct Offices, and quickens the Womb of Nature. He viſits Man every Day, and makes him feel the Effects of his Providence, in giving him *fruitful Seaſons, and filling his Heart with Food and Gladneſs* *, as Witneſſes of his Liberality and Kindneſs to Man. *The Earth is viſited, and watered by the River of God, He ſettles the Furrows of the Earth, and makes it ſoft with Showers*, that the Corn may be nouriſhed in its Womb, and ſpring up to maturity. *He crowns the Year with his Goodneſs, and his Paths drop Fatneſs. The little Hills rejoyce on every ſide; the Paſtures are clothed with Flocks, and the Vallies are covered over with Corn*; as the *Pſalmiſt* elegantly *. He waters the Ground by his Showers, and preſerves the little Seed from the Rapine of Animals. *He draws not out the evil Arrows of Famine*; as the Expreſſion is *. Every Day ſhines with new Beams of his Divine Goodneſs. The vaſtneſs of this City, and the multitudes of living Souls in it, is an aſtoniſhing Argument. What Streams of nouriſhing Neceſſaries are daily convey'd to it? Every Mouth hath Bread to ſuſtain it; And among all the Number of Poor in the Bowels and Skirts of it, how rare is it to hear of any ſtarv'd to Death for want of it? Every Day he *ſpreads a Table* for us, and that with Varieties, and *fills* our *Cups* *. He ſhortens not his Hand, nor withdraws his Bounty: The Increaſe of one Year by his Bleſſing, reſtores what was ſpent by the former. He is the *Strength of our Life* *, continuing the Vigour of our Limbs, and the Health of our Bodies; ſecures us from *Terrors by Night, and the Arrows* of Diſeaſes *that fly by Day* *. *Sets a Hedge about our Eſtates* *, and defends them againſt the Attempts of Violence. Preſerves our Houſes from Flames that might conſume them, and our Perſons from the Dangers that lie in wait for them. Watcheth over us *in our goings out, and our comings in* *; and waylays a thouſand Dangers we know not of. And employs the moſt glorious *Creatures in Heaven*, in the Service of mean *Men upon Earth* *: Not by a faint Order, but a preſſing *Charge* over them, to *keep them in all his ways.* Thoſe that are his immediate Servants before his Throne, he ſends to miniſter to them, that were once his Rebels. By an *Angel* he conducted the Affairs of *Abraham*: And by an *Angel* ſecur'd the Life of *Iſhmael* †: Glorious Angels for mean Man, holy Angels for impure Man, powerful Angels for weak Man. How in the midſt of great Dangers, doth his ſud-

* Pſal. 104. 24. *Gulielmus Pariſien. p. 184.

* Pſal. 36. 6.

* Acts 14. 17.

* Pſal. 65. 9, 10. & Pſal. 107. 35, 36

* Ezek. 5. 16.

* Pſal. 23. 5.

* Pſal. 27. 1.

* Pſal. 91. 5. * Job 1. 10.

* Pſ. 121. 6.

* Pſ. 91. 11.

* Gen. 24. 7 † Gen. 21. 17.

den Light diſſipate our great Darkneſs, and create a Deliverance out of nothing? How often is he found a preſent help in time of trouble? When all other Aſſiſtance ſeems to ſtand at a diſtance, He flies to us beyond our Expectations, and raiſes us up on the ſudden from the Pit of our Dejectedneſs, as well as that of our Danger, exceeding our Wiſhes, and ſhooting beyond our Deſires as well as our Deſerts. How often in a time of Confuſion, doth he preſerve an indefenſible Place from the Attacks of Enemies, like a Spark in the midſt of a tempeſtuous Sea? The Rage falls upon other places round about them, and by a ſecret Efficacy of Divine Goodneſs not able to touch them. He hath peculiar Preſervations for his *Iſrael in Egypt*, and his *Lots in Sodom*, his *Daniels in the Lions Dens*, and his *Children in a fiery Furnace*. He hath a Tenderneſs for all, but a peculiar Affection to thoſe that are in Covenant with him.

2. The Goodneſs of God is ſeen *in taking Care of the Animals, and inanimate Things*. Divine Goodneſs embraceth in its Arms the loweſt Worm, as well as the loftieſt Cherubim: He provides
*Pſal. 147. 9. Food for the *crying Ravens*, * and a Prey for the
†Pſal. 104. 21. Appetite of the *hungry Lion* †: He *opens his hand, and fills with good thoſe innumerable creeping things, both ſmall and great Beaſts, they are all waiters upon him, and all are ſatisfied by their bountiful Ma-*
* Pſ. 104. 25, 26, 27, 28. *ſter* *. They are better provided for by the Hand of Heaven, than the beſt Favourite is by an earthly Prince: For *they are fill'd with good*. He hath made Channels in the wildeſt Deſarts for the watering of Beaſts, and Trees for the Neſts and *Habi-*
*Pſal. 104. 10, 12, 17. *tation of Birds* *. As a Law-giver to the Jews, he took care that the poor Beaſt ſhould not be abuſed by the Cruelty of Man: He provided for the Eaſe of the labouring Beaſt in that Command of the Sabbath wherein he provided for his own Service: The Cat-
*Exod. 20. 10. tle was to do *no work* on it *. He order'd, that the Mouth of the *Ox* ſhould not be *muzzled*, while
†Deut. 25. 4. it trod out the Corn †, (it being the manner of thoſe Countries to ſeparate the Corn from the Stalk by that means, as we do in this by Thraſhing) regarding it as a part of Cruelty to deprive the poor Beaſt of Taſting, and ſatisfying it ſelf with that, which he was ſo officious by his Labour to prepare for the uſe of Man. And when any met with a Neſt of young Birds, tho' they might take the Young to their uſe, they were forbidden to ſeize upon the Dam, that ſhe might not loſe the Objects of her
*Deut. 22. 6. Affection, and her own Liberty in one Day *.

And ſee how God enforceth this Precept with a Threatning of a ſhortneſs of Life, if they tranſ-
*Deut. 22. 7. greſs'd it: * *Thou ſhalt let the Dam go, that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayeſt prolong thy Days.* He would revenge the Cruelty to dumb Creatures with the ſhortneſs of the Oppreſſor's Life; nor would he have Cruelty uſed to Creatures that were ſeparated for his Worſhip: He therefore provides, that a *Cow*, or an *Ewe*, and their *young ones*
*Levit. 22. 28. ſhould *not be killed for Sacrifice in one day* *. All which Precepts, ſay the Jews, are to teach Men Mercifulneſs to their Beaſts; ſo much doth Divine Goodneſs bow down it ſelf, to take notice of thoſe mean Creatures, which Men have ſo little regard to, but for their own advantage: Yea, he is ſo good, that he would have Worſhip declin'd for a time in favour of a diſtreſſed Beaſt; the *helping a Sheep, or an Ox, or an Aſs out of a pit*, was indulged them even *on the Sabbath*-Day, a Day God had peculiarly
* Mat. 12. 11. ſanctify'd and order'd for his Service: * In this caſe
Luke 14. 5. he ſeems to remit for a time the Rights of the Deity, for the reſcue of a meer Animal. His Goodneſs extends not only to thoſe kind of Creatures that have Life, but to the inſenſible ones: He cloaths the Graſs, and *arrays the Lilies of the Field* with a greater Glory than *Solomon* had upon his
* Mat. 6. 28, 29. Throne* ; and ſuch care he had of thoſe *Trees* which *bore Fruit* for the maintenance of Man or Beaſt, that he forbids any Injury to be offer'd to them, and bars the Rapine and Violence, which by Soldiers uſeth to be practiſed, *Deut.* 20. 19. tho' it were to promote the Conqueſt of their Enemy. How much Goodneſs is it, that he ſhould think of ſo ſmall a thing as Man! How much more that he ſhould concern himſelf in things, that ſeem ſo petty as Beaſts and Trees! Perſons ſeated in a Sovereign Throne, think it a debaſing of their Dignity to regard little things: But God, who is infinitely greater in Majeſty above the mightieſt Potentate, and the higheſt Angel, yet is ſo infinitely good, as to employ his Divine Thoughts about the meaneſt things. He who poſſeſſes the Praiſes of Angels, leaves not off the Care of the meaneſt Creatures: And that Majeſty that dwells in a pure Heaven, and an unconceivable Light, ſtoops to provide for the Eaſe of thoſe Creatures that lie and lodge in the Dirt and Dung of the Earth. How ſhould we be careful not to uſe thoſe unmercifully, which God takes ſuch Care of in his Law, and not to diſtruſt that Goodneſs, that opens his Hand ſo liberally to Creatures of another Rank?

3. The Goodneſs of God is ſeen *in taking care of the meaneſt rational Creatures*: As Servants and Criminals. He provided for the liberty of Slaves, and would not have their Chains continue longer than the *Seventh Year*, unleſs they would voluntarily continue under the power of their Maſters; and that upon pain of his Diſpleaſure, and the withdrawing his Bleſſing *. And tho' by the Laws of
* Deut. 15. 18. many Nations, Maſters had an abſolute power of Life and Death over their Servants, yet God provided that no Member ſhould be lam'd, not an *Eye*, no nor a *Tooth* ſtruck out, but the Maſter was to pay for his folly and fury, the price of the *liberty of his Servant* *: He would not ſuffer the abuſed
*Exod. 21. 26, 27. Servant to be any longer under the power of that Man, that had not Humanity to uſe him as one of the ſame Kindred and Blood with himſelf. And tho' thoſe Servants might be never ſo wicked, yet when unjuſtly afflicted, God would intereſt himſelf as their Guardian, in their protection and delivery. And when a poor Slave had been provok'd by the Severity of his Maſter's Fury, to turn Fugitive from him, he was, by Divine Order not to be delivered up again to his Maſter's Fury, but dwell in that City, and with that Perſon, to whom he had *fled for Refuge* *. And when publick Juſtice was to be
* Deut. 23. 15, 16. adminiſtred upon the leſſer ſort of Criminals, the Goodneſs of God order'd the *number of Blows* not to exceed *Forty*, and left not the Fury of Man to meaſure out the Puniſhment to exceſs *. And
* Deut. 25. in any juſt Quarrel againſt a provoking and injuring Enemy, he order'd them not to ravage with the *Sword*, 'till they had ſummon'd a Rendition of the place *. And as great a care he took of the
* Deut. 20. 10. †Levit. 19. 10. Lev. 23. 22. Poor, that they ſhould have the *Gleanings* both of the *Vineyard* and *Field*, † and not be forced to pay *Uſury for the Money lent them* *.

4. His Goodneſs is ſeen *in taking care of the wickedſt Perſons*. *The Earth is full of his Goodneſs* *.
*Ex. 22. 25
* Pſ. 37. 5. The wicked as well as the good enjoy it; they that dare lift up their Hands againſt Heaven in the poſture of Rebels, as well as thoſe that lift up their Eyes in the condition of Suppliants. To do good to a Criminal, far ſurmounts that Goodneſs that flows down upon an innocent Object: Now God is not only good to thoſe that have ſome Degrees of Goodneſs, but to thoſe that have the greateſt Degrees of Wickedneſs, to Men that turn his Li-

berality into Affronts of him, and have ſcarce an Appetite to any thing but the violation of his Authority and Goodneſs. Tho' upon the Fall of *Adam* we have loſt the pleaſant Habitation of Paradiſe, and the Creatures made for our uſe are fall'n from their Original Excellency and Sweetneſs; yet he hath not left the World utterly incommodious for us, but yet ſtores it with things not only for the preſervation, but delight of thoſe that make their whole Lives Invectives againſt this good God. *Manna* fell from Heaven for the Rebellious, as well as for the Obedient *Iſraelites*. *Cain* as well as *Abel*, and *Eſau* as well as *Jacob*, had the Influences of his Sun, and the Benefits of his Showers. The World is yet a kind of Paradiſe to the veriеſt Beaſts among Mankind: The Earth affords its Riches, the Heavens its Showers, and the Sun its Light to thoſe that injure and blaſpheme
*Mat. 5.45 him: * *He makes his Sun to riſe on the evil, and on the good, and ſends Rain on the juſt, and on the unjuſt.* The wicked'ſt breath in his Air, walk upon his Earth, and drink of his Water as well as the beſt. The Sun looks with as pleaſant and bright an Eye upon a rebellious *Abſolom*, as a righteous *David*: The Earth yields its Plants and Medicines to one, as well as to the other: 'Tis ſeldom that he deprives any of the Faculties of their Souls, or any Members of their Bodies. God diſtributes his Bleſſings, where he might ſhoot his Thunders, and darts his Light on thoſe who deſerve an Eternal Darkneſs, and preſents the Good Things of the Earth, to thoſe that merit the Miſeries of Hell: For *the Earth, and the fulneſs thereof, is the Lords*;
* Pſ. 24.1. * every thing in it is *his* in Propriety, ours in Truſt:
† Hoſ. 2.8. 'Tis *his* Corn, *his* Wine; † he never deveſted himſelf of the Propriety, tho' he grants us the Uſe; and by thoſe good things he ſupports multitudes of wicked Men, not one or two, but the whole Shoal of them in the World: For he is *the Saviour of all*
*1 Tim. 4. *Men*, *i. e.* is the Preſerver of all Men *. And as
10. he created them, when he foreſaw they would be wicked, ſo he provides for them, when he beholds them in their Ungodlineſs. The Ingratitude of Man ſtops not the Current of his Bounty, nor tires his liberal Hand; howſoever unprofitable and injurious Men are to him, he is liberal to them; and his Goodneſs is the more admirable, by how much the more the Unthankfulneſs of Men is provoking: He ſometimes affords to the worſt a greater Portion of theſe earthly Goods; they often ſwim in Wealth, when others pine away their Lives in Poverty. And the Silk-worm yields its Bowels to make Purple for Tyrants, while the Oppreſſed ſcarce have from the Sheep Wool enough to cover their Nakedneſs; and tho' he furniſh Men with thoſe good things, upon no other Account than what Princes do, when they nouriſh Criminals in a Priſon 'till the time of their Execution, 'tis a Mark of his *Goodneſs*. Is it not the kindneſs of a Prince to treat his Rebels deliciouſly? To give them the Liberty of the Priſon, and the Enjoyment of the Delights of the place, rather than to load their Legs with Fetters, and lodge them in a dark and loathſome Dungeon, 'till he orders them for their Crime to be conducted to the Scaffold or Gibbet? Since God is thus kind to the vileſt Men, whoſe meanneſs by reaſon of Sin is beyond that of any other Creature, as to ſhoot ſuch Rays of Goodneſs upon them, how unexpreſſible would be the Expreſſions of his Goodneſs, if the Divine Image were as pure and bright upon them, as it was upon innocent *Adam*?

2. His Goodneſs is evident *in the preſervation of Humane Society*. It belongs to his Power that he is able to do it, but to his *Goodneſs* that he is willing to do it.

1. This Goodneſs appears, *in preſcribing Rules for it*. The Moral Law conſiſts but of *Ten Precepts*, and there are more of them order'd for the *ſupport* of Humane Society, than for the adoration and *honour* of himſelf; *Four* for the Rights of *God*, *Exod. 20. 1, 2. and *Six* for the Rights of *Man*, and his Security in his Authority, Relations, Life, Goods, and Reputation; Superiours not to be diſhonoured, Life not to be invaded, Chaſtity not to be ſtain'd, Goods not to be filch'd, Good Name not to be crack'd by Falſe witneſſes, nor any thing belonging to our Neighbour to be coveted: And in the whole Scripture, not only that which was calculated for the Jews, but compil'd for the whole World, he hath fix'd Rules for the ordering all Relations; Magiſtrates, and Subjects, Parents and Children, Husbands and Wives, Maſters and Servants, Rich and Poor find their diſtinct Qualifications and Duties. There would be a Paradiſical State, if Men had a goodneſs to obſerve, what God hath had a Goodneſs to order, for the ſtrengthning the Sinews of Humane Society: The World would not groan under oppreſſing Tyrants, nor Princes tremble under diſcontented Subjects, or mighty Rebels: Children would not be provok'd to Anger by the Unreaſonableneſs of their Parents, nor Parents ſink under Grief by the Rebellion of their Children; Maſters would not tyrannize over the meaneſt of their Servants, nor Servants invade the Authority of their Maſters.

2. The Goodneſs of God in the preſerving Human Society, is ſeen *in ſetting a Magiſtracy to preſerve it*. Magiſtracy is from God in its Original, the Charter was drawn up in paradiſe; Civil Subordination muſt have been, had Man remained in Innocence; but the Charter was more explicitely renew'd and enlarg'd at the Reſtoration of the World after the Deluge, and giv'n out to Man under the Broad Seal of Heaven, * *Whoſo ſheds Man's* * Gen. 9.6. *Blood, by Man ſhall his Blood be ſhed.* The Command of ſhedding the Blood of a Murderer, was a part of his Goodneſs, to ſecure the Lives of thoſe that bore his Image. Magiſtrates are *the Shields of the Earth*, but *they belong to God* *. They are * Pſ. 47. 9. Fruits of his Goodneſs in their Original and Authority; were there no Magiſtracy, there would be no Government, no Security to any Man under his own Vine and Fig-tree; the World would be a Den of wild Beaſts preying upon one another, every one would do what ſeems good in his Eyes; the loſs of Government is a Judgment God brings upon a Nation, * when Men become *as the Fiſhes of the* * Hab. 1.14 *Sea*, to *devour* one another, becauſe they *have no Ruler over them.* Private Diſſentions will break out into Publick Diſorders and Combuſtions.

3. The Goodneſs of God in the preſervation of Human Society, is ſeen *in the Reſtraints of the Paſſions of Men*. He ſets Bounds to the Paſſions of Men, as well as to the Roulings of the Sea, * *He ſtilleth* * Pſ. 65.7. *the Noiſe of the Waves, and the Tumults of the People.* Tho' God hath erected a Magiſtracy to ſtop the breaking out of thoſe Floods of Licentiouſneſs, which ſwell in the Hearts of Men, yet if God ſhould not hold ſtiff Reins on the Necks of thoſe tumultuous and foaming Paſſions, the World would be a place of unruly Confuſion, and Hell triumph upon Earth: A crazy State would be quickly broke in pieces by boiſterous Nature. The Tumults of a People could no more be quell'd by the Force of Man, than the Rage of the Sea by a Puff of Breath; without Divine Goodneſs, neither the Wiſdom nor Watchfulneſs of the Magiſtrates, nor the Induſtry of Officers could preſerve a State. The Laws of Men would be too ſlight to curb the Luſts of Men, if the Goodneſs of God did not reſtrain

ſtrain them by a ſecret Hand, and interweave their Temporal Security with obſervance of thoſe Laws. The Sons of *Belial* did murmur when *Saul* was choſen King; and that they did no more, was the Goodneſs of God, for the preſervation of Human Society. If God did not reſtrain the Impetuouſneſs of Mens Luſts, they would be the entire Ruine of Human Society; their Luſts would render them as bad as Beaſts, and change the World into a ſavage Wilderneſs.

4. The Goodneſs of God is ſeen in the preſervation of Human Society, *in giving various Inclinations to Men for publick advantage.* If all Men had an Inclination to one Science or Art, they would all ſtand idle Spectators of one another; but God hath beſtow'd various Diſpoſitions and Gifts upon Men, for the promoting the Common Good, that they may not only be uſeful to themſelves, but to Society. He will have none idle, none unuſeful, but every one acting in a due place, according to their Meaſures, for the good of others.

5. The Goodneſs of God is ſeen *in the Witneſs he bears againſt thoſe Sins, that diſturb Human Society.* In thoſe Caſes he is pleaſed to Intereſt himſelf in a more ſignal manner, to cool thoſe that make it their Buſineſs to overturn the Order he hath eſtabliſhed for the Good of the Earth. He doth not ſo often in this World puniſh thoſe Faults committed immediately againſt his own Honour, as thoſe that put the World into a hurry and confuſion: As a good Governour is more merciful to Crimes againſt himſelf, than thoſe againſt his Community. 'Tis obſerved, that the moſt turbulent ſeditious Perſons in a State, come to moſt violate Ends; as *Corah*, *Adonijah*, *Zimri*, *Achitophel* draws *Abſalom*'s Sword againſt *David* and *Iſrael*; and the next is, he twiſts a Halter for himſelf. *Abſalom* heads a Party againſt his Father, and God by a Goodneſs to *Iſrael* hangs him up, and prevents not its Safety by *David*'s Indulgence, and a future Rebellion, had Life been ſpared by the Fondneſs of his Father. His Providence is more evident in diſcovering Diſturbers, and the Cauſes that move them, in defeating their Enterprizes, and digging the Contrivers out of their Caverns and Lurking-holes. In ſuch Caſes, God doth ſo act, and uſe ſuch Methods, that he ſilenceth any Creature from challenging any Partnerſhip with him in the Diſcovery. He doth more ſeverely in this World correct thoſe Actions, that unlink the mutual aſſiſtance between Man and Man, and the charitable and kind Correſpondence he would have kept up. The Sins for which the *Wrath of God comes upon the Children of* *Col. 3. 5, 6. *Diſobedience* in this World, are of this ſort: * And when Princes will be oppreſſing the People, God will be *pouring contempt on the Princes, and ſet* *Pſ. 107. 40, 41. *the Poor on high from Affliction.* * An Evidence of God's care and kindneſs in the preſerving Human Society, is thoſe ſtrange Diſcoveries of Murders, tho' never ſo clandeſtine and ſubtilly committed, more than of any other Crime among Men. Divine Care never appears more, than in bringing thoſe hidden and injurious Works of Darkneſs to Light, and a due Puniſhment.

6. His Goodneſs is ſeen *in ordering mutual Offices to one another, againſt the Current of Mens Paſſions.* Upon this Account he ordered in his Laws for the Government of the *Iſraelites*, that a Man ſhould reduce the wandring Beaſt of his Enemy, to the hand of his rightful Proprietor, tho' he were a provoking Enemy; and alſo *help the poor Beaſt, that belonged to one that hated him, when he ſaw* *Exod. 23. 4, 5. *him ſink under his Burden* *. When mutual aſſiſtance was neceſſary, he would not have Men conſider'd as Enemies, or conſider'd as Wicked, but as of the ſame Blood with our ſelves, that we might be ſerviceable to one another for the preſervation of Life and Goods.

7. His Goodneſs is ſeen *in remitting ſomething of his own Right, for the preſerving a due dependance and ſubjection.* He declines the Right he had to the *Vows* of a Minor, or one under the power of another, waving what he might challenge by the voluntary obligation of his Creature, to keep up the due order between Parents and Children, Husbands and Wives, Superiors and Inferiors; thoſe that were under the Power of another, as a Child under his Parents, or a Wife under her Husband, if they had *vowed a Vow unto the Lord*, which concern'd his Honour and Worſhip, it was void without the approbation of that perſon under whoſe charge they were *. Tho' God was the Lord of every Man's * Num. 30. Goods, and Men but his Stewards; and tho' he 3, 4, &c. might have taken to himſelf, what another had offer'd by a Vow, ſince whatſoever could be offer'd was God's own, tho' it was not the Parties own, who offer'd it; yet God would not have himſelf ador'd by his Creature, to the prejudice of the neceſſary ties of Humane Society: He lays aſide what he might challenge by his Sovereign Dominion, that there might not be any breach of that Regular Order, which was neceſſary for the preſervation of the World. If Divine Goodneſs did not thus order things, he would not do the part of a Rector of the World: The beauty of the World would be much defac'd, it would be a confus'd Maſs of Men and Women, or rather Beaſts and Bedlams. Order renders every City, every Nation, yea, the whole Earth beautiful: This is an effect of Divine Goodneſs.

3. His Goodneſs is evident *in encouraging any thing of Moral Goodneſs in the World.* Tho' *Moral Goodneſs cannot* claim an Eternal Reward, yet it hath been many times rewarded with a Temporal Happineſs; He hath often ſignally rewarded Acts of Honeſty, Juſtice and Fidelity, and puniſh'd the contrary by his Judgments, to deter Man from ſuch an unworthy practice, and encourage others to what was comely, and of a general good Report in the World. *Ahab*'s Humiliation put a demurrer to God's Judgments intended againſt him; and ſome aſcribe the great Victories and Succeſs of the *Romans* to that Juſtice which was obſerv'd among themſelves. *Baruch* was but an Amanuenſis to the Prophet *Jeremy*, to write his Prophecie, and very deſpondent of his own Welfare; * God upon that ac- * Jer. 45. count provides for his Safety, and rewards the In- 13. duſtry of his Service with the Security of his Perſon: He was not a Stateſman, to declare againſt the corrupt Counſels of them that ſate at the Helm; nor a Prophet, to declare againſt their prophane Practices, but the Prophet's Scribe; and as he writes in God's Service the Prophecies reveal'd to the Prophet, God writes his name in the Roll of thoſe that were deſign'd for preſervation in that Deluge of Judgments, which were to come upon that Nation. *Epicurus* complain'd of the Adminiſtration of God, that the *Virtuous Moraliſt* had not ſufficient ſmiles of Divine Favor, nor the Swiniſh Senſualiſt frowns of Divine Indignation. But what if they have not always that confluence of outward Wealth and Pleaſures, but remain in the Common Level? yet they have the happineſs and ſatisfaction of a clear Reputation, the eſteem of Men, and the ſecret applauſes of their very Enemies; beſides the inward raviſhments upon an exerciſe of Virtue, and the commendatory ſubſcription of their own Hearts, a Dainty the vicious Man knows not of; they have an inward Applauſe from God, as a Reward of *Divine Goodneſs*, inſtead of thoſe Racks of Conſcience

upon which the Prophane are ſometimes ſtretched. He will not let the worſt Men do him any ſervice, (tho' they never intended in the act of ſervice, him, but themſelves) without giving them their Wages; He will not let them hit him in the Teeth, as if he were beholden to them. If *Nebuchadnezzar* be the Inſtrument of God's Judgments againſt *Tyrus* and *Iſrael*, he will not only give him that rich City, but a richer Country, *Egypt*, the Granary of her Neighbors, a Wages above his Work. In this is Divine Goodneſs eminent, ſince in the moſt Moral Actions, as there is ſomething beautiful, ſo there is ſomething mix'd, hateful to the infinitely exact Holineſs of the Divine Nature; yet he will not let that which is pleaſing to him go unrewarded, and defeat the expectations of Men; as Men do with thoſe they imploy, when for one flaw in an Action they deny them the reward due for the other part. God encourag'd and kept up Morality in the Cities of the *Gentiles*, for the entertainment of a further *Goodneſs* in the Doctrine of the Goſpel, when it ſhould be publiſh'd among them.

4. Divine Goodneſs is eminent in *providing a Scripture as a Rule to guide us, and continuing it in the World.* If Man be a rational Creature, governable by a Law, can it be imagin'd there ſhould be no Revelation of that Law to him? Man, by the Light of Reaſon, muſt needs confeſs himſelf to be in another condition than he was by Creation, when he came firſt out of the hands of God; and can it be thought that God ſhould keep up the World under ſo many Sins againſt the Light of Nature, and beſtow ſo many Providential Influences, to invite Men to return to him, and acquaint no Men in the World with the means of that return? Would he exact an Obedience of Men, as their Conſciences witneſs he doth, and furniſh them with no Rules to guide them in the Darkneſs, they cannot but acknowledge, that they have contracted? No, Divine Goodneſs hath otherwiſe provided; this *Bible* we have is his Word and Rule. Had it been a Falſity and Impoſture, would that Goodneſs that watches over the World, have continued it ſo long? That Goodneſs that overthrew the burdenſom Rites of *Moſes*, and expell'd the fooliſh Idolatry of the *Pagans*, would have diſcover'd the Impoſture of this, had it not been a Tranſcript of his own Will. Whatever miſtakes he ſuffers to remain in the World, what Goodneſs had there been to ſuffer this anciently among the *Jews*, and afterwards to open it to the whole World, to abuſe Men in Religion and Worſhip, which ſo nearly concern'd himſelf and his own Honour, that the World ſhould be deceiv'd by the *Devil*, without a remedy in the Morning of its appearance? It hath been honour'd and admir'd by ſome *Heathens*, when they have caſt their Eyes upon it, and their natural Light made them behold ſome Footſteps of a Divinity in it. If this therefore be not a Divine Preſcript, let any that deny it bring as good Arguments for any Book elſe, as can be brought for this. Now the publiſhing this, is an Argument of Divine Goodneſs: 'Tis deſign'd to win the Affections of beggarly Man, to be eſpous'd to a God of Eternal Bleſſedneſs and Immenſe Riches. It ſpeaks Words in ſeaſon; No Doubts but it reſolves; no Spiritual Diſtemper but it cures; no Condition but it hath a Comfort to ſuit it. 'Tis a Garden which the Hand of Divine Bounty hath planted for us; in it he condeſcends to ſhadow himſelf in thoſe Expreſſions that render him in ſome manner intelligible to us. Had God wrote in a loftineſs of Style, ſuitable to the Greatneſs of his Majeſty, his Writing had been as little underſtood by us, as the brightneſs of his Glory can be beheld by us. But he draws Phraſes from our Affairs, to expreſs his Mind to us; He incarnates himſelf in his Word to our Minds, before his Son was incarnate in the Fleſh to the Eyes of Men: He aſcribes to himſelf Eyes, Ears, Hands, that we might have from the Conſideration of our ſelves, and the whole Humane Nature, a conception of his Perfections: He aſſumes to himſelf the Members of our Bodies, to direct our Underſtandings in the knowledge of his Deity: This is his Goodneſs.

Again. Tho' the *Scripture* was written upon ſeveral occaſions, yet in the dictating of it, the Goodneſs of God caſt his Eye upon the laſt Ages of the World, * *They are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the World are come.* It was given to the *Iſraelites*, but Divine Goodneſs intended it for the future *Gentiles*. The old Writings of the Prophets were thus deſign'd, much more the later Writings of the Apoſtles. Thus did Divine Goodneſs think of us, and prepare his Records for us, before we were in the World: Theſe he hath written plain for our Inſtruction, and wrapt up in them, what is neceſſary for our Salvation: 'Tis clear to inform our Underſtanding, and rich to comfort us in our Miſery; 'tis a Light to guide us, and a Cordial to refreſh us; 'tis a Lamp to our Feet, and a Medicine for our Diſeaſes; a Purifier of our Filth, and a Reſtorer of us in our Faintings. He hath by his Goodneſs ſeal'd the Truth of it, by his Efficacy on multitudes of Men: He hath made it the *Word of Regeneration* †. Men wilder, and more monſtrous than Beaſts, have been tam'd and chang'd by the power of it: It hath rais'd multitudes of dead Men, from a Grave fuller of Horror than any earthly one. Again, Goodneſs was in all Ages ſending his Letters of Advice and Counſel from Heaven, 'till the Canon of the Scripture was clos'd; ſometimes he wrote to chide a froward People; ſometimes to chear up an oppreſſed and diſconſolate People, according to the ſtate wherein they were; as we may obſerve by the ſeveral Seaſons wherein parts of Scripture were written. It was his Goodneſs that he firſt reveal'd any thing of his Will after the Fall; it was a further degree of Goodneſs, that he would add more Cubits to its Stature; before he would lay aſide his Penſil, it grew up to that bulk wherein we have it. And his Goodneſs is further ſeen in the preſerving it; he hath triumphed over the Powers that oppoſed it, and ſhewed himſelf good in the Inſtruments that propagated it: He hath maintain'd it againſt the Blaſts of Hell, and ſpread it in *all Languages* againſt the Obſtructions of Men and Devils. The Sun of his Word is by his kindneſs preſerv'd in our Horizon, as well as the Sun in the Heavens. How admirable is Divine Goodneſs! He hath ſent his Son to die for us, and his written Word to inſtruct us, and his Spirit to edge it for an entrance into our Souls: He hath opened the Womb of the Earth to nouriſh us; and ſent down the Records of Heaven, to direct us in our Pilgrimage: He hath provided the Earth for our Habitation, while we are Travellers; and ſent his Word to acquaint us with a Felicity at the end of our Journey, and the way to attain in another World, what we want in this, *viz. a happy Immortality.*

* 1 Cor. 10. 11.

† Jam. 1. 18

5. His Goodneſs in his Government is evident, *in Converſions of Men.* Tho' his Work be wrought by his Power, yet his Power was firſt ſollicited by his Goodneſs. It was his rich Goodneſs, that he would employ his Power to pierce the Scales of a Heart as hard as thoſe of the *Leviathan.* It was this that opened the Ears of Men to hear him, and draws them from the Hurry of worldly Cares, and the Charms of ſenſual Pleaſures; and, which is the top of all, the Impoſtors and Cheats of their own

Hearts.

Hearts. It is this that ſends a Spark of his Wrath into Mens Conſciences, to put them to a ſtand in Sin, that he might not ſend down a Shower of Brimſtone eternally to conſume their Perſons. This it was that firſt ſhewed you the Excellency of the Redeemer, and brought you to taſte the Sweetneſs of his Blood, and find your Security in the Agonies of his Death. 'Tis his Goodneſs to call one Man and not another, to turn *Paul* in his Courſe, and lay hold of no other of his Companions. 'Tis his Goodneſs to call any, when he is not bound to call one.

1. 'Tis his Goodneſs, *to pitch upon mean and deſpicable Men in the Eye of the World.* To call this poor *Publican*, and over-look that proud *Phariſee*; this Man that ſits upon a Dung-hill, and neglect him that gliſters in his Purple. His Majeſty is not enticed by the lofty Titles of Men; nor, which is more worth, by the Learning and Knowledge of Men. *Not many wiſe, not many mighty*; * not many Doctors, not many Lords, tho' ſome of them; but his Goodneſs condeſcends to the *baſe things of the World*, and things which are *deſpiſed*. The *Poor receive the Goſpel**; when thoſe that are more acute, and furniſh'd with a more apprehenſive Reaſon, are not touch'd by it.

* 1 Cor. 26, 27, 28.

* Mat. 11. 5.

2. *The worſt Men.* He ſeizeth ſometimes upon Men moſt ſoil'd, and neglects others that ſeem more clean and leſs polluted. He turns Men in their Courſe in Sin, that by their Infernal Practices, have ſeem'd to have gone to School to Hell, and to have ſuck'd in the ſole Inſtructions of the Devil. He lays hold upon ſome, when they are moſt under actual Demerit, and ſnatcheth them as Firebrands out of the Fire; as upon *Paul*, when fulleſt of Rage againſt him: And ſhoots a Beam of Grace, where nothing could be juſtly expected but a Thunderbolt of Wrath. 'Tis his Goodneſs to viſit any, when they lie putrifying in their loathſome Luſts; to draw near to them who have been guilty of the greateſt Contempt of God, and the Light of Nature; the murdering *Manaſſehs*, perſecuting *Sauls*, Chriſt-crucifying *Jews*, Perſons in whom Luſts had had a peaceable Poſſeſſion and Empire for many Years.

3. His Goodneſs appears, *in converting Men poſſeſt with the greateſt Enmity againſt him, while he was dealing with them.* All were in ſuch a State, and framing Contrivances againſt him, when Divine Goodneſs knock'd at the Door *. He look'd after us, when our Backs were turned upon him, and ſought us when we ſlighted him, and were a *gain-ſaying People**; when we had ſhaken off his Convictions, and contended with our Maker, and muſtered up the Powers of Nature againſt the Alarms of Conſcience; ſtruggled like wild Bulls in a Net, and blunted thoſe Darts which ſtuck in our Souls. Not a Man that is turn'd to him, but had lifted up the heel againſt his Goſpel-Grace, as well as made light of his Creating-Goodneſs. Yet it hath employed it ſelf about ſuch ungrateful Wretches, to poliſh thoſe knotty and rugged Pieces for Heaven; and ſo invincibly, that he would not have his Goodneſs defeated by the fierceneſs and rebellion of the Fleſh. Tho' the thing was more difficult in it ſelf, (if any thing may be ſaid to have a difficulty to Omnipotency) than to make a Stone live, or to turn a Straw into a Marble Pillar. The Malice of the Fleſh makes a Man more unfit for the one, than the Nature of the Straw unfits it for the other.

* Col. 1. 21.

* Rom. 10. 21.

4. His Goodneſs appears in turning Men, *when they were pleaſed with their own Miſery, and unable to deliver themſelves.* When they preferr'd a Hell before him, and were in love with their own vileneſs; when his Call was our Torment, and his Neglect of us had been accounted our Felicity. Was it not a mighty Goodneſs to keep the Light cloſe to our Eyes, when we endeavoured to blow it out, and the Corroſive near to our Hearts, when we endeavoured to tear it off, being more fond of our Diſeaſe, than the Remedy? We ſhould have been ſcalded to Death with the *Sodomites*, had not God laid his good Hand upon us, and drawn us from the approaching Ruine we affected, and were loath to be freed from. And had we been diſpleaſed with our State, yet we had been as unable ſpiritually to raiſe our ſelves from Sin to Grace, as to raiſe our ſelves naturally from Nothing to Being: In this State we were, when his Goodneſs triumphed over us; when he put a Hook into our Noſtrils, to turn us in order to our Salvation; and drew us out of the Pit, which we had digged, when he might have left us to ſink under the Rigors of his Juſtice we had merited. Now this Goodneſs in Converſion is greater than that in Creation; as in Creation there was nothing to oppoſe him, ſo there was nothing to diſoblige him: Creation was terminated to the good of a mutable Nature, and Converſion tends to a ſupernatural Good. God pronounced all Creatures good at firſt, and Man among the reſt; but did not pronounce any of them, or Man himſelf, his *Portion*, his *Inheritance*, his *Segullah*, his *Houſe*, his *Diadem*. He ſpeaks ſlightly of all thoſe Things which he made, the nobleſt Heavens, as well as the loweſt Earth, in compariſon of a true Convert. * *All thoſe things hath my hand made, and all thoſe things have been, but to this Man will I look, to him that is of a contrite Spirit.* 'Tis more Goodneſs to give the eſpouſing Grace of the Covenant, than the compleating Glory of Heaven. As it is more for a Prince to marry a Beggar, than only to bring her to live deliciouſly in his Courts; all other Benefits are of a meaner ſtrain, if compar'd with this; there is little leſs of Goodneſs in imparting the Holineſs of his Nature, than imputing the Righteouſneſs of his Son.

* Iſa. 66. 1, 2

6. The Divine Goodneſs doth appear, *in anſwering Prayers.* He delights to be familiarly acquainted with his People, and to hear them call upon him. He indulgeth them a free acceſs to him, and *delights* in every Addreſs of an *upright Man**. The wonderful efficacy of Prayer depends not upon the Nature of our Petitions, or the Temper of our Soul, but the Goodneſs of God to whom we addreſs. Chriſt eſtabliſheth it upon this bottom; when he exhorts to ask in his Name, he tells them the Spring of all their Grants, is the Father's Love. * *I ſay not, I will pray the Father for you, for the Father himſelf loves you.* And ſince it is of it ſelf incredible, that a Majeſty exalted above the Cherubims, ſhould ſtoop ſo low, as to give the miſerable and rebellious Creature admittance to him, and afford him a gracious Hearing, and a quick Supply, Chriſt uſhers in the Promiſe of anſwering Prayer, with a Note of great Aſſurance: * *I ſay unto you, Ask and it ſhall be given you.* I that know the Mind of my Father, and his good Diſpoſition, aſſure you, your Prayer ſhall not be in vain. Perhaps you will not be ſo ready of your ſelves, to imagine ſo great a Liberality; but take it upon my word, 'tis true, and ſo you will find it. And his Bounty travels as it were in Birth, to give the greateſt Bleſſings, upon our asking, rather than the ſmalleſt. * *Your heavenly Father ſhall give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him:* Which, in *Mat.* 7. 11. is called *good things*. Of all the good and rich things Divine Goodneſs hath in its Treaſury, he delights to give the beſt upon asking, becauſe God doth act ſo, as to manifeſt the Greatneſs of his

* Prov. 15. 8.

* John 16. 26, 27.

* Luke 11. 9, 10.

* Verſe 13.

his Bounty and Magnificence to Men; and therefore is delighted, when Men by their petitioning him, own ſuch a liberal Diſpoſition in him, and put him upon the manifeſting it. He would rather you ſhould ask the greateſt Things Heaven can afford, than the Trifles of this World: Becauſe his Bounty is not diſcovered in meaner Gifts, he loves to have an opportunity to manifeſt his Affection, above the Liberality and Tenderneſs of worldly Fathers. He doth more wait to give in a way of Grace, than we to beg. * And therefore *will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you.* He ſtands expecting your Suits, and employs his Wiſdom in pitching upon the fitteſt Seaſons, when the Manifeſtation of his Goodneſs may be moſt gracious in it ſelf, and the Mercy you want moſt welcome to you; as it follows, for *the Lord is a God of Judgment.* He chooſeth the time, wherein his Doles may be moſt acceptable to his Suppliants: * *In an acceptable time have I heard thee.* He often opens his Hand, while we are opening our Lips, and his Bleſſings meet our Petitions, at the firſt ſetting out upon their Journey to Heaven. * *While they are yet ſpeaking, I will hear.* How often do we hear a ſecret Voice within us, while we are praying, ſaying, *Your Prayer is granted*; as well as hear a Voice behind us, while we are erring, ſaying, *This is the way, walk in it?* And his liberality exceeds often our deſires, as well as our deſerts; and gives out more than we had the Wiſdom or Confidence to ask. The Apoſtle intimates it in that Doxology, † *Unto him who is able to do abundantly above all that we ask or think.* This Power would not have been ſo ſtrong an Argument of Comfort, if it were never put in practice; He is more liberal than his Creatures are craving. *Abraham* petition'd for the *Life* of *Iſhmael*, and God promiſeth him the *birth of Iſaac* ‖. *Iſaac* asks for a Child, and God gives him *two*, *Gen.* 25. 21, 22. *Jacob* deſires *Food* to eat, and *Raiment* to put on; God confines not his Bounty within the narrow Limits of his Petition, but inſtead of a *Staff*, wherewith he paſſed *Jordan*, makes him repaſs it with *two Bands* *. *David* ask'd Life of God, and he gave him *Life* and a *Crown* to boot †. The *Iſraelites* would have been contented with a free Life in *Egypt*, they only cry'd to have their Chains ſtruck off; God gave them that, and adopts them to be his *peculiar People*, and raiſes them into a famous ſtate. 'Tis a wonder that God ſhould condeſcend ſo much, that he ſhould hear Prayers ſo weak, ſo cold, ſo wandring, and gather up our ſincere Petitions from the Dung of our Diſtractions and Diffidence. *David* vents his Aſtoniſhment at it ‖; *Bleſſed be God, for he hath ſhew'd me marvelous kindneſs. I ſaid in my haſte, I am cut off from before thy Eyes, nevertheleſs, thou heardſt the voice of my ſupplication.* How do we wonder at the Goodneſs of a petty Man in granting our Deſires; how much more ſhould we at the Humility and Goodneſs of the moſt Sovereign Majeſty of Heaven and Earth?

7. The Goodneſs of God is ſeen *in bearing with the Infirmities of his People, and accepting imperfect Obedience.* Tho' *Aſa* had many Blots in his Scutcheon, yet they are overlook'd, and this Note ſet upon Record by Divine Goodneſs, That his Heart was perfect towards the Lord all his Days; * *But the High Places were not removed, nevertheleſs* Aſa's *heart was perfect with the Lord all his days.* He takes notice of a ſincere tho' chequer'd Obedience, to reward it, which could claim nothing but a ſlight from him, if he were extream to mark what is done amiſs. When there is not an opportunity to Work, but only to Will, he accepts the Will, as if it had paſt into Work and Act. He ſees *no Iniquity in Jacob* †, *i. e.* He ſees it not ſo as to caſt off a reſpect to their Perſons, and the acceptance of their Services: His Omniſcience knows their Sins, but his Goodneſs doth not reject their Perſons. He is of ſo good a diſpoſition, that he delights in a weak Obedience of his Servants, not in the Imperfection, but in the Obedience; ‖ *He delights in the way of a good Man*, tho' he ſometimes ſlips in it: He accepts a poor Man's *Pigeon*, as well as a rich Man's *Ox*: He hath a Bottle for the *Tears*, and a Book for the *Services of the Upright*, as well as for the moſt perfect Obedience of Angels: * He preſerves their Tears, as if they were a rich and generous Wine, as the Vine-dreſſer doth the Expreſſions of the Grape.

8. The Goodneſs of God is ſeen *in Afflictions and Perſecutions.* If it be good for us to be *afflicted*, for which we have the *Pſalmiſt*'s Vote *, then Goodneſs in God is the principal Cauſe and Orderer of the Afflictions. 'Tis his Goodneſs to ſnatch away that, whence we fetch ſupports for our Security, and encouragements for our Inſolence againſt him: He takes away the thing which we have ſome value for, but ſuch as his Infinite Wiſdom ſees inconſiſtent with our true Happineſs. 'Tis no ill-will in the *Phyſician* to take away the hurtful Matter the Patient loves, and preſcribe bitter Potions, to advance that health which the other impair'd. Nor any mark of Unkindneſs in a Friend, to wreſt a Sword out of a Mad-man's Hand, wherewith he was about to ſtab himſelf, tho' it were beſet with the moſt Orient Pearls. To prevent what is evil, is to do us the greateſt good. 'Tis a kindneſs to prevent a Man from falling down a Precipice, tho' it be with a violent Blow, that lays him flat upon the Ground at ſome diſtance from the edge of it. By Afflictions he often ſnaps aſunder thoſe Chains which fetter'd us, and quells thoſe Paſſions which ravag'd us: He ſharpens our Faith, and quickens our Prayers; he brings us into the ſecret Chamber of our own Heart, which we had little mind before to viſit by a Self-examination. 'Tis ſuch a Goodneſs, that he will vouchſafe to correct Man in order to his Eternal Happineſs, that *Job* makes it one part of his Aſtoniſhment; † *What is Man, that thou ſhouldſt magnifie him? That thou ſhouldſt ſet thy heart upon him? and that thou ſhouldſt viſit him every morning? and try him every moment?* His ſtrokes are often the magnifyings and exaltings of Man. He ſets his Heart upon Man, while he inflicts the ſmart of his Rod: He ſhews thereby what a high account he makes of him, and what a ſpecial affection he bears to him. When he might treat us with more ſeverity after the breach of his Covenant, and make his Jealouſie flame out againſt us in furious Methods; he will not deſtroy his Relation to us, and leave us to our own Inclinations, but deal with us as a Father with his Children; and when he takes this courſe with us, 'tis when it cannot be avoided without ruine: His Goodneſs would not ſuffer him to do it, if our badneſs did not force him to it, ‖ *I will melt them, and try them, for how ſhall I do for the daughter of my People?* What other Courſe can I take but this, according to the nature of Man? The Goldſmith hath no other way to ſeparate the Droſs from the Metal, but by melting it down. And when the Impurities of his People neceſſitate him to this proceeding, *he ſits as a Refiner* *. He watches for the purifying the Silver, not for his own profit as the Goldſmith, but out of a care of them, and good-will to them; as himſelf ſpeaks, † *I have refined thee, but not with Silver*; or, as ſome read it, *not for Silver.* As when he ſcatters his People abroad for their Sin, he will not leave them without his Preſence for their Sanctuary ‖: He would by his Preſence with them ſupply the

place

place of Ordinances, or be an Ark to them in the midſt of the Deluge: His Hand that ſtruck them is never without a Goodneſs to comfort them and pity them. When *Jacob* was to go into *Egypt*, which was to prove a Furnace of Affliction to his Offspring, God promiſes to *go down with him*, and to *bring him* *Gen. 46. 4 *up again* *. A Promiſe not only made to *Jacob* in his Perſon, but to *Jacob* in his Poſterity. He return'd not out of *Egypt* in his Perſon, but as the Father of a numerous Poſterity. He that would go down with their Root, and afterwards bring up the Branches, was certainly with them in all their Oppreſſions; † Harw. Sermon at Oxford, p. 5 *I will go down with thee. Down*, ſaith one †, What a Word is that for a Deity? *Into Egypt*, Idolatrous *Egypt*, What a place is that for his Holineſs? Yet, Oh the Goodneſs of God! He never thinks himſelf low enough to do his People good, nor any place too bad for his ſociety with them. So when he had ſent away into Captivity the People of *Iſrael*, by the hand of the *Aſſyrian*, his Bowels yearn ‖ Iſa. 52. 4, 5. after them in their affliction; ‖ *The Aſſyrian oppreſt them without cauſe, i. e.* without a juſt cauſe in the Conqueror to inflict ſo great an Evil upon them, but not without cauſe from God, whom they had provoked. *Now therefore what have I here, ſaith the Lord?* What do I here? I will not ſtay behind them. What do I longer here? For I will redeem again thoſe Jewels the Enemy hath carried away. That Chapter is a Prophecy of Redemption: God ſhews himſelf ſo good to his People in their Perſecutions, that he gives them occaſion to glorifie him * Iſa. 24. 15. in the very Fires, as the Divine Order is, * *Wherefore glorifie the Lord in the Fires.*

9. The Goodneſs of God is ſeen *in Temptations*. In thoſe he takes occaſion to ſhew his care and watchfulneſs, as a Father uſes the diſtreſs of a Child as an opportunity for manifeſting the tenderneſs of his Affection. God is at the beginning and end of every Temptation; He meaſures out both the quality and quantity: He expoſeth them not to Temptation beyond the ability he hath already granted them, or will at the time, or afterwards multiply * 1 Cor. 10. 13. in them. * He hath promiſed his People, that *the gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt them:* That *in all things* they ſhall be *more than Conquerors thro' him that loved them:* That the moſt raging Malice of Hell ſhall not wreſt them out of his Hands. His Goodneſs is not leſs in performing, than it was in promiſing: And as the care of his Providence extends to the leaſt as well as the greateſt, ſo the watchfulneſs of his Goodneſs extends to us in the leaſt as well as in the greateſt Temptation.

1. The Goodneſs of God appears *in ſhortening Temptations*. None of them can go beyond their * Dan. 11. 35. *appointed times:* * The ſtrong blaſt Satan breaths cannot blow; nor the Waves he raiſes rage one minute beyond the time God allows them; when they have done their Work, and come to the period of their Time, God ſpeaks the Word, and the Wind and Sea of Hell muſt obey him, and retire into their Dens. The more violent Temptations are, the ſhorter time doth God allot them. The aſſaults Chriſt had at the time of his Death, were of the moſt preſſing and urging nature: The Powers of Darkneſs were all in Arms againſt him; the Reproaches and Scorns put upon him, queſtioning his Sonſhip, were very ſharp; yet a little before his Suffering, † Luke 22. 53. he calls it but an hour, † *This is your hour and the power of darkneſs.* A ſhort time that Men and Devils were combin'd againſt him; and the time of Temptation that is to come upon all the World for ‖ Rev. 3. 10 their trial, is call'd but an *hour* ‖. In all ſuch attempts, the *greatneſs* of the Rage is a certain Prognoſtick of the *ſhortneſs* of the Seaſon, *Rev.* 12. 12.

2. The Goodneſs of God appears *in ſtrengthening his People under Temptations*. If he doth not reſtrain the Arm of Satan from ſtriking, he gives us a *Sword* to manage the Combat, and a *Shield* to bear off the Blow. * If he obſcures his Goodneſs in one * Eph. 6. 16, 17. part, he clears and brightens it in another; He either binds the ſtrong Man that he ſhall not ſtir, or gives us Armour to render us victorious. If we fall, it is not for want of Proviſion from him, but for want of our *putting on the Armour of God* †. When † Eph. 6. 11, 13. we have not a ſtrength by Nature, he gives it us by Grace: He often quells thoſe Paſſions *within*, which would joyn hands with, and ſecond the Temptation *without*. He either qualifies the Temptation, ſuitably to the force we have, or elſe ſupplies us with a new ſtrength to mate the Temptation he intends to let looſe againſt us: He knows we are but Duſt, and his Goodneſs will not have us unequally matcht. The *Jews*, that in *Antiochus*'s time were under great Temptation to Apoſtacy, by reaſon of the violence of their Perſecutions, were *out of weakneſs made ſtrong for the Combat* ‖. The Spirit came more ſtrong- ‖ Heb. 11. 34. ly upon *Sampſon*, when the *Philiſtines* moſt furiouſly and confidently aſſaulted him. His Spirit is ſent to ſtrengthen his People, before the Devil is permitted to tempt them; * *Then was Jeſus led up of the Spi-* * Mat. 4. 2. *rit. Then:* When? When the Spirit had in an extraordinary manner deſcended upon him, *Matth.* 3. 16. *Then*, and not before. As the Angels appear'd to Chriſt after his Temptation, to Miniſter to him, ſo they appear'd to him before his Paſſion, the time of the ſtrongeſt Powers of Darkneſs, to ſtrengthen him for it: He is ſo good, that when he knows our Potſheard ſtrength too weak, he furniſheth our Recruits from his own Omnipotence; † *Be ſtrong in* † Eph. 6. 10 *the Lord, and in the power of his Might.* He doth as it were breath in ſomething of his own Almightineſs, to aſſiſt us in our wreſtling againſt Principalities and Powers, and make us capable to ſuſtain the violent Storms of the Enemies.

3. The Goodneſs of God is ſeen in Temptations, *in giving great Comforts in or after them.* The *Iſraelites* had a more immediate Proviſion of *Manna* from Heaven, when they were in the Wilderneſs. We read not that the Father ſpake audibly to the Son, and gave him ſo loud a Teſtimony that he was his *beloved Son*, *in whom* he was *well pleas'd*, till he was upon the brink of ſtrong Temptations *: Nor * Mat. 3. 17. ſent *Angels to miniſter* immediately to his Perſon, till after his ſucceſs †. *Job* never had ſuch Eviden- † Mat. 4. 11 ces of Divine Love, till after he had felt the ſharp ſtrokes of Satan's malice; he had heard of God before by the *hearing of the Ear*, but afterwards is admitted into greater familiarity ‖: He had more ‖ Job 42. 5. choice Appearances, clearer Illuminations, and more lively Inſtructions. And tho' his People fall into Temptation, yet after their riſing they have more ſignal Marks of his favour than others have, or themſelves, before they fell. *Peter* had been the Butt of Satan's rage, in tempting him to deny Chriſt, and he had ſhamefully comply'd with the Temptation; yet to him particularly muſt the firſt news of the *Redeemer's Reſurrection* be carried by God's order in the mouth of an Angel; * *Go your ways, tell* * Mark 16. 7. *his Diſciples and Peter.* We have the greateſt Communion with God after a Victory: The moſt refreſhing Truths after the Devil hath done his worſt. God is ready to furniſh us with ſtrength in a Combat, and Cordials after it.

4. The Goodneſs of God is ſeen in Temptations, *in diſcovering and advancing inward Grace by this means.* The iſſue of a Temptation of a Chriſtian is often like that of Chriſt's, the manifeſting a greater vigor of the Divine Nature in affections to God and enmity to Sin. Spices perfume not the Air with their ſcent, till they are invaded by the Fire; the truth

truth of Grace is evidenced by them. The aſſault of an Enemy revives, and actuates that Strength and Courage which is in a Man perhaps unknown to himſelf as well as others, till he meets with an Adverſary. Many ſeem good, not that they are ſo in themſelves, but for want of a Temptation. This many times verifies a Virtue, which was own'd upon Truſt before, and diſcovers that we had more Grace than we thought we had. The ſollicitations of *Joſeph*'s Miſtreſs clear'd up his Chaſtity. We are many times under Temptation, as a Candle under the Snuffer, it ſeems to be out, but preſently burns the clearer. Afflictions are like thoſe Clouds, which look black, and eclipſe the Sun from the Earth, but yet when they drop, refreſh that Ground they ſeem to threaten, and multiply the Grain on the Earth, to ſerve for our Food; and ſo our Troubles, while they wet us to the Skin, waſh much of that Duſt from our Graces, which in a clearer day had been blown upon us. Too much Reſt corrupts; Exerciſe teacheth us to manage our Weapons: The Spiritual Armour would grow ruſty, without opportunity to furbiſh it up. Faith receives a new Heart by every Combat, and by every Victory; like a Fire it ſpreads it ſelf further, and gathers ſtrength by the blowing of the Wind. While the Gardener commands his Servant to ſhake the Tree, he intends to faſten its Roots, and ſettle it firmer in its place; And is this an ill-will to the Plant?

5. His Goodneſs is ſeen in Temptations, *in preventing Sin, which we were likely to fall into. Paul*'s *Thorn in the Fleſh* was to prevent the pride of his
* 2 Cor. 12. 7. Spirit, and let out the windineſs of his Heart *, leſt it ſhould be exalted above meaſure. The Goodneſs of God makes the Devil a Poliſher, while he intends to be a Deſtroyer. The Devil never works, but ſutably to ſome Corruption lurking in us: Divine Goodneſs makes his fiery Darts a Means to diſcover, and ſo to prevent the Treachery of that perfidious Inmate in our own Hearts. Humility is a greater benefit than a putrifying Pride; if God brings us into a Wilderneſs to be tempted of the Devil, 'tis to bring down our Loftineſs, to ſtarve our carnal Confidence, and expel our ruſting *Secu-*
* Deut. 8. 2. *rity* *: We many times fly under a Temptation to God, from whom we ſat too looſe before. Is it not Goodneſs to uſe thoſe means that may drive us into his own Arms? 'Tis not a want of Goodneſs to ſoap the Garment, in order to take away the Spots: We have reaſon to bleſs God for the Aſſaults from Hell, as well as pure Mercies from Heaven; and it is a Sin to over-look the one, as well as the other, ſince Divine Goodneſs ſhines in both.

6. The Goodneſs of God is ſeen in Temptations, *in fitting us more for his Service.* Thoſe whom God intends to make choice Inſtruments in his Service, are firſt ſeaſon'd with ſtrong Temptations, as Timber reſerved for the ſtrong Beams of a Building, is firſt expos'd to Sun and Wind, to make it more compact for its proper uſe. By this Men are brought to anſwer the End of their Creation, the Service of God, which is their proper Goodneſs. *Peter*, was after his Foil by a Temptation, more courageous in his Maſter's Cauſe than before, and the more fitted to ſtrengthen his Brethren. Thus the Goodneſs of God appears in all parts of his Government.

I ſhall now come to *the USE.*

Firſt, Of *Inſtruction.*

1. If God be ſo good, *how unworthy is the contempt and abuſe of his Goodneſs?*

1. *The contempt and abuſe of Divine Goodneſs is frequent and common:* It began in the firſt Ages of the World, and commenced a few Moments after the Creation; it hath not to this Day diminiſh'd its Affronts; *Adam* began the Dance, and his Poſterity have followed him; the Injury was directed againſt this, when he entertain'd the Seducer's Notion of God's being an envious Deity, in not indulging ſuch a Knowledge, as he might have afforded him: * *God doth know, that you ſhall be as Gods, knowing Good and Evil.* The Charge of Envy is utterly inconſiſtent with pure Gooduеſs. What was the Language of this Notion ſo eaſily entertain'd by *Adam*, but that the Tempter was better than God, and the Nature of God as baſe and ſordid as the Nature of a Devil? Satan paints God with his own Colours, repreſents him as envious and malicious as himſelf: *Adam* admires, and believes the Picture to be true, and hangs it up as a beloved one in the Cloſet of his Heart. The *Devil* ſtill drives on the ſame Game, fills Mens Hearts with the ſame Sentiments, and by the ſame means he murder'd our firſt Parents, he redoubles the Stabs to his Poſterity. Every violation of the Divine Law, is a contempt of God's Goodneſs, as well as his Sovereignty; becauſe his Laws are the Products both of the one and the other. Goodneſs animates them, while Sovereignty enjoys them: God hath commanded nothing but what doth conduce to our Happineſs. All Diſobedience implies, that his Law is a Snare to entrap us, and make us miſerable, and not an Act of Kindneſs, to render us happy; which is a diſparagement to this Perfection, as if he had commanded what would promote our Miſery, and prohibited what would conduce to our Bleſſedneſs: To go far from him, and walk after Vanity, is to charge him with our Iniquity, and Unrighteouſneſs, Baſeneſs, and Cruelty in his Commands: God implies it by his Speech, * *What Iniquity have* * Jer. 2. 5. *your Fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and walked after vanity?* As if, like a Tyrant, he had conſulted Cruelty in the Compoſure of them, and deſign'd to Feaſt himſelf with the Blood and Miſery of his Creatures. Every Sin is in its own Nature a denial of God to be the chiefeſt Good and Happineſs, and implies, that it is no great matter to loſe him; 'tis a forſaking him as the Fountain of Life, and a preferring a crack'd and *empty Ciſtern*, as the chief Happineſs before him *. * Jer. 2. 13. Tho' Sin is not ſo evil as God is good, yet it is the greateſt Evil, and ſtands in oppoſition to God as the greateſt Good. Sin diſorders the Frame of the World, it endeavour'd to fruſtrate all the Communications of Divine Goodneſs in Creation, and to ſtop up the way of any further Streams of it to his Creatures.

2. *The abuſe and contempt of the Divine Goodneſs is baſe and diſ-ingenuous.* 'Tis the higheſt Wickedneſs, becauſe God is the higheſt Goodneſs, pure Goodneſs, that cannot have any thing in him worthy of our Contempt. Let Men injure God under what Notion they will, they injure his Goodneſs; becauſe all his Attributes are ſumm'd up in this one, and all as it were Deified by it. For whatſoever Power or Wiſdom he might have, if he were deſtitute of this, he were not God: The contempt of his Goodneſs implies him to be the greateſt Evil, and worſt of Beings. Badneſs, not Goodneſs, is the proper Object of Contempt: As Reſpect is a propenſion of Mind to ſomething that is Good, ſo Contempt is an alienation of the Mind from ſomething as Evil, either ſimply or ſuppoſedly Evil in its Nature, or baſe or unworthy in its Action towards that Perſon that contemns it. As Men deſire nothing but what they apprehend to be Good, ſo they ſlight nothing but what they apprehend to be Evil: Since nothing therefore is more contemned by us than God, nothing more ſpurn'd at by us than God, it will follow, that we regard him

him as the moſt loathſom and deſpicable Being; which is the greateſt Baſeneſs. And our contempt of him, is worſe than that of the Devils; they injure him under the inevitable Strokes of his Juſtice, and we ſlight him when we are ſurrounded with the Expreſſions of his Bounty; they abuſe him under Vials of Wrath, and we under a Plenteous Liberality; they malice him, becauſe he inflicts on them what is hurtful; and we deſpiſe him, becauſe he commands what is profitable, holy, and honourable in its own Nature, tho' not in our Eſteem. They are not under thoſe high Obligations as we, they abuſe his Creating, and we his Redeeming Goodneſs: He never ſent his Son to ſhed a Drop of Blood for their Recovery, they can expect nothing but the Torment of their Perſons, and the Deſtruction of their Works: But we abuſe that Goodneſs that would reſcue us ſince we are miſerable, as well as that Righteouſneſs which created us innocent. How baſe is it to uſe him ſo ill, that is not once or twice, but a daily, hourly Benefactor to us; whoſe Rain drops upon the Earth for our Food, and whoſe Sun ſhines upon the Earth for our Pleaſure, as well as Profit; ſuch a Benefactor as is the true Proprietor of what we have, and thinks nothing too good for them, that thinks every thing too much for his Service? How unworthy is it to be guilty of ſuch baſe Carriage towards him, whoſe Benefits we cannot want, nor live without? How diſingenuous both to God and our ſelves, to
* Rom. 2. 4. **deſpiſe the Riches of his Goodneſs, that are deſign'd to lead us to Repentance*, and by that to Happineſs? And more heinous are the Sins of renew'd Men upon this account, becauſe they are againſt his *Goodneſs*, not only offer'd to them, but taſted by them; not only againſt the Notion of Goodneſs, but the Experience of Goodneſs, and the reliſh'd Sweetneſs of choiceſt Bounty.

3. *God takes this Contempt of his Goodneſs heinouſly.* He never upbraids Men with any thing in Scripture, but with the abuſe of the Good Things he hath vouchſafed them, and the unmindfulneſs of the Obligations ariſing from them. This he bears with the greateſt Regret and Indignation. Thus he upbraids *Eli* with the preference of him to
* 1 Sam. 2. 28. the Prieſthood, above other Families *: And *David*, with his Exaltation to the Crown of *Iſrael*,
† 2 Sam. 12. 7, 8, 9. † when they abuſed thoſe Honours to Careleſneſs and Licentiouſneſs. All Sins offend God, but Sins againſt his Goodneſs do more diſparage him; and therefore his Fury is the greater, by how much the more liberally his Benefits have been diſpens'd. It was for abuſe of Divine Goodneſs, as ſoon as it was taſted, that ſome Angels were hurl'd from their bleſſed Habitation, and more happy Nature: It was for this *Adam* loſt his preſent Enjoyments and future Happineſs; for the abuſe of God's Goodneſs in Creation. For the abuſe of God's Goodneſs, the Old World fell under the Fury of the Flood; and for the Contempt of the Divine Goodneſs in Redemption, *Jeruſalem*, once the darling City of the infinite Monarch of the World, was made an *Acelдema*, a Field of Blood. For this cauſe it is, that Candleſticks have been removed, great Lights put out, Nations overturn'd, and Ignorance hath triumph'd in places bright before with the Beams of Heaven. God would have little Care of his own Goodneſs, if he always proſtituted the Fruits of it to our Contempt: Why ſhould we expect he ſhould always continue that to us, which he ſees we will never uſe to his Service? When the *Iſraelites* would dedicate the Gifts of God to the Service of *Baal*, then he would return, and take away his Corn and his Wine, and make them know by the loſs, that thoſe things were his in Dominion which they abus'd, as if they had been Sovereign Lords of them *.
* Hoſ. 2. 8, 9 Benefits are entail'd upon us no longer than we obey; † *If you forſake the Lord, he will do you hurt,*
† Joſh. 24. 20. *after he hath done you good.* While we obey, his Bounty ſhall ſhower upon us; and when we revolt, his Juſtice ſhall conſume us. Preſent Mercies abus'd, are no Bulwarks againſt impendent Judgments. God hath Curſes as well as Bleſſings, and they ſhall light more heavy, when his Bleſſings have been more weighty: Juſtice is never ſo ſevere, as when it comes to right Goodneſs, and revenge its Quarrel for the Injuries received.

A convenient Enquiry may be here, *How God's Goodneſs is contemn'd, or abus'd?*

1. *By a forgetfulneſs of his Benefits.* We enjoy the Mercies, and forget the Donor; we take what he gives, and pay not the Tribute he deſerves: The *Iſraelites forgot God their Saviour, which had done great things in Egypt* *. We ſend God's Mer-
* Pſal. 100. 21. cies, where we would have God ſend our Sins into the Land of Forgetfulneſs, and write his Benefits, where himſelf would write the Names of the Wicked, in the Duſt, which every Wind defaceth: The remembrance ſoon wears out of our Minds, and we are ſo far from remembring what we had before, that we ſcarce think of that Hand that gives, the very inſtant wherein his Benefits drop upon us. *Adam* baſely forgot his Benefactor, preſently after he had been made capable to remember him, and reflect upon him; the firſt Remark we hear of him, is of his Forgetfulneſs, not a Syllable of his Thankfulneſs. We forget thoſe Souls he hath lodg'd in us, to acknowledge his Favours to our Bodies; we forget that Image wherewith he beautified us, and that Chriſt he expos'd as a Criminal to Death for our Reſcue; which is ſuch an Act of Goodneſs, as cannot be expreſs'd by the Eloquence of the Tongue, or conceiv'd by the Acuteneſs of the Mind. Thoſe things which are ſo common, that they cannot be inviſible to our Eyes, are unregarded by our Minds; our Senſe prompts our Underſtanding, and our Underſtanding is deaf to the plain Dictates of our Senſe. We forget his Goodneſs in the Sun, while it warms us; and his Showers, while they enrich us; in the Corn, while it nouriſheth us, and the Wine while it refreſheth us:
* Hoſ. 2. 8. * *She did not know, that I gave her Corn, and Wine, and Oyl:* She that might have read my Hand in every Bit of Bread, and every Drop of Drink, did not conſider this. 'Tis an Injuſtice to forget the Benefits we receive from Man; 'tis a Crime of a higher Nature to forget thoſe diſpens'd to us by the Hand of God, who gives us thoſe Things that all the World cannot furniſh us with, without him. The Inhabitants of *Troas* will condemn us, who worſhipped Mice, in a grateful Remembrance of the Victory they had made eaſie for them, by gnawing their Enemies Bow-ſtrings. They were mindful of the Courteſie of Animals, tho' unintended by thoſe Creatures; and we are regardleſs of the fore-meditated Bounty of God. 'Tis in God's Judgment a Brutiſhneſs beyond that of a ſtupid Ox, or a duller Aſs: * *The Ox knows his Owner, and the Aſs his*
* Iſai. 1. 3. *Maſter's Crib; but Iſrael doth not know, my People do not conſider.* The Ox knows his Owner that paſtures him, and the Aſs his Maſter that feeds him; but Man is not ſo good as to be like to them, but ſo bad as to be inferiour to them: He forgets him that ſuſtains him, and ſpurns at him, inſtead of valuing him for the Benefits conferr'd by him. How horrible is it, that God ſhould loſe more by his Bounty, than he would do by his Parcimony? If we had Bleſſings more ſparingly, we ſhould remember him more gratefully. If he had ſent us a Bit of Bread in a Diſtreſs, by a Miracle, as he did to

Elijah by the Ravens, it would have ſtuck longer in our Memories; but the ſenſe of daily Favours ſooneſt wears out of our Minds, which are as great Miracles as any in their own Nature, and the Products of the ſame Power; but the wonder they ſhould beget in us, is obſcur'd by their frequency.

2. The Goodneſs of God is contemn'd *by an impatient murmuring.* Our Repinings proceed from an Inconſideration of God's free Liberality, and an ungrateful Temper of Spirit. Moſt Men are guilty of this. 'Tis implied in the Commendation of *Job* under his Preſſures: * *In all this Job ſinned not, nor* *Job 1.22. *charged God fooliſhly*; as if it were a Character peculiar to him, whereby he verified the Elogy God had given of him before, *verſe* 8. That there was *none like him in the Earth, a perfect and an upright Man.* What is imply'd by the Expreſſion? But that ſcarce a Man is to be found without unjuſt Complaints of God, and charging him under their Croſſes with Cruelty; when in the greateſt, they have much more reaſon to bleſs him for his Bounty in the remainder. Good Men have not been innocent. *Baruch* complains of God, for adding Grief to his Sorrow, not furniſhing him with thoſe *great things* he expected, whereas he had Matter of Thankfulneſs in God's Gift of his Life as a Prey. * Jer.45.5. * But his Maſter chargeth God in a higher ſtrain, † Jer.20.7. † *Oh Lord, thou haſt deceiv'd me, and I was deceived, I am in deriſion daily.* When he met with Reproach inſtead of Succeſs, in the execution of his Function, he quarrels with God, as if he had a Mind to cheat him into a Miſchief, when he had more reaſon to bleſs him for the Honour of being employ'd in his Service. Becauſe we have not what we expect, we ſlight his Goodneſs in what we enjoy. If he croſs us in one thing, he might have made us ſucceſsleſs in more: If he take away ſome things, he might as well have taken away all. The unmerited remainder, tho' never ſo little, deſerves our Acknowledgments more than the deſerved Loſs can juſtifie our Repining. And for that which is ſnatch'd from us, there is more cauſe to be thankful, that we have enjoyed it ſo long, than to murmur that we poſſeſs it no longer. *Adam*'s Sin implies a repining: He imagin'd God had been ſhort in his Goodneſs, in not giving him a Knowledge he fooliſhly conceived himſelf capable of, and would venture a forfeiture of what already had been bountifully beſtow'd upon him. Man thought God had envied him; and ever ſince, Man ſtudies to be even with God, and envies him the free diſpoſal of his own Doles: All murmuring, either in our own Cauſe or others, charges God with a want of Goodneſs, becauſe there is a want of that, which he fooliſhly thinks would make himſelf, or others happy. The Language of this Sin is, That Man thinks himſelf better than God, and if it were in his Power, would expreſs a more plentiful Goodneſs than his Maker. As Man is apt to think himſelf more *pure than* *Job 4.17. *God*, * ſo of a kinder Nature alſo than an Infinite Goodneſs. The *Iſraelites* are a wonderful Example of this Contempt of Divine Goodneſs; they had been Spectators of the greateſt Miracles, and Partakers of the choiceſt Deliverance: He had ſollicited their Redemption from Captivity, and when Words would not do, he came to Blows for them; muſters up his Judgments againſt their Enemies, and at laſt, as the *Lord of Hoſts*, and God of Battles, totally defeats their Purſuers, and drowns them and their proud hopes of Victory in the Red Sea. Little account was made of all this by the Redeem'd Ones. *They lightly eſteem'd the Rock of their Salvation*, and launch into greater Unworthineſs, inſtead of being thankful for the breaking their Yoke: They are angry with him, that he had done ſo much for them: They repented that ever they had complied with him for their own Deliverance, and had a regret that they had been brought out of *Egypt*: They were angry that they were Free-men, and that their Chains had been knock'd off: They were more deſirous to return to the Oppreſſion of their *Egyptian* Tyrants, than to have God for their Governor and Caterer, and be fed with his *Manna*. *It was well with us in Egypt; Why came we forth out of Egypt?* Which is call'd a *deſpiſing the Land*: * They were ſo far from rejoicing in the expecta- * Num.11. 18, 20. tion of the future Benefits promis'd them, that they murmur'd that they had not enjoy'd leſs; they were ſo ſottiſh, as to be deſirous to put themſelves into the Irons whence God had delivered them: They would ſeek a Remedy in that *Egypt*, which had been the Priſon of their Nation, and under the Succeſſors of that *Pharaoh*, who had been the Invader of their Liberties; they would ſnatch *Moſes* from the place, where the Lord by an extraordinary Providence had eſtabliſh'd him; * they would * Num.16. *ſtone* thoſe that minded them of the Goodneſs of 3,9,10,11. God to them, and thereupon of their Crime, and their Duty; they roſe againſt their Benefactors, and *murmur'd againſt God*, that had ſtrengthened the Hand of their Deliverers; they *deſpiſed the Manna* he had ſent them, and *deſpiſed the pleaſant Land* he intended them: * All which was a high * Pſal.106. Contempt of God, and his unparallel'd Goodneſs 24. and Care of them. All Murmuring is an Accuſation of Divine Goodneſs.

3. *By Unbelief and Impenitency.* What is the reaſon we come not to him when he calls us, but ſome ſecret Imagination that he is of an ill Nature, means not as he ſpeaks, but intends to mock us inſtead of welcoming us? When we neglect his Call, ſpurn at his Bowels, ſlight the Riches of his Grace; as it is a diſparagement to his Wiſdom, to deſpiſe his Counſel, ſo it is to his Goodneſs, to ſlight his Offers, as tho' you could make better Proviſion for your ſelves, than he is able or willing to do. It diſgraceth that which is deſign'd to the praiſe of the Glory of his Grace: And renders God cruel to his own Son, as being an unneceſſary Shedder of his Blood. As the Devil by his Temptation of *Adam*, envied God the Glory of his Creating Goodneſs; ſo Unbelief envies God the Glory of his Redeeming Grace: 'Tis a bidding Defiance to him, and challenging him to muſter up the Legions of his Judgments, rather than have ſent his Son to ſuffer for us, or his Spirit to ſollicit us. Since the ſending of his Son was the greateſt Act of Goodneſs that God could expreſs, the refuſal of him muſt be the higheſt Reproach of that Liberality God deſign'd to commend to the World in ſo rare a Gift: The Ingratitude in this refuſal muſt be as high in the Rank of Sins, as the Perſon ſlighted is in the Rank of Beings, or Rank of Gifts. *Chriſt is a Gift*, * the * Rom. 5. 16. Royalleſt Gift, an *unparallel'd Gift*, ſpringing from unconceivable Treaſures of Goodneſs: * What is * John3.16 our turning our Backs upon this Gift, but a low Opinion of it? As tho' the richeſt Jewel of Heaven, were not ſo valuable as a Swiniſh Pleaſure on Earth; and deſerved to be treated at no other rate, than if meer Offals had been preſented to us. The plain Language of it is, That there were no gracious Intentions for our welfare in this preſent; and that he is not as good in the Miſſion of his Son, as he would induce us to imagine. Impenitence is alſo an abuſe of this Goodneſs, either by preſumption, as if God would entertain Rebels that bid defiance againſt him, with the ſame reſpect that he doth his proſtrate and weeping Suppliants; that he will have the ſame regard to the Swine, as to the Children,

dren, and lodge them in the ſame Habitation: Or it ſpeaks a ſuſpicion of God as a deceitful Maſter, one of a pretended, not a real Goodneſs; that makes Promiſes to mock Men, and Invitations to delude them; that he is an implacable Tyrant, rather than a good Father; a rigid, not a kind Being, delightful only to mark our Faults, and overlook our Services.

4. The Goodneſs of God is contemned *by a diſtruſt of his Providence*. As all truſt in him ſuppoſeth him good, ſo all diſtruſt of him ſuppoſeth him evil, either without Goodneſs to exert his Power, or without Power to diſplay his Goodneſs. *Job* ſeems to have a Spice of this in his Complaint; [†]Job 30. 20 * *I cry unto thee, and thou doſt not hear me; I ſtand up, and thou regardeſt me not.* 'Tis a Fume of the Serpent's Venom, firſt breath'd into Man, to ſuſpect him of Cruelty, Severity, Regardleſneſs, even under the daily Evidences of his good Diſpoſition: And it is ordinary not to believe him when he ſpeaks, nor credit him when he acts: To queſtion the Goodneſs of his Precepts, and miſinterpret the kindneſs of his Providence; as if they were deſign'd for the Supports of a Tyranny, and the Deceit of the Miſerable. Thus the *Iſraelites* thought their miraculous Deliverance from *Egypt*, and the placing them in ſecurity in the Wilderneſs, was intended only to *pound* them up for a *ſlaughter* *. Thus [†]Num. 14. 3. they defil'd the Luſtre of Divine Goodneſs, which they had ſo highly experimented, and placed not that Confidence in him, which was due to ſo frequent a Benefactor; and thereby *crucifi'd* the rich Kindneſs of God, as *Genebrard* tranſlates the word [†]Pſ. 78. 41. *limited* *. 'Tis alſo a Jealouſie of Divine Goodneſs, when we ſeek to deliver our ſelves from our ſtraits by unlawful ways; as tho' God had not kindneſs enough to deliver us without committing Evil. What, did God make a World, and all Creatures in it, to think of them no more, not to concern himſelf in their Affairs? If he be good, he is diffuſive, and delights to communicate himſelf; and what Subjects ſhould there be for it, but thoſe that ſeek him and implore his aſſiſtance? 'Tis an Indignity to Divine Bounty, to have ſuch mean thoughts of it, that it ſhould be of a Nature contrary to that of his Works, which the better they are, the more diffuſive they are. Doth a Man diſtruſt that the Sun will not ſhine any more, or the Earth not bring forth its Fruit? Doth he diſtruſt the Goodneſs of an approved Medicine, for the expelling his Diſtemper? If we diſtruſt thoſe things, ſhould we not render our ſelves ridiculous and ſottiſh? And if we diſtruſt the Creator of thoſe things, do we not make our ſelves Contemners of his Goodneſs? If his Caring for us be a principal Argument, to move us to caſt our Care upon him, as it is, 1 *Pet.* 5. 7. *Caſting your Care upon him, for he cares for you:* Then if we caſt not our Care upon him, 'tis a denial of his gracious Care of us, as if he regarded not what becomes of us.

5. We do contemn, or abuſe his Goodneſs, *by omiſſions of Duty*. Theſe ſometimes ſpring from injurious Conceits of God, which end in deſperate Reſolutions. It was the Crime of a good Prophet in [†]2 Kings 6. 33. his Paſſion, * *This evil is of the Lord, Why ſhould I wait on the Lord any longer?* God deſigns nothing but Miſchief to us, and we will ſeek him no longer. And the Complaint of thoſe in *Malachy*, Mal. 3. 14. is of the ſame nature: *Ye have ſaid, 'tis vain to ſerve God, and what profit is it, that we have kept his Ordinances?* We have all this while ſerv'd a hard Maſter, not a Benefactor, and have not been anſwer'd with Advantages proportionable to our Services: We have met with a Hand too nigardly to diſpenſe that Reward which is due to the largeneſs of our Offerings. When Men will not lift up their Eyes to Heaven, and ſollicite nothing but the Contrivance of their own Brain, and the Induſtry of their own Heads, they diſown Divine Goodneſs, and approve themſelves as their own Gods, and the Spring of their own Proſperity. Thoſe that run not to God in their neceſſity, to crave his ſupport, deny either the Arm of his Power, or the Diſpoſition of his Will, to ſuſtain and deliver them: They muſt have very mean Sentiments, or none at all of this Perfection; or think him either too empty to fill them, or too churliſh to relieve them: That he is of a narrow and contracted Temper, and that they may ſooner expect to be made better and happier by any thing elſe than by him. And as we contemn his Goodneſs by a *total omiſſion* of thoſe Duties, which reſpect our own Advantage and Supply, as Prayer; ſo we contemn him as the chiefeſt Good, by an *omiſſion* of the *due manner* of any Act of Worſhip, which is deſign'd purely for the acknowledgment of him. As every omiſſion of the material part of a Duty is a denial of his Sovereignty, as commanding it; ſo every omiſſion of the manner of it, not performing it with a due eſteem and valuation of him, a ſurrender of all the Powers of our Souls to him, is a denial of him, as the moſt amiable Object. But certainly to omit thoſe Addreſſes to God, which his Precept enjoyns, and his Excellency deſerves, ſpeaks this Language, That they can be well enough, and do well enough without God, and ſtand in no need of his Goodneſs to maintain them. The neglect, or refuſal, in a Malefactor to ſupplicate for his Pardon, is a wrong to, and contempt of the Prince's Goodneſs: Either implying, that he hath not a Goodneſs in his Nature worthy of an Addreſs, or that he ſcorns to be oblig'd to him for any Exerciſe of it.

6. The Goodneſs of God is contemned or abuſed, *in relying upon our Services, to procure God's good Will to us.* * As when we ſtand in need either of ſome particular Mercy, or ſpecial Aſſiſtance: When Preſſures are heavy, and we have little hopes of eaſe in an ordinary way: When the Devotions in courſe have not prevail'd for what we want: We engage our ſelves by extraordinary Vows and Promiſes to God, hereby to open that Goodneſs, which ſeems to be lock'd up from us. Sometimes indeed Vows may proceed from a ſole Deſire to engage our ſelves to God, from a ſenſe of the Levity and Inconſtancy of our Spirits: Binding our ſelves to God by ſomething more ſacred and inviolable than a common Reſolution. But many times the Vowing the Building of a Temple, Endowing an Hoſpital, giving ſo much in Alms, if God will free them from a Fit of Sickneſs, and ſpin out the Thread of their Lives a little longer, (as hath been frequent among the *Romaniſts*) ariſes from an Opinion of Lazineſs, and a Selfiſhneſs in the Divine Goodneſs; that it muſt be ſqueezed out by ſome ſolemn Promiſes of Returns to him, before it will exerciſe it ſelf to take their parts. Popular Vows are often the Effects of an Ignorance of the free and bubbling Nature of this Perfection of the Generouſneſs and Royalty of Divine Goodneſs: As if God were of a mean and mechanick Temper, not to part with any thing, unleſs he were in ſome meaſure paid for it: And of ſo bad a Nature, as not to give paſſage to any Kindneſs to his Creature, without a Bribe. It implies alſo, that he is of an ignorant, as well as contracted Goodneſs; that he hath ſo little Underſtanding, and ſo much weakneſs of Judgment, as to be taken with ſuch Trifles and Ceremonial Courtſhips, and little Promiſes; and meditated only low Deſigns, in imparting his Bounty: 'Tis juſt as if a Malefactor ſhould ſpeak

* Amyral. *Moral. Tom.* 4. p. 291.

to a Prince, *Sir, If you will but beſtow a Pardon upon me, and prevent the Death I have merited for this Crime, I will give you this Rattle.* All Vows made with ſuch a Temper of Spirit to God, are as injurious and abuſive to his Goodneſs, as any Man will judge ſuch an Offer to be to a Majeſtick and Gracious Prince; as if it were a Trading, not a Free and Royal Goodneſs.

7. The Goodneſs of God is abus'd, *when we give up our Souls and Affections to thoſe Benefits we have from God.* When we make thoſe things God's Rivals, which were ſent to Woe us for him, and offer thoſe Affections to the Preſents themſelves, which they were ſent to ſollicite for the Maſter. This is done, when either we place our truſt in them, or glue our choiceſt Affections to them. This Charge God brings againſt *Jeruſalem*, the truſting in her own Beauty, Glory, and Strength, tho' it was a *Comelineſs* put upon her by God *. When a little Sun-ſhine of Proſperity breaks out upon us, we are apt to graſp it with ſo much eagerneſs and cloſeneſs, as if we had no other Foundation to ſettle our ſelves upon, no other Being that might challenge from us our ſole dependence. And the love of our ſelves, and of Creatures above God, is very natural to us: * *Lovers of themſelves, and Lovers of Pleaſure more than of God.* Self-love is the Root, and the Love of Pleaſures the top Branch, that mounts its Head higheſt againſt Heaven. * 'Tis for the love of the World, that the Dangers of the Sea are paſt over, that Men deſcend into the Bowels of the Earth, paſs Nights without Sleep, undertake Suits without intermiſſion, wade through many Inconveniencies, venture their Souls, and contemn God; in thoſe things Men glory, and fooliſhly grow proud by them, and think themſelves ſafe and happy in them. Now to love our ſelves above God, is to own our ſelves better than God, and that we tranſcend him in an amiable Goodneſs; or if we love our ſelves equal with God, it at leaſt manifeſts, that we think God no better than our ſelves, and think our ſelves our own chief Good, and deny any thing above us to out-ſtrip us in goodneſs, whereby to deſerve to be the Center of our Affections and Actions: And to love any other Creature above him, is to conclude ſome defect in God, that he hath not ſo much Goodneſs in his own Nature, as that Creature hath, to compleat our Felicity; that God is a ſlighter thing than that Creature. 'Tis to account God, what all the things in the World are, an imaginary Happineſs, a Goodneſs of Clay, and them what God is, a Supream Goodneſs. 'Tis to value the goodneſs of a Drop above that of the Spring, and the goodneſs of the Spark above that of the Sun. As if the Bounty of God were of a leſs Alloy, than the Advantages we immediately receive from the Hands of a ſilly Worm. By how much the better we think a Creature to be, and place our Affections chiefly upon it; by ſo much the more deficient and indigent we conclude God: For God wants ſo much in our Conception, as the other thing hath goodneſs above him in our Thoughts. Thus is God leſſen'd below the Creature, as if he had a mixture of Evil in him, and were capable of an imperfect Goodneſs. He that eſteems the Sun that ſhines upon him, the Cloaths that warm him, the Food that nouriſheth him, or any other Benefit above the Donor, regards them as more *comely* and *uſeful* than God himſelf; and behaves himſelf, as if he were more oblig'd to them, than to God, who beſtowed thoſe advantageous Qualities upon them.

*Ezek.16. 14, 15.

* 2 Tim.3. 2, 4.

* Creſſol, *Antholog. Part 2. p. 29.*

8. *The Divine Goodneſs is contemn'd, in ſinning more freely upon the account of that Goodneſs, and employing God's Benefits in a Drudgery for our Luſts.* This is a treachery to his Goodneſs, to make his Benefits ſerve for an end quite contrary to that for which he ſent them. As if God had been plentiful in his Bleſſings, to hire them to be more fierce in their Rebellions, and fed them to no other purpoſe, but that they might more ſtrongly kick againſt him; this is the Fruit which corrupt Nature produceth. Thus the *Egyptians*, who had ſo fertile a Country, prove unthankful to the Creator, by adoring the meaneſt Creatures, and putting the Scepter of the Monarch of the World, into the hands of the ſottiſheſt and cruelleſt Beaſts. And the *Romans* multiply their Idols, as God multiplied their Victories. This is alſo the Complaint of God concerning *Iſrael*, * *She did not know, that I gave her Corn, and Wine, and Oyl, and multiplied her Silver and Gold, which they prepar'd for Baal.* They ungratefully employ'd the Bleſſings of God in the Worſhip of an Idol, againſt the Will of the Donor. So in *Hoſ.* 10. 1. *According to the multitude of his Fruit, he hath increas'd the Altars, according to the goodneſs of his Land they have made goodly Images.* They followed their own Inventions with the ſtrength of my outward Bleſſings. As their Wealth increas'd, they increas'd the Ornaments of their Images; ſo that what were before of Wood and Stone, they advanc'd to Gold and Silver. And the like Complaint you may ſee, *Ezek.* 16. 17. Thus,

* Hoſ. 2.8.

1. *The Benefits of God are abuſed to Pride:* When Men ſtanding upon a higher ground of outward Proſperity, vaunt it loftily above their Neighbours; the common fault of thoſe that enjoy a worldly Sun-ſhine, which the *Apoſtle* obſerves in his Direction to *Timothy*: *Charge them that are rich in this World, that they be not high-minded.* 'Tis an ill uſe of Divine Bleſſings, to be fill'd by them with Pride and Wind. Alſo,

* 1 Tim.6. 17.

2. *When Men abuſe Plenty to Eaſe*; becauſe they have abundance, ſpend their time in Idleneſs, and make no other uſe of Divine Benefits, than to trifle away their time, and be utterly uſeleſs to the World.

3. *When they alſo abuſe Peace, and other Bleſſings, to Security.* As they which would not believe the Threatnings of Judgment, and the Storm coming from a far Country, becauſe the Lord was in *Sion*, and her King in her: * *Is not the Lord in Sion? Is not her King in her?* Thinking they might continue their progreſs in their Sin, becauſe they had the Temple, the Seat of the Divine Glory, *Sion*, and the promiſe of an everlaſting Kingdom to *David*; abuſing the Promiſe of God to Preſumption and Security, and turning the Grace of God into wantonneſs.

* Jer.8.19.

4. Again, *When they abuſe the Bounty of God to Senſuality and Luxury*, miſimploying the Proviſions God gives them, in reſolving to live like Beaſts, when by a good improvement of them, they might attain the Life of Angels. Thus is the Light of the Sun abus'd to conduct them, and the Fruits of the Earth abus'd to enable them to their prodigious Debauchery: *As we do*, ſaith one, * *with the Thames, which brings us in Proviſion, and we ſoil it with our Rubbiſh.* The more God ſows his Gifts, the more we ſow our Cockle and Darnel. Thus we make our outward Happineſs the moſt unhappy part of our Lives, and by the ſtrength of Divine Bleſſings, exceed all Laws of Reaſon and Religion too.

* Young, *of Affliction, p. 34.*

How unworthy a Carriage is this, to uſe the Expreſſions of Divine Goodneſs, as Occaſions of a greater Outrage and Affront of him? When we ſtab his Honour by thoſe Inſtruments he puts into our Hands to glorifie him: As if a Favorite ſhould turn that Sword into the Bowels of his Prince, where-

wherewith he Knighted him. And a Servant enrich'd by a Lord, ſhould hire by that Wealth Murderers to take away his Life. How brutiſh is it, the more God courts us with his Bleſſings, the more to ſpurn at him with our Feet? Like the Mule that lifts up its Heel againſt the Dam, as ſoon as ever it hath ſuck'd her. We never beat God out of our Hearts, but by his own Gifts: He receives no Blows from Men, but by thoſe Inſtruments he gave them to promote their Happineſs. While Man is an Enjoyer, he makes God a Loſer by his own Bleſſings; inflames his Rebellion by thoſe Benefits which ſhould kindle his Love; and runs from him by the ſtrength of thoſe Favours which ſhould endear the Donor to him. *Do you thus requite the Lord, Oh fooliſh People and unwiſe?* is the Expoſtulation, *Deut.* 32. 6. Divine Goodneſs appears in the Complaint of the abuſe of it, in giving them Titles below their Crime, and complaining more of their being unfaithful to their own Intereſt, than Enemies to his Glory. *Fooliſh and unwiſe*, in neglecting their own Happineſs, a Charge below the Crime, which deſerved to be abominable, ungrateful People to a Prodigy. All this Carriage towards God, is as if a Man ſhould knock the *Chirurgeon* on the Head, as ſoon as he hath ſet and bound up his diſlocated Members. So God compares the ungrateful Behaviour of the *Iſ-*
*Hoſ. 7. 15. *raelites* againſt him, * *Though I have bound and ſtrengthned their Arms, yet do they imagine miſchief againſt me.* A Metaphor taken from a *Chyrurgeon* that applies corroborating Plaiſters to a broken Limb.

9. We contemn the Goodneſs of God, *in aſcribing our Benefits to other Cauſes than Divine Goodneſs.* Thus *Iſrael* aſcribed her Felicity, Plenty, and Succeſs to her Idols, as *Rewards which her Lo-*
* Hoſ. 2. 5. *vers had given her* *. And this Charge *Daniel*
12. brought home upon *Belſhazzer*; † *Thou haſt praiſed*
†Dan. 5. 23 *the Gods of Silver, and Gold, and Braſs, and Iron, and the God in whoſe hand is thy Breath, and whoſe are all thy ways, haſt thou not glorify'd.* The God who hath given Succeſs to the Arms of thy Anceſtors, and convey'd by their hands ſo large a Dominion to thee, thou haſt not honour'd in the ſame Rank with the ſordideſt of thy Idols. 'Tis the ſame caſe, when we own him not as the Author of any Succeſs in our Affairs, but by an over-weening Conceit of our own Sagacity, applaud and admire our ſelves, and over-look the Hand that conducted us, and brought our Endeavours to a good iſſue. We eclipſe the Glory of Divine Goodneſs, by ſetting the Crown that is due to it upon the Head of our own Induſtry. A Sacriledge worſe than *Belſhazzar's* drinking of Wine with his Lords and Concubines, in the Sacred Veſſels pilfer'd from the Temple; as in that place of *Daniel*. This was the proud Vaunt of the *Aſſyrian* Conqueror, for which God threatens to puniſh the Fruit of his ſtout
* Iſai. 10. Heart: * *By the ſtrength of my hand, I have done*
12, 13, 14. *it, and by my Wiſdom: For I am prudent, and I have removed the Bounds of the People, and have robbed their Treaſures*, and *I have put down the Inhabitants like a valiant Man.* Not a word of Divine Goodneſs and Aſſiſtance in all this, but applauding his own Courage and Conduct. This is a robbing of God, to ſet up our ſelves, and making Divine Goodneſs a Footſtool, to aſcend into his Throne. And as it is unjuſt, ſo it is ridiculous, to aſcribe to Our ſelves, or Inſtruments, the chief Honour of any Work: As ridiculous, as if a Soldier, after a Victory, ſhould erect an Altar to the Honour of his Sword, or an Artificer offer Sacrifices to the Tools, whereby he compleated ſome excellent and uſeful Invention. A Practice that every rational Man would diſdain, where he ſhould ſee it. 'Tis a diſcarding any Thoughts of the Goodneſs of God, when we imagine, that we chiefly owe any thing in this World to our own Induſtry or Wit, to Friends or Means, as tho' Divine Goodneſs did not open its hand, to intereſt it ſelf in our Affairs, ſupport our Ability, direct our Counſels, and mingle it with any thing we do. God is the principal Author of any Advantage that accrues to us, of any wiſe Reſolution we fix upon, or any proper Way we take to compaſs it; no Man can be wiſe in oppoſition to God, act wiſely or well without him; his Goodneſs inſpires Men with generous and magnificent Counſels, and furniſheth them with fit and proportionable Means; when he withdraws his Hand, Mens Heads grow fooliſh, and their Hands feeble; Folly and Weakneſs drops upon them, as Darkneſs upon the World upon the removal of the Sun. 'Tis an abuſe of Divine Goodneſs, not to own it, but erect an Idol in its place. *Ezra* was of another mind, when he aſcribed to the good Hand of God, the *providing Miniſters for the Temple*, and not to his own care and diligence *: * Ezra 8.
And *Nehemiah* the *ſucceſs he had with the King* in 11.
the behalf of his Nation, and not ſolely to his Favour with the Prince, * or the Arts he uſed to pleaſe * Neh 2. 8.
him.

2. The Second Information is this: If God be ſo good, *'tis a certain Argument that Man is fallen from his Original State.* 'Tis the Complaint of Man ſometimes, that other Creatures have more of earthly Happineſs than Men have, live freer from Care and Trouble, and are not rack'd with that Sollicitouſneſs and Anxiety as Man is: Have not ſuch Diſtempers to embitter their Lives. 'Tis a good ground for Man to look into himſelf, and conſider whether he hath not ſome ways or other, diſobliged God more than other Creatures can poſſibly do. We often find that the Creatures Men have need of in this State, do not anſwer the expectation of Man. *Curſed be the Ground for thy ſake* *. A fruit- *Gen. 3. 17.
ful Land is made barren, Thorns and Thiſtles triumph upon the Face of the Earth, inſtead of good Fruit. Is it like that Goodneſs which is as infinite as his Power, and knows no more Limits than his Almightineſs ſhould imprint ſo many Scars upon the World, if he had not been heinouſly provoked by ſome miſcarriage of his Creature? Infinite Goodneſs could never move Infinite Juſtice to inflict Puniſhment upon Creatures, if they had not highly merited it: We cannot think, that any Creature was blemiſh'd with a Principle of Diſturbance, as it came firſt out of the hand of God. All things were certainly ſetled in a due order and dependance upon one another: Nothing could be ungrateful, and unuſeful to Man, by the Original Law of their Creation: If there had, it had not been *Goodneſs*, but Evil and Baſeneſs, that had created the World. When we ſee therefore the Courſe of Nature overturn'd, the Order of Divine Goodneſs had placed, diſturb'd; and the Creatures pronounced good and uſeful to Man, employ'd as Inſtruments of Vengeance againſt him; we muſt conclude ſome horrible Blot upon Human Nature, and very odious to a God of infinite Goodneſs; and that this Blot was daſh'd upon Man by himſelf, and his own Fault; for it is repugnant to the Infinite Goodneſs of God, to put into the Creature a ſinning Nature, to hurry him into Sin, and then puniſh him for that which he had impreſt upon him. The Goodneſs of God inclines him to love Goodneſs, where-ever he finds it, and not to puniſh any, that have not deſerved it by their own Crimes. The Curſe we therefore ſee the Creatures groan under, the Diſorders in Nature, the fruſtrating the Expectations of Man

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in the Fruits of the Earth, and plentiful Harveſts, the trouble he is continually expos'd to in the World, which tedders down his Spirit from more generous Employments, ſhews, that Man is not what he was, when Divine Goodneſs firſt erected him; but hath admitted into his Nature ſomething more uncomely in the Eye of God; and ſo heinous, that it puts his Goodneſs ſometimes to a ſtand, and makes him lay aſide the Bleſſings, his Hand was fill'd with, to take up the Arms of Vengeance, wherewith to fight againſt the World. Divine Goodneſs would have ſecur'd his Creatures from any ſuch Invaſions, and never us'd thoſe things againſt Man, which he deſign'd in the firſt Frame for Man's Service, were there not ſome deteſtable Diſorder riſen in the Nature of Man, which makes God with-hold his Liberality, and change the Diſpenſation of his numerous Benefits into Legions of Judgments. The Conſideration of the Divine Goodneſs, which is a Notion that Man naturally concludes to be inſeparable from the Deity, would to an unbiaſs'd Reaſon, verifie the Hiſtory of thoſe Puniſhments, ſettled upon Man in the Third Chapter of *Geneſis*, and make the whole ſeem more probable to Reaſon at the firſt relation. This Inſtruction naturally flows from the *Doctrine of Divine Goodneſs*. If God be ſo good, it is a certain Argument, that Man is fallen from his Original State.

3. The third Information is this: If God be infinitely good, *there can be no juſt Complaint againſt God, if Men be puniſh'd for abuſing his Goodneſs.* Man had nothing; nay, it was impoſſible he could have any thing from infinite Goodneſs to diſoblige him, but to engage him. God never did, nay, never could draw his Sword againſt Man, 'till Man had ſlighted him, and affronted him by the ſtrength of his own Bounty. 'Tis by this, God doth juſtifie his ſevereſt proceedings againſt Men, and very ſeldom charges them with any elſe, as the matter of their provocations: * *Therefore will I return, and take away my Corn in the time thereof, and my Wine in the ſeaſon thereof, and will recover my Wool and my Flax.* And in *Ezek.* 16. after he had drawn out a Bill of Complaint againſt them, and inſerted only the abuſe of his Benefits, as a Juſtification of what he intended to do: He concludes, Verſe 27. *Behold therefore, I have ſtretched out my Hand over thee, and diminiſh'd thy ordinary Food, and delivered thee unto the Will of them that hate thee.* When Men ſuffer, they ſuffer juſtly; they were not conſtrained by any violence, or forced by any neceſſity, nor provok'd by any ill uſage, to turn Head againſt God, but broke the Bands of the ſtrongeſt Obligations, and moſt tender Allurements. What Man, what Devil can juſtly blame God for puniſhing them, after they had been ſo intolerably bold, as to fly in the Face of that Goodneſs that had oblig'd them, by giving them Beings of a higher elevation than to inferiour Creatures, and furniſhing them with ſufficient ſtrength to continue in their firſt Habitation? Man ſeems to have leſs reaſon to accuſe God of Rigor than Devils, ſince after his unreaſonable Revolt, a more expreſs Goodneſs than that which created him, hath ſollicited him to Repentance, courted him by melting Promiſes and Expoſtulations, added undeniable Arguments of Bounty, and drawn out the choiceſt Treaſures of Heaven in the Gift of his Son, to prevail over Mens Perverſity. And yet *Man*, after he might arrive to the height and happineſs of an *Angel*, will be fond of continuing in the meanneſs and miſery of a Devil; and more ſtrongly link himſelf to the Society of the damn'd Spirits, wherein by his firſt Rebellion he had incorporated himſelf. Who can blame God for vindicating his own Goodneſs from ſuch deſperate Contempts, and the extream Ingratitude of Man? * If God be good, 'tis our Happineſs to adhere to him: If we depart from him, we depart from Goodneſs; and if Evil happen to us, we cannot blame God, but our ſelves, for our departure. Why are Men happy? Becauſe they cleave to God: Why are Men miſerable? Becauſe they recede from God. 'Tis then our own fault that we are miſerable; God cannot be charged with any Injuſtice, if we be miſerable, ſince his Goodneſs gave means to prevent it, and afterwards added means to recover us from it; but all deſpis'd by us. The Doctrine of Divine Goodneſs juſtifies every Stone laid in the Foundation of Hell, and every Spark in that burning Furnace, ſince it is for the abuſe of Infinite Goodneſs, that it was kindled.

4. The fourth Information: *Here is a certain Argument both for God's fitneſs to govern the World, and his actual Government of it.*

1. *This renders him fit for the Government of the World, and gives him a full Title to it.* This Perfection doth the *Pſalmiſt* celebrate throughout the 107th *Pſalm*, where he declares God's Works of Providence, *Verſe* 8, 15, 21, 32. Power without Goodneſs would deface, inſtead of preſerving; Ruine is the Fruit of Rigor, without Kindneſs; but God, becauſe of his infinite and immutable Goodneſs, cannot do any thing unworthy of himſelf, and uncomely in it ſelf, or deſtructive to any Moral Goodneſs in the Creature. 'Tis impoſſible he ſhould do any thing that is baſe, or act any thing but for the beſt, becauſe he is eſſentially and naturally, and therefore neceſſarily good. As a good Tree cannot bring forth bad Fruit, ſo a good God cannot produce evil Acts; no more than a pure Beam of the Sun can engender ſo much as a Mite of Darkneſs, or Infinite Heat produce any Particle of Cold. As God is ſo much Light, that he can be no Darkneſs, ſo he is ſo much Good, that he can have no Evil; and becauſe there is no Evil in him, nothing ſimply Evil can be produced by him. Since he is good by Nature, all Evil is againſt his Nature, and God can do nothing againſt his Nature: It would be a part of Impotence in him, to Will that which is Evil; and therefore the Miſery Man feels, as well as the Sin whereby he deſerves that Miſery, are ſaid to be from himſelf: * *Oh Iſrael, thou haſt deſtroy'd thy ſelf.* And tho' God ſends Judgments upon the World, we have ſhewn theſe to be intended for the ſupport and vindication of his Goodneſs. And *Hezekiah* judg'd no otherwiſe, when after the Threatning of the Devaſtation of his Houſe, the Plundering his Treaſures, and Captivity of his Poſterity, he replies, *Good is the Word of the Lord which thou haſt ſpoken* *. God cannot act any thing that is baſe and cruel, becauſe his Goodneſs is as infinite as his Power, and his Power acts nothing, but what his Wiſdom directs, and his Goodneſs moves him to. Wiſdom is the Head in Government, Omniſcience the Eye, Power the Arm, and Goodneſs the Heart and Spirit in them, that animates all.

2. As Goodneſs renders him fit to govern the World, *ſo God doth actually govern the World.* Can we underſtand this Perfection aright, and yet imagine, that he is of ſo moroſe a Diſpoſition, as to neglect the Care of his Creatures? That his Excellency, which was diſplay'd in framing the World, ſhould withdraw and wrap up it ſelf in his own Boſom, without looking out, and darting it ſelf out in the diſpoſal of them? Can that which moved him firſt to erect a World, ſuffer him to be unmindful of his own Work? Would he deſign firſt

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* Petav. *Theolog. Dogmat.* Vol. I. p. 407.

*Hoſea 2. 3

*Hoſ. 13. 9.

* Iſai. 39. 8.

to diſplay it in Creation, and afterwards obſcure the Honour of it? That cannot be entitled an infinite permanent Goodneſs, which ſhould be ſo indifferent, as to let the Creatures tumble together, as they pleaſe, without any order, after he had moulded them in his Hand. If Goodneſs be diffuſive and communicative of it ſelf, can it conſiſt with the Nature of it, to extend it ſelf to the giving the Creatures Being, and then withdraw and contract it ſelf, not caring what becomes of them? 'Tis the Nature of Goodneſs after it hath communicated it ſelf, to enlarge its Channels: That Fountain that ſprings up in a little hollow part of the Earth, doth in a ſhort progreſs increaſe its Streams, and widen the Paſſages through which it runs: It would be a Blemiſh to Divine Goodneſs, if it did deſert what it made, and leave things to wild Confuſions; which would be, if a good Hand did not manage them, and a good Mind preſide over them. This is the Leſſon intended to us by all his Judgments, * *That the Living may know, that the Moſt High rules in the Kingdoms of Men.* If he doth not actually govern the World, he muſt have devolv'd it ſomewhere, either to Men or Angels; not to Men, who naturally want a Goodneſs and Wiſdom to govern themſelves, much more to govern others exactly. And beſides the Miſinterpretations of Actions, they are liable to the want of Patience, to bear with the Provocations of the World. Since ſome of the beſt at one time in the World, and in preſence of the greateſt Example of Meekneſs and Sweetneſs, would have kindled a Fire in Heaven, to have conſumed the *Samaritans*, for no other Affront, than a *Non-Entertainment of their Maſter, and themſelves* *. Nor hath he committed the diſpoſal of things to Angels, either good or bad; tho' he uſeth them as Inſtruments in his Government, yet they are not the principal Pilots to ſteer the World. Bad Angels certainly are not; they would make continual Ravages, meditate Ruine, never deſeat their own Counſels, which they manage by the Wicked, as their Inſtruments in the World, nor fill their Spirits with Diſquiet and Reſtleſneſs, when they are engaged in ſome ruinous Deſign, as often is experienc'd: Nor hath he committed it to the good Angels, who, for ought we know, are not more numerous than the evil ones are: But beſides, we can ſcarcely think their finite Nature capable of ſo much goodneſs, as to bear the innumerable Debaucheries, Villanies, Blaſphemies, vented in one Year, one Week, one Day, one Hour, throughout the World; their Zeal for their Creator might well be ſuppos'd to move them, to teſtifie their Affection to him in a conſtant and ſpeedy Righting of his injured Honour, upon the Heads of the Offenders. The evil Angels have too much Cruelty, and would have no care of Juſtice, but take pleaſure in the Blood of the moſt Innocent, as well as the moſt Criminal. And the good Angels have too much Tenderneſs, to ſuffer ſo many Crimes. Since the World therefore continues without thoſe Floods of Judgments, which it daily merits, ſince notwithſtanding all the Provocations, the Order of it is preſerved; 'tis a Teſtimony, that an Infinite Goodneſs holds the Helm in his Hands, and ſpreads its warm Wings over it.

* Dan. 4.17.

* Luke 9. 54.

5. The Fifth Information is this; Hence we may infer the *ground of all Religion, 'tis the Perfection of Goodneſs.* As the Goodneſs of God is the luſtre of all his Attributes, ſo it is the Foundation and Link of all true Religious Worſhip: The natural Religion of the Heathens was introduc'd by the conſideration of Divine Goodneſs, in the Being he had beſtow'd upon them, and the Proviſions that were made for them. Divine Bounty was the Motive to erect Altars, and preſent Sacrifices; tho' they miſtook the Object of their Worſhip, and offer'd the dues of the Creator to the Inſtruments whereby he convey'd his Benefits to them. And you find, that the Religion inſtituted by him among the *Jews*, was enforc'd upon them by the conſideration of their miraculous deliverance from *Egypt*, the preſervation of them in the Wilderneſs, and the inſeoffing them in a Land flowing with Milk and Honey. Every act of bounty and ſucceſs the *Heathens* receiv'd, mov'd them to appoint new Feaſts, and repeat their adorations of thoſe Deities they thought the Authors and Promoters of their Victories and Welfare. The Devil did not miſtake the common Sentiment of the World in Divine Service, when he alledg'd to God, that *Job did not fear him for nought, i. e.* worſhip him for nothing *. All acts of Devotion take their riſe from God's Liberality, either from what they have, or from what they hope: *Praiſe* ſpeaks the Poſſeſſion, and *Prayer* the expectation of ſome Benefit from his Hand. Tho' ſome of the *Heathens* made *Fear* to be the prime Cauſe of the acknowledgment and worſhip of a Deity, yet ſurely ſomething elſe beſides and beyond this Eſtabliſht ſo great a thing as *Religion* in the World; an ingenuous Religion could never have been born into the World without a Notion of *Goodneſs*; and would have gaſpt its laſt, as ſoon as this Notion ſhould have expir'd in the Minds of Men. What encouragement can fear of Power give, without ſenſe of Goodneſs? juſt as much as Thunder hath, to invite a Man to the place where it is like to fall, and cruſh him. The nature of *Fear* is to drive from, and the nature of *Goodneſs* to allure to the Object. The Divine Thunders, Prodigies, and other Armies of his Juſtice in the World, which are the Marks of his Power, could conclude in nothing but a ſlaviſh Worſhip: Fear alone would have made Men blaſpheme the Deity, inſtead of ſerving him, they would have fretted againſt him; they might have offer'd him a trembling Worſhip, but they could never have in their minds thought him worthy of an Adoration; they would rather have ſecretly complain'd of him, and curſed him in their heart, than inwardly have admir'd him: The iſſue would have been the ſame, which *Job*'s Wife adviſ'd him to, when God withdrew his Protection from his Goods and Body, *Curſe God and die* †. 'Tis certainly the common Sentiment of Men, that he that acts cruelly and tyrannically, is not worthy of an integrity to be retain'd towards him in the Hearts of his Subjects: But *Job* fortifies himſelf againſt this Temptation from his Boſom Friend, by the conſideration of the good he had receiv'd from God, which did more deſerve a Worſhip from him, than the preſent Evil had reaſon to diſcourage it. Alas! what is only fear'd, is hated, not ador'd: Would any ſeek to an irreconcileable Enemy? Would any Perſon affectionately liſt himſelf in the ſervice of a Man void of all good diſpoſition? Would any diſtreſſed perſon put up a Petition to that Prince, who never gave any Experiment of the ſweetneſs of his nature, but always ſatiated himſelf with the Blood of the meaneſt Criminals? All affection to Service is rooted up, when hopes of receiving good are extinguiſht. There could not be a ſpark of that in the World, which is properly call'd Religion without a Notion of Goodneſs: The Exiſtence of God is the firſt Pillar, and the Goodneſs of God in rewarding the next, upon which coming to him (which includes all acts of Devotion) is eſtabliſh'd, ‖ *He that comes unto God, muſt believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him:* If either of thoſe Pillars be not thought to ſtand firm,

* Job 1.9.

† Job 2.9.

‖ Heb. 11.6.

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all Religion falls to the Ground. 'Tis this as the moſt agreeable Motive, that the Apoſtle *James* uſes, to encourage Mens approach to God, becauſe *he gives liberally, and upbraideth not* *. A Man of a kind Heart and bountiful Hand, ſhall have his Gate throng'd with Suppliants, who ſometimes would be willing to lay down their Lives: *For a good Man one would even dare to die*; when one of a niggardly, or tyrannical Temper, ſhall be deſtitute of all free and affectionate Applications. What Eyes would be lifted up to Heaven? What Hands ſtretched out, if there were not a knowledge of Goodneſs there to enliven their Hopes of ſpeeding in their Petitions? Therefore Chriſt orders our Prayers to be directed to God as a *Father*, which is a Title of Tenderneſs, as well as a *Father in Heaven*, a Mark of his Greatneſs; the one to ſupport our Confidence, as well as the other to preſerve our Diſtance. God could not be ingenuouſly ador'd and acknowledged, if he were not liberal as well as powerful: The Goodneſs of God is the Foundation of all ingenuous Religion, Devotion, and Worſhip.

* James 1. 5

6. The ſixth Inſtruction: *The Goodneſs of God renders God amiable.* His Goodneſs renders him beautiful, and his Beauty renders him lovely, both are link'd together: * *How great is his Goodneſs, and how great is his Beauty?* This is the moſt powerful Attractive, and maſters the Affections of the Soul: 'Tis Goodneſs only ſuppoſed, or real, that is thought worthy to demerit our Affections to any thing. If there be not a reality of this, or at leaſt an opinion and eſtimation of it in an Object, it would want a force and vigour to allure our Will. This Perfection of God is the Loadſtone to draw us, and the Center for our Spirits to reſt in.

* Zech. 9. 17.

1. *This renders God amiable to himſelf.* His Goodneſs is his *Godhead*, * by his Godhead is meant his Goodneſs: If he loves his Godhead for it ſelf, he loves his Goodneſs for it ſelf: He would not be good, if he did not love himſelf: And if there were any thing more excellent, and had a greater Goodneſs than himſelf, he would not be good, if he did not love that greater Goodneſs above himſelf: For not only a hatred of Goodneſs is evil, but an indifferent or cold Affection to Goodneſs, hath a Tincture of Evil in it. If God were not good, and yet ſhould love himſelf in the higheſt manner, he would be the greateſt Evil, and do the greateſt Evil in that Act; for he would ſet his Love upon that which is not the proper Object of ſuch an Affection, but the Object of Averſion. His own infinite Excellency and Goodneſs of his Nature, renders him lovely and delightful to himſelf; without this he could not love himſelf in a commendable and worthy way, and becoming the Purity of a Deity; and he cannot but love himſelf for this: For as Creatures by not loving him as the Supream Good, deny him to be the choiceſt Good, ſo God would deny Himſelf, and his own Goodneſs, if he did not love himſelf, and that for his Goodneſs. But the Apoſtle tells us, That *God cannot deny himſelf* *: Self-love, upon this Account, is the only Prerogative of God, becauſe there is not any thing better than himſelf, that can lay any juſt Claim to his Affections: He only ought to love himſelf, and it would be an Injuſtice in him to himſelf, if he did not. He only can love himſelf for this: An Infinite Goodneſs ought to be infinitely loved; but he only being Infinite, can only love himſelf according to the due Merit of his own Goodneſs. He cannot be ſo amiable to any Man, to any Angel, to the higheſt Seraphim, as he is to himſelf; becauſe he is only capable in regard of his Infinite Wiſdom, to know the Infiniteneſs of his own Goodneſs. And no Creature can love him, as he ought to be loved, unleſs it had the ſame Infinite Capacity of Underſtanding to know him, and of Affection to embrace him. This firſt renders God amiable to himſelf.

* Rom. 1. 20.

* 2 Tim. 2. 13.

2. *It ought therefore to render him amiable to us.* What renders him lovely to his own Eye, ought to render him ſo to ours; and ſince by the ſhortneſs of our Underſtandings we cannot love him, as he merits, yet we ſhould be induc'd by the Meaſures of his Bounty, to love him, as we can. If this do not preſent him lovely to us, we own him rather a Devil than a God: If his Goodneſs moved him to frame Creatures, his Goodneſs moved him alſo to frame Creatures for himſelf, and his own Glory. 'Tis a mighty wrong to him, not to look with a delightful Eye upon the Marks of it, and return an Affection to God in ſome meaſure ſutable to his Liberality to us; we are deſcended as low as Brutes, if we underſtand him not to be the Perfect Good; and we are deſcended as low as Devils, if our Affections are not attracted by it.

1. *If God were not Infinitely Good, he could not be the Object of Supream Love.* If he were Finitely Good, there might be other things as good as God, and then God in Juſtice could not challenge our choiceſt Affections to him, above any thing elſe: It would be a defect of Goodneſs in him to demand it; becauſe he would deſpoil that, which were equally good with him, of its due and right to our Affections, which it might claim from us upon the account of its goodneſs: God would be unjuſt to challenge more than was due to him; for he would claim that chiefly to himſelf, which another had a lawful ſhare in. Nothing can be ſupreamly loved, that hath not a triumphant excellency above all other things: Where there is an equality of goodneſs, neither can juſtly challenge a Supremacy, but only an equality of Affection.

2. *This Attribute of Goodneſs renders him more lovely than any other Attribute.* He never requires our Adoration of him ſo much, as the ſtrongeſt or wiſeſt, but as the beſt of Beings: He uſes this chiefly, to conſtrain and allure us. Why would he be fear'd or worſhipp'd, but becauſe *there is forgiveneſs with him* *? 'Tis for his Goodneſs ſake, that he is ſued to by his People in diſtreſs, † *For thy goodneſs ſake, O Lord.* Men may be admir'd becauſe of their Knowledge, but they are affected becauſe of their Goodneſs: The Will, in all the variety of Objects it purſues, centers in this one thing of Good, as the Term of its Appetite. All things are belov'd by Men, becauſe they have been better'd by them, or becauſe they expect to be the better for them. Severity can never conquer Enmity, and kindle Love: Were there nothing but Wrath in the Deity, it would make him be fear'd, but render him odious, and that to an innocent Nature. As the *Spouſe* ſpeaks of Chriſt, * ſo we may of God: Tho' ſhe commends him for his *Head*, the excellency of his Wiſdom; his *Eyes*, the extent of his Omniſcience; his *Hands*, the greatneſs of his Power; and his *Legs*, the ſwiftneſs of his Motions, and ways to and for his People; yet the *ſweetneſs of his Mouth*, in his gracious Words and Promiſes cloſes all, and is follow'd with nothing but an Exclamation, that *he is altogether lovely*, *Verſe* 16. His Mouth in pronouncing Pardon of Sin, and Juſtification of the Perſon, preſents him moſt lovely. His Power to do good is admirable, but his Will to do good is amiable: This puts a Gloſs upon all his other Attributes. Tho' he had Knowledge to underſtand the Depth of our Neceſſities, and Power to prevent them, or reſcue us from them, yet his Knowledge would be fruitleſs,

* Pſ. 130. 4. † Pſ. 25. 7.

* Cant. 5. 10, 11.

and

and his Power uſeleſs, if he were of a rigid Nature, and not touched with any Sentiments of kindneſs.

3. *This Goodneſs therefore lays a ſtrong Obligation upon us.* 'Tis true he is lovely in regard of his abſolute Goodneſs, or the Goodneſs of his Nature; but we ſhould hardly be perſwaded to return him an Affection, without his relative Goodneſs, his Benefits to his Creatures; we are oblig'd by both to love him.

1. *By his abſolute Goodneſs, or the Goodneſs of his Nature.* Suppoſe a Creature had drawn its Original from ſomething elſe, wherein God had no Influx; and had never received the leaſt Mite of a Benefit from him, but from ſome other Hand; yet the infinite Excellency and Goodneſs of his Nature, would merit the Love of that Creature; and it would act ſordidly and diſingenuouſly, if it did not diſcover a mighty Reſpect for God: For what Ingenuity could there be in a rational Creature, that were poſſeſſed with no Eſteem for a Nature fill'd with unbounded Goodneſs and Excellency, tho' he had never been oblig'd to him for any Favour? That Man is accounted odious, and juſtly deſpicable by Man, that reproaches and diſ-eſteems; nay, that doth not value a Perſon of a high Vertue in himſelf, and an univerſal Goodneſs and Charity to others, tho' himſelf never ſtood in need of his Charity, and never had any Benefit conveyed from his Hands, nor ever ſaw his Face, or had any Commerce with him: A value of ſuch a Perſon is but a juſt due to the natural Claim of Vertue. And indeed, the firſt Object of Love is God, in the Excellency of his own Nature, as the firſt Object of Love in Marriage, is the *Perſon*; the Portion is a thing conſequent upon it. To love God only for his Benefits, is to love our ſelves firſt, and him ſecondarily: To love God for his own Goodneſs and Excellency, is a true love of God; a love of him for himſelf. That flaming Fire in his own Breaſt, tho' we have not a Spark of it, hath a right to kindle one in ours to him.

2. *By his relative Goodneſs, or that of his Benefits.* Tho' the Excellency of his own Nature, wherein there is a Combination of Goodneſs, muſt needs raviſh an apprehenſive Mind; yet a reflection upon his imparted Kindneſs, both in the Beings we have from him, and the Support we have by him, muſt enhance this Eſtimation. When the Excellency of his Nature, and the Expreſſions of his Bounty are in Conjunction, the Excellency of his own Nature, renders him eſtimable in a way of Juſtice, and the Greatneſs of his Benefits renders him valuable in a way of Gratitude: The firſt raviſheth, and the other allures and melts: He hath enough in his Nature to attract, and ſufficient in his Bounty to engage your Affections. The Excellency of his Nature is ſtrong enough of it ſelf, to blow up our Affections to him, were there not a Malignity in our Hearts, that repreſents him under the Notion of an Enemy; therefore in regard of our corrupt State, the Conſideration of Divine Largeſſes, comes in for a ſhare in the Elevation of our Affections: For, indeed, 'tis a very hard thing, for a Man to love another, tho' never ſo well qualified, and of an eminent Vertue, while he believes him to be his Enemy, and one that will ſeverely handle him; tho' he hath before received many good Turns from him: The Vertue, Valour, and Courteſie of a Prince, will hardly make him affected by thoſe againſt whom he is in Arms, and that are daily pilfer'd by his Soldiers, unleſs they have hopes of a Reparation from him, and future Security from Injuries. Chriſt in the Repetition of the Command, to *love God with all our Mind, with all our Heart, and with all our Soul, i. e.* with ſuch an ardency, above all things which glitter in our Eye, or can be created by him, conſiders him as *our God* *. And the *Pſalmiſt* conſiders him as one, that had kindly employ'd his Power for him, in the eruption of his Love, *Pſal.* 18. 1. *I will love thee, Oh Lord, my ſtrength.* And ſo in *Pſal.* 116. 1. *I love the Lord, becauſe he hath heard the Voice of my Supplications.* An eſteem of the Benefactor, is inſeparable from Gratitude for the received Benefits: And ſhould not then the unparallel'd Kindneſs of God, advance him in our Thoughts, much more than ſlighter Courteſies do a created Benefactor in ours? 'Tis an Obligation on every Man's Nature, to anſwer Bounty with Gratitude, and Goodneſs with Love. Hence you never knew any Man, nor can the Records of Eternity produce any Man or Devil, that ever hated any Perſon, or any thing as good in it ſelf: 'Tis a thing abſolutely repugnant to the Nature of any rational Creature. The Devils hate not God, becauſe he is good; but becauſe he is not ſo good to them as they would have him; becauſe he will not unlock their Chains, turn them into Liberty, and reſtore them to Happineſs, *i. e.* becauſe he will not deſert the Rights of abus'd Goodneſs. But how ſhould we ſend up Flames of Love to that God, ſince we are under his direct Beams, and enjoy ſuch plentiful Influences! If the Sun is comely in it ſelf, yet 'tis more amiable to us, by the Light we ſee, and the Warmth we feel.

* Matth. 22. 37.

1. *The greatneſs of his Benefits have reaſon to affect us with a Love to him.* The Impreſs he made upon our Souls, when he extracted us from the Darkneſs of Nothing: The Comelineſs he hath put upon us, by his own Breath: The Care he took of our Recovery, when we had loſt our ſelves: The Expence he was at, for our Regaining our defac'd Beauty: The Gift he made of his Son: The affectionate Calls we have heard to over-maſter our corrupt Appetites, move us to Repentance, and make us diſaffect our beloved Miſery: The loud Sound of his Word in our Ears, and the more inward Knockings of his Spirit in our Heart: The offering us the Gift of himſelf, and the everlaſting Happineſs he courts us to; beſides thoſe common Favours we enjoy in the World, which are all the Streams of his rich Bounty. The Voice of all is loud enough to ſollicite our Love, and the Merit of all ought to be ſtrong enough to engage our Love: *There is none like the God of Jeſurun, who rides upon the Heaven in thy help, and in his Excellency on the Sky* *.

* Deut. 33. 26.

2. *The Unmeritedneſs of them doth inhance this.* 'Tis but reaſon to love him, who hath loved us firſt *: Hath he placed his delight upon any, when they were nothing, and after they were ſinful; and ſhall he ſet his delight upon ſuch vile Perſons, and ſhall not we ſet our Love upon ſo excellent an Object as himſelf? How baſe are we, if his Goodneſs doth not conſtrain us to affect him, who hath been ſo free in his Favour to us, who have merited the quite contrary at his Hands? *If his tender Mercies are over all his Works* *, he ought for it to be eſteem'd by all his Works, that are capable of a rational Eſtimation.

* 1 Joh. 4. 19.

* Pſal. 145. 9.

3. *Goodneſs in Creatures makes them eſtimable, much more ſhould the Goodneſs of God render him lovely to us.* If we love a little ſpark of Goodneſs in this or that Creature, if a drop be ſo delicious to us, ſhall not the immenſe Sun of Goodneſs, the ever-flowing Fountain of all, be much more delightful? The Original Excellency always outſtrips what is deriv'd from it: If ſo mean and contracted an Object as a little Creature deſerves Eſtimation for

a little Mite communicated to it, ſo great and extended a Goodneſs as is in the Creator, much more merits it at our hands: He is good after the infinite methods of a Deity; A weak reſemblance is lovely, much more amiable than muſt be the incomprehenſible Original of that Beauty. We love Creatures for what we think to be good in them, tho' it may be hurtful; And ſhall we not love God, who is a real and unblemiſht Goodneſs, and from whoſe Hand are pour'd out all thoſe Bleſſings that are convey'd to us by ſecond Cauſes. The Object that delights us, the Capacity we have to delight in it, are both from him; our love therefore to him ſhould tranſcend the Affection we bear to any Inſtruments he moves for our welfare. *Among the Gods there is none like thee, O Lord, neither are there any Works like unto thy Works* *. Among the pleaſanteſt Creatures, there is none like the Creator, nor any Goodneſs like unto his Goodneſs. Shall we love the Food that nouriſheth us, and the Medicine that cures us, and the Silver whereby we furniſh our ſelves with uſeful Commodities? Shall we love a Horſe or Dog, for the benefits we have by them? And ſhall not the Spring of all thoſe draw our Souls after it, and make us aſpire to the honour of loving and embracing him, who hath ſtor'd every Creature with that which may pleaſure us? But inſtead of endeavouring to parallel our Affection with his Kindneſs, we endeavour to make our Diſingenuity as extenſive and towring as his Divine Goodneſs.

* Pſal. 86. 1

4. *This is the true end of the manifeſtation of his Goodneſs, that he might appear amiable, and have a Return of Affection.* Did God diſplay his Goodneſs only to be thought of, or to be loved? 'Tis the want of ſuch a return, that he hath uſually aggravated from the Benefits he hath beſtow'd upon Men. Every thought of him ſhould be attended with a motion ſuitable to the Excellency of his Nature and Works. Can we think thoſe nobler Spirits the Angels look upon themſelves, or thoſe Frames of things in the Heavens and Earth, without ſtarting ſome practical Affection to him for them? Their knowledge of his Excellency and Works, cannot be a lazy Contemplation: 'Tis impoſſible their Wills and Affections ſhould be a thouſand Miles diſtant from their Underſtandings in their Operations. 'Tis not the leaſt part of his condeſcending Goodneſs, to court in ſuch Methods the Affections of us Worms, and manifeſt his deſire to be beloved by us. Let us give him then that Affection he deſerves, as well as demands, and which cannot be with-held from him without horrible Sacrilege. There is nothing worthy of Love beſides him; let no Fire be kindled in our Hearts, but what may aſcend directly to him.

7. The ſeventh Inſtruction is this, *This renders God a fit Object of Truſt and Confidence.* Since none is good but God, none can be a full and ſatisfactory Ground or Object of confidence but God: As all things derive their Beings, ſo they derive their helpfulneſs to us from God; they are not therefore the principal Objects of Truſt, but that Goodneſs alone that renders them fit Inſtruments of our ſupport: They can no more challenge from us a ſtable Confidence, than they can a ſupream Affection. 'Tis by this the *Pſalmiſt* allures Men to a truſt in him; * *Taſte, and ſee how good the Lord is*; What is the conſequence? *Bleſſed is the Man that truſts in thee.* The Voice of Divine Goodneſs ſounds nothing more intelligibly, and a taſte of it produceth nothing more effectually than this. As the Vials of his Juſtice are to make us fear him, ſo the Streams of his Goodneſs are to make us rely on him. As his Patience is deſign'd to broach our Repentance, ſo his Goodneſs is moſt proper to ſtrengthen our aſſurance in him: That Goodneſs which ſurmounted ſo many difficulties, and conquer'd ſo many motions that might be made againſt any repeated Exerciſe of it, after it had been abus'd by the firſt Rebellion of Man: That Goodneſs that after ſo much contempt of it, appear'd in ſuch a Majeſtick tenderneſs, and threw aſide thoſe Impediments which Men had caſt in the way of Divine Inclinations: This Goodneſs is the foundation of all reliance upon God. Who is better than God? And therefore, who more to be truſted than God? As his Power cannot act any thing weakly, ſo his Goodneſs cannot act any thing unbecomingly, and unworthy of his Infinite Majeſty. And here conſider,

* Pſal. 34. 8

1. *Goodneſs is the firſt Motive of Truſt.* Nothing but this could be the encouragement to Man, had he ſtood in a ſtate of Innocence, to preſent himſelf before God; the Majeſty of God would have conſtrain'd him to keep his due diſtance, but the Goodneſs of God could only hearten his Confidence; 'tis nothing elſe now, that can preſerve the ſame temper in us in our lapſed condition. To regard him only as the Judge of our Crimes, will drive us from him; but only the regard of him as the Donor of our Bleſſings, will allure us to him. The principal Foundation of Faith is not the Word of God, but God himſelf, and God as conſider'd in this Perfection. As the Goodneſs of God in his Invitations, and Providential Bleſſings, *leads us to Repentance* *; ſo by the ſame reaſon the Goodneſs of God by his Promiſes, leads us to Reliance. If God be not firſt believed to be Good, he would not be believed at all, in any thing that he ſpeaks or ſwears: If you were not ſatisfied in the Goodneſs of a Man, tho' he ſhould ſwear a thouſand times, you would value neither his Word nor Oath, as any ſecurity. Many times where we are certain of the goodneſs of a Man, we are willing to truſt him without his Promiſe. This Divine Perfection gives Credit to the Divine Promiſes; they of themſelves would not be a ſufficient ground of Truſt, without an apprehenſion of his Truth; nor would his Truth be very comfortable, without a belief of his good Will, whereby we are aſſur'd, that what he promiſes to give, he gives liberally, free, and without regret. The *Truth* of the Promiſer makes the Promiſe credible, but the *Goodneſs* of the Promiſer makes it chearfully relied on. In *Pſal.* 73. *Aſaph*'s Penitential Pſalm for his diſtruſt of God, he begins the *Firſt Verſe* with an Aſſertion of this Attribute, *v.* 1. *Truly God is good to Iſrael*, and ends with this fruit of it, *Verſe* 28, *I will put my Truſt in the Lord God.* 'Tis a mighty ill Nature, that receives not with aſſurance the Dictates of Infinite Goodneſs, (that cannot deceive or fruſtrate the hopes we conceive of him) that is unconceivably more abundant in the breaſt and Inclinations of the Promiſer, than expreſſible in the words of his Promiſe: *All true Faith works by Love* †, and therefore neceſſarily includes a particular eying of this Excellency in the Divine Nature, which renders him amiable, and is the Motive and Encouragement of a love to him. His *Power* indeed is a foundation of *Truſt*, but his *Goodneſs* is the principal *Motive* of it. His Power without good Will would be dangerous, and could not allure Affection; and his good Will without Power would be uſeleſs; and tho' it might merit a love, yet could not create a Confidence; both in conjunction are ſtrong grounds of hope; eſpecially ſince his Goodneſs is of the ſame infinity with his Wiſdom and Power; and that he can be no more wanting in the effuſions of this upon them that ſeek him, than in his Wiſdom to contrive, or his Power to effect his Deſigns and Works.

* Rom. 2. 4.

† Gal. 5. 6.

2. *This*

2. *This Goodneſs is more the foundation and motive of truſt under the Goſpel, than under the Law.* They under the Law had more evidences of Divine Power, and their truſt ey'd that much; tho' there was an eminency of goodneſs in the frequent deliverances they had, yet the Power of God had a more glorious dreſs than his Goodneſs, becauſe of the extraordinary and miraculous ways whereby he brought thoſe deliverances about. Therefore in the Catalogue of Believers in *Heb.* 11. you ſhall find the Power of God to be the Center of their Reſt and Truſt; and their Faith was built upon the extraordinary Marks of Divine Power, which were frequently viſible to them. But *under the Goſpel*, goodneſs and love was intended by God to be the chief Object of truſt; ſuitable to the Excellency of that Diſpenſation, he would have an Exerciſe of more ingenuity in the Creatures: Therefore 'tis ſaid, *Hoſ.* 3. 5. a promiſe of Goſpel-times, *They ſhall fear God and his Goodneſs in the latter days*, when they ſhall return to *ſeek the Lord, and* David *their King*. 'Tis not ſaid, they ſhall fear God and his Power, but the Lord and his Goodneſs, or the Lord for his Goodneſs: Fear is often in the Old Teſtament taken for Faith, or Truſt. This Divine Goodneſs, the Object of Faith, is that Goodneſs diſcover'd in *David their King*, the *Meſſiah*, our *Jeſus*. God in this Diſpenſation recommends his Goodneſs and Love, and reveals it more clearly than other Attributes, that the Soul might have more prevailing and ſweeter Attractives to confide in him.

3. *A confidence in him gives him the Glory of his Goodneſs.* Moſt Nations that had nothing but the light of Nature, thought it a great part of the Honour that was due to God, to implore his Goodneſs, and caſt their Cares upon it. To do good, is the moſt honourable thing in the World, and to acknowledge a goodneſs in a way of confidence, is as high an honour as we can give to it, and a great part of gratitude for what it hath already expreſt: Therefore we find often, that an acknowledgment of one Benefit receiv'd was attended with a Truſt in him, for what they ſhould in the future need; * *Thou haſt delivered my Soul from Death, wilt thou not deliver my Feet from falling?* So 2 *Cor.* 1.10. And they who have been moſt eminent for their truſt in him, have had the greateſt Elogies and Commendations from him. As a diffidence doth diſparage this Perfection, thinking it meaner and ſhallower than it is, ſo Confidence highly honours it. We never pleaſe him more, than when we truſt in him, † *The Lord takes pleaſure in them that fear him, in them that hope in his Mercy.* He takes it for an Honour, to have this Attribute exalted by ſuch a Carriage of his Creature. He is no leſs offended, when we think his Heart ſtraitned, as if he were a Parcimonious God, than when we think his Arm ſhortned, as if he were an impotent and feeble God.

* Pſal. 56. 13.

† Pſal. 147. 11.

Let us therefore make this *uſe of his Goodneſs*, to hearten our *Faith*. When we are ſcar'd by the terrors of his Juſtice, when we are dazled by the arts of his Wiſdom, and confounded by the ſplendor of his Majeſty, we may take refuge in the Sanctuary of his Goodneſs; this will encourage us, as well as aſtoniſh us: Whereas the conſideration of his other Attributes would only amaze us, but can never refreſh us, but when they are conſider'd, marching under the Conduct and Banners of this. When all the other Perfections of the Divine Nature are lookt upon in conjunction with this Excellency, each of them ſend forth raviſhing and benign Influences upon the applying Creature. 'Tis more advantageous to depend upon Divine Bounty, than our own Cares; We may have better aſſurance upon this account in his Cares for us, than in ours for our ſelves. Our Goodneſs for our ſelves is Finite, and beſides, we are too ignorant: His Goodneſs is Infinite, and attended with an infinite Wiſdom; we have reaſon to diſtruſt our ſelves, not God. We have reaſon to be at reſt, under that kind influence we have ſo often experimented; He hath ſo much goodneſs, that he can have no deceit: His goodneſs in making the Promiſe, and his goodneſs in working the Heart to a reliance on it, are grounds of truſt in him: * *Remember thy word to thy Servant, upon which thou haſt cauſed me to hope.* If his Promiſe did not pleaſe him, why did he make it? If Reliance on the Promiſe doth not pleaſe him, why did his Goodneſs work it? It would be inconſiſtent with his Goodneſs, to mock his Creature, and it would be the higheſt Mockery to publiſh his Word, and create a temper in the Heart of his Supplicant, ſuited to his Promiſe, which he never intended to ſatisfie. He can as little wrong his Creature as wrong himſelf, and therefore can never diſappoint that Faith which in his own methods caſts its ſelf into the arms of his Kindneſs, and is his own Workmanſhip, and calls him Author. That Goodneſs that imparted it ſelf ſo freely in Creation, will not neglect thoſe nobler Creatures that put their truſt in him. This renders God a fit Object for Truſt and Confidence.

* Pſal. 119. 49.

8. The eighth Inſtruction; *This renders God worthy to be obey'd and honour'd.* There is an Excellency in God, to allure, as well as Sovereignty to enjoyn Obedience: The infinite Excellency of his Nature is ſo great, that if his Goodneſs had promiſed us nothing to encourage our Obedience, we ought to prefer him before our ſelves, devote our ſelves to ſerve him, and make his glory our greateſt content; but much more when he hath given ſuch admirable Expreſſions of his Liberality, and ſtor'd us with hopes of richer and fuller Streams of it. When *David* conſider'd the Abſolute Goodneſs of his Nature, and the Relative Goodneſs of his Benefits, he preſently expreſſeth an ardent deſire to be acquainted with the Divine Statutes, that he might make ingenuous returns in a dutiful obſervance; * *Thou art good, and thou doſt good, teach me thy Statutes.* As his Goodneſs is the Original, ſo the acknowledgment of it is the end of all, which cannot be without an obſervance of his Will. His Goodneſs requires of us an ingenuous, not a ſervile Obedience.

* Pſal. 119. 68.

And this is Eſtabliſht upon two Foundations.

1. Becauſe *the Bounty of God hath laid upon us the ſtrongeſt Obligations.* The ſtrength of an Obligation depends upon the greatneſs and numerouſneſs of the Benefits receiv'd. The more excellent the Favours are which are conferr'd upon any Perſon, the more right hath the Benefactor to claim an obſervance from the Perſon better'd by him. Much of the Rule and Empire which hath been in ſeveral Ages conferr'd by Communities upon Princes, hath had its firſt ſpring from a ſenſe of the advantages they have receiv'd by them, either in protecting them from their Enemies, or reſcuing them from an ignoble Captivity; in enlarging their Territories, or encreaſing their Wealth. Conqueſt hath been the Original of a conſtrain'd, but Beneficence always the Original of a voluntary and free Subjection *. Obedience to Parents is founded upon their right, becauſe they are inſtrumental in beſtowing upon us Being and Life; and becauſe this of Life is ſo great a benefit, the Law of Nature never diſſolves this Obligation of Obeying and Honouring Parents: 'Tis as long-liv'd as the Law of Nature, and hath an univerſal practice, by the ſtrength of that Law in all parts of the World: And thoſe rightful Chains are not unlockt, but by that which

* Amyrald. *Diſſert.* p. 65.

unties the knot between Soul and Body. Much more hath God a Right to be obey'd and reverenc'd, who is the principal Benefactor, and mov'd all thoſe ſecond Cauſes, to impart to us what conduc'd to our advantage. The juſt Authority of God over us, reſults from the ſuperlativeneſs of his Bleſſings he hath pour'd down upon us, which cannot be equal'd much leſs exceeded by any other. As therefore upon this account he hath a claim to our choiceſt Affections, ſo he hath alſo to our moſt exact Obedience; and neither one, nor other, can be denied him, without a ſordid and diſingenuous ingratitude. God therefore aggravates the Rebellion of the *Jews*, from the cares he had in the *bringing them up* †, and the *miraculous deliverance from* Egypt ‖, implying, that thoſe Benefits were ſtrong Obligations to an ingenuous obſervance of him.

† Iſa. 2. 2.
‖ Jer. 11. 7, 8.

2. It is Eſtabliſht upon this, *That God can enjoyn the obſervance of nothing but what is good.* He may by the Right of his Sovereign Dominion, command that which is indifferent in its own Nature, as in poſitive Laws, The not eating the Fruit of the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which had not been evil in it ſelf, ſet aſide the Command of God to the contrary; and likewiſe in thoſe Ceremonial Laws he gave the *Jews*: But in regard of the tranſcendent Goodneſs and Righteouſneſs of his Nature, he will not, he cannot command any thing that is evil in it ſelf, or repugnant to the true intereſt of his Creature; And God never oblig'd the Creature to any thing, but what was ſo free from damaging it, that it highly conduced to its good and welfare, and therefore it is ſaid, * That *his Commands are not grievous*: Not grievous in their own Nature, nor grievous to one poſſeſt with a true Reaſon. The Command given to *Adam* in *Paradiſe* was not grievous in it ſelf, nor could he ever have thought it ſo, but upon a falſe ſuppoſition inſtill'd into him by the *Tempter*. There is a pleaſure reſults from the Law of God to a holy Rational Nature, a ſweetneſs taſted both by the Underſtanding and by the Will, for they both *rejoice the Heart, and enlighten the Eyes* of the Mind †. God being eſſentially Wiſdom and Goodneſs, cannot deviate from that Goodneſs in any Orders he gives the Creature; whatſoever he enacts, muſt be agreeable to that Rule, and therefore he can will nothing but what is good and excellent, and what is good for the Creature; for ſince he hath put originally into Man a Natural Inſtinct, to deſire that which is good, he would never enact any thing for the Creature's obſervance, that might controul that deſire imprinted by himſelf, but what might countenance that impreſſion of his own hand; for if God did otherwiſe, he would contradict his own Natural Law, and be a Deluder of his Creatures, if he impreſt upon them Deſires one way, and order'd Directions another. The truth is, all his Moral Precepts are comely in themſelves, and they receive not their goodneſs from God's poſitive Command, but that Command ſuppoſeth their Goodneſs: If every thing were good becauſe God loves it, or becauſe God wills it, *i. e.* That God's loving it, or willing it, made that good which was not good before, then as *Camero* well argues ſomewhere, God's *Goodneſs* would depend upon his loving himſelf; He was *good* becauſe he loved himſelf, and was not good till he loved himſelf; whereas indeed God's loving himſelf doth not make him good, but ſuppoſeth him good: He was *good* in the order of Nature before he loved himſelf, and his being *good* was the ground of his loving himſelf, becauſe, as was ſaid before, if there were any thing better than God, God would love that: For it is inconſiſtent with the Nature of God and Infinite Goodneſs, not to love that which is *good*, and not to love that ſupreamly, which is the *Supream Good*. Further to underſtand it, you may conſider, if the *Queſtion* be askt, Why God loves himſelf? You would think it a reaſonable Anſwer to ſay, Becauſe he is *good*. But if the *Queſtion* be askt, Why God is *good*? You would think that Anſwer, becauſe he loves himſelf, would be deſtitute of Reaſon; but the true Anſwer would be, Becauſe his Nature is ſo, and he could not be *God*, if he were not *good*: Therefore *God's goodneſs* is in order of our conception before his ſelf-love, and not his ſelf-love before his *goodneſs*: So the moral things God commands are *good* in themſelves, before God commands them; and ſuch, that if God ſhould command the contrary, it would openly ſpeak him *evil* and *unrighteous*. Abſtract from *Scripture*, and weigh things in your own Reaſon; Could you conceive God *good*, if he ſhould command a Creature not to love him? Could you preſerve the notion of a *good Nature* in him, if he did command Murder, Adultery, Tyranny, and cutting of Throats? You would wonder, to what purpoſe he made the World, and fram'd it for Society, if ſuch things were order'd, that ſhould deface all Comelineſs of Society: The Moral Commands given in the Word, appear'd of themſelves very beautiful to meer Reaſon, that had no knowledge of the written Law; they are *good*, and becauſe they are ſo, his Goodneſs had moved his Sovereign Authority ſtrictly to enjoyn them. Now this *Goodneſs*, whereby he cannot oblige a Creature to any thing that is evil, ſpeaks him highly worthy of our Obſervance, and our Diſobedience to his Law, to be full of unconceivable Malignity: That is the laſt thing.

*1 Joh. 5. 3.

† Pſ. 19. 8.

As a Heathen Maximus Tyrius, *Diſſert.* 22. *p.* 220. Ἀλλ' ὁ Δίμας οὐ βούλεται, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἡδὺ προαιρεῖται.

2. Uſe is a Uſe of *Comfort*. He is a *Good* without mixture, *Good* without wearineſs, *none good but God*, none *good* purely, none *good* inexhauſtibly but God; becauſe he is *good*, we may upon our ſpeaking expect his inſtruction; * *Good is the Lord, therefore will he teach Sinners in his way*. His *Goodneſs* makes him ſtoop to be the Tutor to thoſe Worms that lie proſtrate before him; and tho' they are Sinners full of filth, he drives them not from his School, nor denies them his Medicines, if they apply themſelves to him as a Phyſician. He is *good* in removing the Puniſhment due to our Crimes, and *good* in beſtowing Benefits not due to our Merits; becauſe he is *good*, Penitent Believers may expect forgiveneſs, † *Thou Lord art good, and ready to forgive*. He acts not according to the rigor of the Law, but willingly grants his Pardon to thoſe that fly into the Arms of the Mediator: His *Goodneſs* makes him more ready to forgive, than our neceſſities make us deſirous to enjoy: He charged not upon *Job* his impatient Expreſſions in curſing the day of his Birth, his *Goodneſs* paſſed that over in ſilence, and extols him for ſpeaking the thing that is right, right in the main, (‖ when he charges his Friends, *for not ſpeaking of him the thing that is right, as his Servant* Job *had done*.) He is ſo *good*, that if we offer the leaſt thing ſincerely, he will graciouſly receive it; If we have not a *Lamb* to offer, a *Pigeon* or *Turtle* ſhall be accepted upon his Altar: He ſtands not upon coſtly Preſents, but ſincerely tender'd Services. All Conditions are ſweeten'd by it; whatſoever any in the World enjoy, is from a redundancy of this *goodneſs*; but whatſoever a *good* Man enjoys, is from a propriety in this *Goodneſs*.

* Pſal. 25. 8

† Pſal. 86. 5

‖ Job 42. 7.

1. Here is Comfort *in our Addreſſes to him*. If he be a Fountain and Sea of *Goodneſs*, he cannot be weary of doing *good*, no more than a Fountain or Sea are of flowing. All *Goodneſs* delights to communicate it ſelf: Infinite goodneſs hath then an infinite delight, in expreſſing it ſelf; 'tis a part of his *goodneſs* not to be weary of ſhewing it; He can never

then

then be weary of being ſollicited, for the effuſions of it; If he rejoyces over his People to do them *good*, he will rejoyce in any opportunities offer'd to him to honour his *Goodneſs*, and gladly meet with a fit Object for it: He therefore delights in Prayer; Never can we ſo delight in addreſſing, as he doth in imparting: He delights more in our Prayers than we can our ſelves: *Goodneſs* is not pleaſed with ſhyneſs. To what purpoſe did his immenſe Bounty beſtow his Son upon us, but that we ſhould be *accepted* both in our Perſons and Petitions? * *His Eyes are upon the Righteous, and his Ears are open to their Cry*; He fixes the Eye of his *Goodneſs* upon them, and opens the Ears of his *Goodneſs* for them; He is pleaſed to behold them, and pleaſed to liſten to them, as if he had no pleaſure in any thing elſe: He loves to be ſought to, to give a vent to his Bounty; † *Acquaint thy ſelf with God, and thereby good ſhall come unto thee.* The word ſignifies *to accuſtom* our ſelves to God; The more we accuſtom our ſelves in ſpeaking, the more he will accuſtom himſelf in giving: He loves not to keep his *Goodneſs* cloſe under Lock and Key, as Men do their Treaſures. If *we knock, he opens* his Exchequer; His *Goodneſs* is as flexible to our importunities, as his Power is invincible by the Arm of a ſilly Worm: He thinks his Liberality honour'd, by being apply'd to, and your Addreſs to be a Recompence for his Expence. There is no reaſon to fear, ſince he hath ſo kindly invited us, but he will as heartily welcome us: The Nature of *Goodneſs* is to compaſſionate, and communicate, to pity and relieve, and that with a heartineſs and chearfulneſs: Man is weary of being often ſollicited, becauſe he hath a finite, not a bottomleſs *Goodneſs*: He gives ſometimes to be rid of his Suppliant, not to encourage him to a ſecond approach. But every Experience God gives us of his Bounty, is a Motive to ſollicit him afreſh, and a kind of Obligation he hath laid upon himſelf, to *renew it* ‖: 'Tis one part of his Goodneſs, that it is boundleſs and bottomleſs; we need not fear the waſting of it, nor any wearineſs in him to beſtow it. The Stock cannot be ſpent, and infinite Kindneſs can never become niggardly; When we have enjoy'd it, there is ſtill an infinite Ocean in him to refreſh us, and as full Streams as ever to ſupply us. What an encouragement have we to draw near to God? We run in our ſtraights, to thoſe that we think have moſt good Will, as well as Power to relieve and protect us. The oftner we come to him, and the nearer we approach to him, the more of his influences we ſhall feel: As the nearer the Sun, the more of its heat inſinuates it ſelf into us. The Greatneſs of God joyned with his *Goodneſs*, hath more reaſon to encourage our approach to him, than our flight from him, becauſe his Greatneſs never goes unattended with his Goodneſs; and if he were not ſo *good*, he would not be ſo great in the apprehenſions of any Creature. How may his *Goodneſs* in the great Gift of his Son encourage us to apply to him, ſince he hath ſet him as a Days-man between himſelf and us, and appointed him an Advocate, to preſent our Requeſts for us, and ſpeed them at the Throne of Grace, and he never leaves, till *Divine Goodneſs* ſubſcribes a *Fiat* to our believing and juſt Petitions?

* Eph. 1. 6. Pſ. 34. 15. † Job 22. 21. Mat. 7. 7. ‖ 1 Sam. 17. 37.

2. Here is *Comfort in Afflictions*. What can we fear from the conduct of *Infinite Goodneſs*? Can his Hand be heavy upon thoſe that are humble before him? They are the hands of infinite Power indeed, but there is not any motion of it upon his People, but is order'd by a *Goodneſs* as infinite as his *Power*; which will not ſuffer any Affliction to be *too ſharp*, or *too long*. By what ways ſoever he conveys Grace to us here, and prepares us for Glory hereafter, they are *good*, and thoſe are the *good* things he hath chiefly oblig'd himſelf to give: * *Grace and Glory* will he *give, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.* This *David* comforted himſelf with, in that which his devout Soul accounted the greateſt Calamity, his *abſence from the Courts and Houſe of God.* Not an ill Will, but a good Will directs his Scourges; He is not an idle Spectator of our Combats; His Thoughts are fuller of Kindneſs, than ours in any caſe can be of Trouble: And becauſe he is *Good*, he Wills the beſt *Good* in every thing he acts; in exerciſing Vertue, or correcting Vice: There is no Affliction without ſome apparent mixtures of *Goodneſs*; when he ſpeaks, how he had ſmitten *Iſrael* †, he preſently adds, ‖ *Have I been a Wilderneſs to Iſrael, a land of darkneſs?* Tho' he led them through a Deſart, yet he was not a Deſart to them; He was no Land of darkneſs to them; while they march'd thro' a Land of barrenneſs, he was a Caterer to provide them *Manna*, and a place of *broad Rivers* and *Streams*. How often hath Divine Goodneſs made our Afflictions our Conſolations; Our Diſeaſes our Medicines, and his gentle Strokes reviving Cordials? How doth he provide for us above our deſerts, even while he doth puniſh us beneath our Merits? Divine Goodneſs can no more mean ill, than Divine Wiſdom can be miſtaken in its End, or Divine Power over-rul'd in its Actions. *Charity thinks no evil* *, Charity in the Stream doth not, much leſs doth Charity in the Fountain. To be afflicted by a Hand of *Goodneſs*, hath ſomething comfortable in it, when to be afflicted by an *Evil Hand* is very odious. *Elijah*, who was loth to dye by the hand of a Whoriſh, Idolatrous *Jezabel*, was very *deſirous to die by the hand of God* †. He accounted it a miſery to have died by her hand, who hated him, and had nothing but Cruelty; and therefore fled from her, when he wiſh'd for death, as a deſirable thing, by the hand of that God who had been *good* to him, and could not but be *good* in whatſoever he acted.

* Pſ. 84. 11. *Verſe* 2. † Jer. 2. 30. ‖ *Verſe* 31. * 1 Cor. 13. 5. † 1 Kin. 19. 2, 3, 4.

3. The third Comfort flowing from this Doctrin of the *Goodneſs of God*, is, *'Tis a ground of aſſurance of Happineſs.* If God be ſo *good*, that nothing is better, and loves himſelf, as he is good, he cannot be wanting in love to thoſe that reſemble his Nature, and imitate his Goodneſs: He cannot but love his own Image of Goodneſs; where-ever he finds it, he cannot but be bountiful to it; for it is impoſſible there can be any love to any Object, without wiſhing well to it, and doing well for it. If the Soul loves God as its chiefeſt Good, God will love the Soul as his pious Servant: As he hath offer'd to them the higheſt Allurements, ſo he will not with-hold the choiceſt Communications. *Goodneſs* cannot be a deluding thing; It cannot conſiſt with the nobleneſs and largeneſs of this Perfection, to invite the Creature to him, and leave the Creature empty of him when it comes. 'Tis inconſiſtent with this Perfection, to give the Creature a knowledge of himſelf, and a deſire of enjoyment larger than that knowledge, a deſire to know and enjoy him perpetually, yet never intend to beſtow an Eternal Communication of himſelf upon it. The nature of Man was erected by the goodneſs of God, but with an enlarg'd deſire for the higheſt *Good*, and a Capacity of enjoying it. Can *Goodneſs* be thought to be deceitful, to fruſtrate its own Work, be tir'd with its own Effuſions, to let a gracious Soul groan under its burthen, and never reſolve to eaſe him of it? To ſee delightfully the aſpirings of the Creature to another ſtate, and reſolve never to admit him to a happy iſſue of thoſe deſires? 'Tis not agreeable to this unconceivable Perfection, to be unconcern'd in the longings of his Creature, ſince their firſt longings were

were placed in them, by that *Goodneſs* which is ſo free from mocking the Creature, or falling ſhort of its well-grounded Expectations or Deſires, that it infinitely exceeds them. If Man had continued in Innocence, the *Goodneſs of God* without queſtion would have continued him in Happineſs: And ſince he hath had ſo much *goodneſs* to reſtore Man, would it not be diſhonourable to that *goodneſs* to break his own *Conditions*, and defeat the believing Creature of Happineſs, after it hath comply'd with his terms? He is a Believer's God in Covenant, and is a God in the utmoſt extent of this Attribute, as well as of any other; and therefore will not communicate mean and ſhallow Benefits, but according to the grandeur of it, Soveraign and Divine, ſuch as the gift of a happy Immortality. Since he had no Obligation upon him to make any Promiſe, but the ſweetneſs of his own Nature, the ſame is as ſtrong upon him to make all the Words of his Grace *good*; They cannot be invalid in any one tittle of them, as long as his Nature remains the ſame; And his Goodneſs cannot be diminiſh'd without the impairing of his Godhead, ſince it is inſeparable from it. Divine Goodneſs will not let any Man ſerve God for nought: He hath promiſed our weak Obedience, more than any Man in his right Wits can ſay it merits: * *A cup of cold water ſhall not loſe its reward.* He will manifeſt our good Actions, as he gave ſo high a Teſtimony to *Job* in the Face of the Devil his Accuſer: It will not only be the Happineſs of the Soul but of the Body, the whole Man, ſince Soul and Body were in Conjunction in the Acts of Righteouſneſs; it conſiſts not with the Goodneſs of God to reward the one, and to let the other lie in the Ruines of its firſt Nothing: To beſtow Joy upon the one for its being Ptincipal, and leave the other without any Sentiments of Joy, that was inſtrumental in thoſe good Works both commanded and approv'd by God: He that had the Goodneſs to pity our Original Duſt, will not want a Goodneſs to advance it: And if we put off our Bodies, 'tis but afterwards to put them on repair'd and freſher. From this Goodneſs, the Upright may expect all the Happineſs their Nature is capable of.

* Matth. 10. 42.

4. *It is a ground of Comfort in the midſt of Publick Dangers.* This hath more Sweetneſs in it to ſupport us, than the Malice of Enemies hath to deject us; becauſe he is *good*, he is a *Strong-hold in the Day of Trouble* *. If his Goodneſs extends to all his Creatures, it will much more extend to thoſe that honour him: If the Earth be full of his Goodneſs, that part of Heaven which he hath upon Earth ſhall not be empty of it. He hath a Goodneſs often to deliver the Righteous, and a Juſtice to put the Wicked in his ſtead *. When his People have been under the Power of their Enemies, he hath chang'd the Scene, and put the Enemies under the Power of his People: He hath clapt upon them the ſame Bolts which they did upon his Servants. How comfortable is this Goodneſs, that hath yet maintain'd us in the midſt of Dangers, preſerved us in the Mouth of Lyons, quench'd kindled Fire; hitherto reſcued us from deſign'd Ruine ſubtilly hatch'd, and ſupported us in the midſt of Men, very paſſionate for our deſtruction? How hath this watchful Goodneſs been a Sanctuary to us in the midſt of an upper Hell?

* Nah. 1. 7.

* Prov. 11. 8.

3. The third Uſe is of *Exhortation.*

1. *How ſhould we endeavour after the Enjoyment of God as good?* How earneſtly ſhould we deſire him? As there is no other Goodneſs worthy of our Supream Love, ſo there is no other Goodneſs worthy our moſt Ardent Thirſt. Nothing deſerves the Name of a deſirable Good, but as it tends to the attainment of this: Here we muſt pitch our Deſires, which otherwiſe will terminate in Nullities, or unconceivable Diſturbances.

1. Conſider, *nothing but Good can be the Object of a rational Appetite.* The Will cannot direct its Motion to any thing under the Notion of Evil, evil in it ſelf, or evil to it; whatſoever courts it, muſt preſent it ſelf in the Quality of a Good in its own Nature, or in its preſent Circumſtances to the preſent State and Condition of the Deſire, it will not elſe touch or affect the Will. This is the Language of that Faculty, *Who will ſhew me any good* *? And Good is as inſeparably the Object of the *Will*'s Motion, as Truth is of the *Underſtanding's* Enquiry. Whatſoever a Man would allure another to comply with, he muſt propoſe to the Perſon under the Notion of ſome Beneficialneſs to him, in point of Honour, Profit or Pleaſure; to act after this manner, is the proper Character of a rational Creature. And tho' that which is evil is often embrac'd, inſtead of that which is good; and what we entertain as conducing to our Felicity, proves our Misfortune; yet that is from our Ignorance and not from a formal Choice of it as Evil, for what Evil ss choſen, it is not poſſible to chooſe under the conception of Evil, but under the appearance of Good, tho' it be not ſo in reality. 'Tis inſeparable from the Wills of all Men, to propoſe to themſelves that, which in the Opinion and Judgment of their Underſtandings, or Imagination, is good, though they often miſtake and cheat themſelves.

* Pſal. 4. 6.

2. Since that Good is the Object of a rational Appetite, *the pureſt, beſt, and moſt univerſal Good, ſuch as God is, ought to be moſt ſought after.* Since Good only is the Object of a rational Appetite, all the Motions of our Souls ſhould be carried to the firſt and beſt Good: A real Good is moſt deſirable; the greateſt Excellency of the Creatures cannot ſpeak them ſo, ſince by the Corruption of Man they are *ſubjected to Vanity* *. God is the moſt excellent Good, without any Shadow: A real ſomething, without that Nothing which every Creature hath in its Nature *. A perfect Good can only give us Content; the beſt Goodneſs in the Creature, is but ſlender and imperfect, had not the Venom of Corruption infus'd a Vanity into it; the Make of it ſpeaks it finite, and the beſt Qualities in it are bounded, and cannot give Satisfaction to a rational Appetite, which bears in its Nature an Imitation of Divine Infiniteneſs, and therefore can never find an Eternal Reſt in mean Trifles. God is above the Imperfection of all Creatures; Creatnres are but Drops of Goodneſs, at beſt but ſhallow Streams; God is like a teeming Ocean, that can fill the largeſt, as well as the narroweſt Creek. He hath an accumulative Goodneſs; ſeveral Creatures anſwer ſeveral Neceſſities, but one God can anſwer all our Wants: He hath an univerſal Fulneſs, to overtop our univerſal Emptineſs: He contains in himſelf the Sweetneſs of all other Goods, and holds in his Boſom plentifully, what Creatures have in their Natures ſparingly. Creatures are uncertain Goods; as they begin to exiſt, ſo they may ceaſe to be; they may be gone with a Breath, they will certainly languiſh, if God blows upon them: * The ſame Breath that rais'd them, can blaſt them; But who can rifle God of the leaſt part of his Excellency? Mutability is inherent in the Nature of every Creature, as a Creature. All ſublunary Things are as Gourds, that refreſh us one moment with their preſence, and the next fret us with their abſence; like fading Flowers ſtrutting to Day, and drooping to Morrow *; while we poſſeſs them, we cannot clip their Wings, that may

* Rom. 8. 20.

* Iſa. 40. 17.

* Iſa. 40. 24.

* Iſa. 40. 6.

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carry them away from us, and may make us vainly ſeek, what we thought we firmly held. But God is as permanent a Good, as he is a real one: He hath Wings to fly to them that ſeek him, but no Wings to fly from them for ever, and leave them. God is an univerſal Good; that which is good to one, may be evil to another; what is deſirable by one, may be refus'd as inconvenient for another: But God being an univerſal, unſtain'd Good, is uſeful for all, convenient to the Natures of all, but ſuch as will continue in Enmity againſt him: There is nothing in God can diſpleaſe a Soul that deſires to pleaſe him; when we are Darkneſs, he is a Light to ſcatter it; when we are in Want, he hath Riches to relieve us; when we are in a Spiritual Death, he is a Prince of Life to deliver us; when we are defil'd, he is Holineſs to purifie us: 'Tis in vain to fix our Hearts any where but on him, in the Deſire of whom there is a Delight, and in the Enjoyment of whom there is an unconceivable Pleaſure.

3. He is to be moſt ſought after, *ſince all things elſe that are deſirable, had their Goodneſs from him.* If any thing be deſirable becauſe of its Goodneſs, God is much more deſirable becauſe of his, ſince all things are good by a participation, and nothing good but by his print upon it: As what Being Creatures have, was deriv'd to them by God; ſo what Goodneſs they are poſſeſſed with, they were furniſh'd with it by God: All Goodneſs flow'd from him, and all created Goodneſs is ſum'd up in him. The Streams ſhould not terminate our Appetite, without aſpiring to the Fountain. If the Waters in the Channel, which receive mixture, communicate a pleaſure, the taſte of the Fountain muſt be much more delicious: That Original Perfection of all things, hath an unconceivable Beauty above thoſe things it hath fram'd. Since thoſe things live not by their own Strength, nor nouriſh us by their own Liberality, but by the *Word of God* *, that God that ſpeaks them into Life, and ſpeaks them into Uſefulneſs, ſhould be moſt ardently deſir'd as the beſt. If the ſparkling Glory of the viſible Heavens delight us, and the Beauty and Bounty of the Earth pleaſe and refreſh us, what ſhould be the Language of our Souls upon thoſe Views and Taſtes, but that of the *Pſalmiſt? Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none upon Earth, that I can deſire beſide thee* *? No greater Good can poſſibly be deſir'd, and no leſs Good ſhould be ardently deſir'd: As he is the Supream Good, ſo we ſhould bear that regard to him as Supreamly, and above all to thirſt for him: As he is good, he is the Object of Deſire; as the choiceſt and firſt Goodneſs, he is deſirable with the greateſt vehemency. *Give me Children, or elſe I die*, was an uncomely Speech; * the one was granted, and the other inflicted; ſhe had Children, but the laſt coſt her her Life: But give me God, or I will not be content, is a gracious Speech, wherein we cannot miſcarry: All that God demands of us, is, That we ſhould long for him, and look for our Happineſs only in him. That is the firſt thing, endeavour after the Enjoyment of God as good.

* Matth. 4. 4.

* Pſal. 73. 25.

* Gen. 30. 1.

2. *Often meditate on the Goodneſs of God.* What was Man produc'd for, but to ſettle his Thoughts upon this? What ſhould have been *Adam*'s Employment in Innocence, but to read over all the Lines of Nature, and fix his Contemplations on that good Hand that drew them? What is Man endued with Reaſon for, above all other Animals, but to take Notice of this Goodneſs, ſpread over all the Creatures, which they themſelves, tho' they felt it, could not have ſuch a ſenſe of, as to make anſwerable Returns to their Benefactor? Can we ſatisfie our ſelves in being Spectators of it, and Enjoyers of it, only in ſuch a manner as the Brutes are? The Beaſts behold things, as well as we; they feel the warm Beams of this Goodneſs as well as we, but without any Reflection upon the Author of them. Shall Divine Bleſſings meet with no more from us, but a brutiſh view, and beholding of them? What is more juſt, than to ſpend a thought upon him, who hath inlarg'd his Hand in ſo many Benefits to us? Are we indebted to any, more than we are to him? Why ſhould we ſend our Souls to viſit any thing more than him in his Works? That we are able to meditate on him, is a part of his Goodneſs to us, who hath beſtowed that Capacity upon us; and if we will not, 'tis a great part of our Ingratitude. Can any thing more delightful enter into us, than that of the kind and gracious Diſpoſition of that God, who firſt brought us out of the Abyſs of an unhappy Nothing, and hath hitherto ſpread his Wings over us? Where can we meet with a Nobler Object than Divine Goodneſs? And what nobler Work can be practiſed by us, than to conſider it? What is more ſenſible in all the Operations of his Hands, than his Skill, as they are conſider'd in themſelves, and his Goodneſs, as they are conſider'd in relation to us? 'Tis ſtrange that we ſhould miſs the Thoughts of it; that we ſhould look upon this Earth, and every thing in it, and yet overlook that which it is moſt *full* of, *viz.* Divine Goodneſs; * it runs thro' the whole Web of the World, all is fram'd and diverſified by Goodneſs: 'Tis one entire ſingle Goodneſs, which appears in various Garbs and Dreſſes, in every part of the Creation. Can we turn our Eyes inward, and ſend our Eyes outward, and ſee nothing of a Divinity in both, worthy of our deepeſt and ſerioſeſt Thoughts? Is there any thing in the World we can behold, but we ſee his Bounty, ſince nothing was made, but is one way or other beneficial to us? Can we think of our daily Food, but we muſt have ſome reflecting Thoughts on our great Caterer? Can the Sweetneſs of the Creature to our Palate, obſcure the Sweetneſs of the Provider to our Minds? 'Tis ſtrange that we ſhould be regardleſs of that, wherein every Creature without us, and every Senſe within us, and about us, is a Tutor to inſtruct us! Is it not reaſon we ſhould think of the times wherein we were nothing, and from thence run back to a never-begun Eternity, and view our ſelves in the Thoughts of that Goodneſs, to be in time brought forth upon this Stage, as we are at preſent? Can we conſider but one Act of our Underſtandings, but one Thought, one Bloſſom, one Spark of our Souls mounting upwards, and not reflect upon the Goodneſs of God to us, who in that Faculty that ſparkles out rational Thoughts, has advanced us to a nobler State, and endued us with a nobler Principle, than all the Creatures we ſee on Earth, except thoſe of our own Rank and Kind? Can we conſider but one fooliſh Thought, one ſinful Act, and reflect upon the Guilt and Filth of it, and not behold Goodneſs in ſparing us, and Miracles of Goodneſs in ſending his Son to die for us, for the Expiation of it? This Perfection cannot well be out of our Thoughts, or at leaſt it is horrible it ſhould, when it is writ in every Line of the Creation, and in a legible Rubrick in bloody Letters, in the Croſs of his Son. Let us think with our ſelves, how often he hath multiplied his Bleſſings, when we did deſerve his Wrath; how he hath ſent one unexpected Benefit upon the heel of another, to bring us with a ſwift pace the Tidings of Good Will to us? How often hath he deliver'd us from a Diſeaſe, that had the Arrows of Death in its hand, ready to pierce us? How often hath he

* Pſal. 33. 5.

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turn'd our Fears into Joys, and our Diſtempers into Promoters of our Felicity? How often hath he mated a Temptation, ſent ſeaſonable Supplies in the midſt of a ſore Diſtreſs, and prevented many Dangers which we could not be ſo ſenſible of, becauſe we were in a great meaſure ignorant of them? How ſhould we meditate upon his Goodneſs to our Souls, in preventing ſome Sins, in pardoning others, in darting upon us the Knowledge of his Goſpel, and of himſelf in the Face of his Son Chriſt? This ſeems to ſtick much upon the Spirit of *Paul*, ſince he doth ſo often ſprinkle his Epiſtles with the Titles of the *Grace of God*, *Riches of Grace*, *Unſearchable Riches* of God, *Riches of Glory*, and cannot ſatisfie himſelf with the extolling of it. Certainly we ſhould bear upon our Heart, a deep and quick ſenſe of this Perfection; as it was the deſign of God to manifeſt it, ſo it would be acceptable to God for us to have a ſenſe of it: A dull Receiver of his Bleſſings is no leſs nauſeous to him, than a dull Diſpenſer of his Alms: He loves a *chearful Giver* *: He doth himſelf what he loves in others; is chearful in giving, and he loves we ſhould be ſerious in thinking of him, and have a right apprehenſion and ſenſe of his Goodneſs.

* 2 Cor. 9. 7.

1. A right ſenſe of his Goodneſs would *diſpoſe us to an ingenuous Worſhip of God.* It would damp our Averſeneſs to any Act of Religion: What made *David* ſo reſolute, and ready to *Worſhip towards his holy Temple*, but the ſenſe of his *loving kindneſs* *? This would render him always in our Mind, a worthy Object of our Devotion, a ſtable Prop of our Confidence. We ſhould then adore him, when we conſider him as *our God*, and our ſelves as *the People of his Paſture, and the Sheep of his Hand* *: We ſhould ſend up Prayers with ſtrong Faith and Feeling, and Praiſes with great Joy and Pleaſure. The ſenſe of his Goodneſs would make us love him, and our Love to him would quicken our Adoration of him; but if we regard not this, we ſhall have no Mind to think of him, no Mind to act any thing towards him: We may tremble at his Preſence, but not heartily worſhip him; we ſhall rather look upon him as a Tyrant, and think no other Affection due to him, than what we reſerve for an Oppreſſor, *viz.* Hatred, and Ill-will.

* Pſal. 138. 2.

* Pſal. 95. 7.

2. A ſenſe of it will *keep us humble.* A ſenſe of it would effect that for which it ſelf was intended, *viz.* bring us to a Repentance for our Crimes, and not ſuffer us to harden our ſelves againſt him. When we ſhould deeply conſider, how he hath made the Sun to ſhine upon us, and his Rain to fall upon the Earth for our ſupport; the one to ſupple the Earth, and the other to aſſiſt the Juice of it to bring forth Fruits: How would it reflect upon us our ill Requitals, and make us hang down our Heads before him in a low poſture, pleaſing to him, and advantageous to our ſelves? What would the firſt Charge be upon our ſelves, but what *Moſes* brings in his Expoſtulation againſt the *Iſraelites*; * *Do I thus requite the Lord?* What is this Goodneſs for me, who am ſo much below him? For me, who have ſo much incenſed him? For me, who have ſo much abus'd what he hath allow'd? It would bring to remembrance the horror of our Crimes, and ſet us a Bluſhing before him, when we ſhould conſider the multitude of his Benefits, and our unworthy Behaviour, that hath not conſtrain'd him, even againſt the inclination of his Goodneſs to puniſh us. How little ſhould we plead for a further liberty in Sin, or palliate our former Faults? When we ſet Divine Goodneſs in one Column, and our Tranſgreſſions in another, and compare together their ſeveral *Items*, it would fill us with a deep Conſciouſneſs of our own Guilt, and deveſt us of any worth of our own in our approaches to him: It would humble us, that we cannot love ſo obliging a God, as much as he deſerves to be loved by us: It would make us humble before Men. Who would be proud of a meer Gift, which he knows he hath not merited? How ridiculous would that Servant be, that ſhould be proud of a rich Livery, which is a Badge of his Service, not a Token of his Merit, but of his Maſter's Magnificence and Bounty; which though he wear this Day, he may be ſtripp'd of to morrow, and be turn'd out of his Maſter's Family?

* Deut. 32. 6.

3. A ſenſe of the Divine Goodneſs would make us *faithful to him.* The Goodneſs of God obligeth us to ſerve him, not to offend him: The freeneſs of his Goodneſs ſhould make us more ready to contribute to the advancement of his Glory. When we conſider the Benefits of a Friend proceed out of Kindneſs to us, and not out of Self-ends, and vain Applauſe, it works more upon us, and makes us more careful of the Honour of ſuch a Perſon. 'Tis a pure Bounty God hath manifeſted in Creation and Providence, which could not be for himſelf, who being bleſſed for ever, wanted nothing from us: It was not to draw a Profit from us, but to impart an Advantage to us, *Our Goodneſs extends not to him* *. The Service of the Benefactor is but a rational Return for Benefits; whence *Nehemiah* aggravates the Sins of the *Jews*, † *They have not ſerved thee in thy great Goodneſs, that thou gaveſt them, i.e.* which thou didſt freely beſtow upon them. How ſhould we dare to ſpend upon our Luſts that which we poſſeſs, if we conſider'd by whoſe Liberality we came by it? How ſhould we dare to be unfaithful in the Goods he hath made us Truſtees of? A deep ſenſe of Divine Goodneſs will ennoble the Creature, and make it act for the moſt Glorious and Noble End: It would ſtrike Satan's Temptation dead at a Blow: It would pull off the falſe Mask and Vizor from what he preſents to us, to draw us from the Service of our Benefactor. We could not with a ſenſe of this, think him kinder to us than God hath and will be, which is the great motive of Men, to joyn hands with him and turn their backs upon God.

* Pſal. 16. 2.

† Neh. 9. 35.

4. A ſenſe of the Divine Goodneſs would make us *patient under our Miſeries.* A deep ſenſe of this, would make us give God the Honour of his Goodneſs in whatſoever he doth, though the Reaſon of his Actions be not apparent to us, nor the Event and Iſſue of his Proceedings foreſeen by us. 'Tis a ſtated Caſe, that *Goodneſs* can never intend Ill, but deſigns Good in all its Acts, *to them that love God* *; Nay, he always deſigns the beſt; when he beſtows any thing upon his People, he ſees it beſt they ſhould have it; and when he removes any thing from them, he ſees it beſt they ſhould loſe it. When we have loſt a thing we loved, and refuſe to be comforted, a ſenſe of this Perfection, which acts God in all, would keep us from misjudging our Sufferings, and meaſuring the Intention of the Hand that ſent them, by the Sharpneſs of what we feel. What *Patient* fully perſwaded of the Affection of the *Phyſician*, would not value him, though that which is given to purge out the Humours, racks his Bowels? When we loſe what we love, perhaps it was ſome outward Luſtre tickled our Apprehenſions, and we did not ſee the Viper we would have harm'd our ſelves by; but God ſeeing it, ſnatch'd it from us, and we mutter as if he had been cruel, and depriv'd us of the Good we imagin'd, when he was kind to us, and freed us from the Hurt we ſhould certainly have felt. We ſhould regard that, which in Goodneſs he takes from us, at no other rate than ſome gilded Poyſon and lurking Venom;

* Rom. 8. 28.

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The Sufferings of Men, though upon high Provocation, are often followed with rich Mercies, and many times are intended as Preparations for greater Goodneſs. When God utters that *Rhetorick* of his Bowels, * *How ſhall I give thee up, Oh* Ephraim, *I will not execute the fierceneſs of my anger!* He intended them Mercy in their Captivity, and would prepare them by it, to walk after the Lord. And it is likely the Poſterity of thoſe *Ten Tribes* were the firſt that ran to God, upon the publiſhing the Goſpel in the Places where they lived: He doth not take away himſelf when he takes away outward Comforts: While he ſnatcheth away the Rattles we play with, he hath a Breaſt in himſelf for us to ſuck, The Conſideration of his Goodneſs, would diſpoſe us to a compos'd frame of Spirit. If we are ſick, 'tis Goodneſs it is a Diſeaſe, and not a Hell. 'Tis Goodneſs that it is a Cloud, and not a total Darkneſs. What if he transfers from us what we have? He takes no more than what his Goodneſs firſt imparted to us; And never takes ſo much from his People, as his Goodneſs leaves them: If he ſtrips them of their Lives, he leaves them their Souls, with thoſe Faculties he furniſhed them with at firſt, and removes them from thoſe Houſes of Clay, to a richer Manſion. The time of our Sufferings here, were it the whole courſe of our Life, bears not the Proportion of a Moment, to that endleſs Eternity wherein he hath deſign'd to manifeſt his Goodneſs to us. The Conſideration of Divine Goodneſs would teach us to draw a Calm, even from Storms, and diſtil Balſom from Rods. If the Reproofs of the Righteous be an excellent Oyl, * we ſhould not think the Corrections of a good God to have a leſs Vertue.

*Hoſ. 11. 8.

*Pſal. 145. 5.

5. A ſenſe of the Divine Goodneſs, would *mount us above the World.* It would damp our Appetites after meaner things; we ſhould look upon the World not as a God, but a Gift from God, and never think the Preſent better than the Donor. We ſhould never lie ſoaking in muddy Puddles, were we always fill'd with a ſenſe of the Richneſs and Clearneſs of this Fountain wherein we might bath our ſelves: Little petty Particles of Good will give us no Content, when we were ſenſible of ſuch an unbounded Ocean. Infinite Goodneſs rightly apprehended, would dull our Deſires after other things, and ſharpen them with a keener Edge after that which is beſt of all. How earneſtly do we long for the Preſence of a Friend, of whoſe good will towards us we have full experience?

6. It would *check any Motions of Envy.* It would make us joy in the Proſperity of good Men, and hinder us from envying the outward Felicity of the Wicked. We ſhould not dare with an *evil Eye* to cenſure his good Hand *, but approve of what he thinks fit to do, both in the Matter of his Liberality, and the Subjects he chooſeth for it. Though if the Diſpoſal were in our Hands, we ſhould not imitate him, as not thinking them Subjects fit for Bounty: Yet ſince it is in his Hands, we be to approve of his Actions, and not to have an ill will towards him for his Goodneſs, or towards thoſe he is pleaſed to make the Subjects of it. Since all his Doles are given, to *invite Man to Repentance* *, to envy them thoſe Goods God hath beſtowed upon them, is to envy God the Glory of his own Goodneſs, and them the Felicity thoſe things might move them to aſpire to. 'Tis to wiſh God more contracted, and thy Neighbour more miſerable; but a deep Senſe of his Sovereign Goodneſs, would make us rejoice in any Marks of it upon others, and move us to Bleſs him inſtead of Cenſuring him.

*Matth. 20. 15.

*Rom. 2. 4.

7. *It would make us Thankful.* What can be the moſt proper, the moſt natural Reflection, when we behold the moſt magnificent Characters he hath imprinted upon our Souls; the Conveniency of the Members he hath Compacted in our Bodies, but a Praiſe of him? Such Motion had *David* upon the firſt Conſideration, * *I will praiſe thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.* What could be the moſt natural Reflection, when we behold the rich Prerogatives of our Natures above other Creatures, the Proviſion he hath made for us for our Delight in the Beauties of Heaven, for our Support in the Creatures on Earth? What can reaſonably be expected from uncorrupted Man, to be the firſt Motion of his Soul, but an extolling the bountiful Hand of the inviſible Donor, whoever he be? This would make us venture at ſome Endeavours of a grateful Acknowledgment, though we ſhould deſpair of rendring any thing proportionable to the greatneſs of the Benefit; and ſuch an Acknowledgment of our own Weakneſs, would be an acceptable part of our Gratitude; without a due and deep ſenſe of Divine Goodneſs, our Praiſe of it, and Thankfulneſs for it, will be but cold, formal, and cuſtomary; our Tongues may bleſs him, and our Heart ſlight him. And this will lead us to the third Exhortation.

*Pſal. 139. 14.

3. Which is that of *Thankfulneſs for Divine Goodneſs.* The abſolute Goodneſs of God, as it is the Excellency of his Nature, is the Object of Praiſe: The Relative Goodneſs of God, as he is our Benefactor, is the Object of Thankfulneſs: This was always a Debt due from Man to God; he had Obligations in the time of his Integrity, and was then to render it; he is not leſs, but more oblig'd to it in the State of Corruption; the Benefits being the greater, by how much the more unworthy he is of them by reaſon of his Revolt. The Bounty beſtow'd upon an Enemy that merits the contrary, ought to be received with a greater Reſentment than that beſtow'd on a Friend, who is not unworthy of Teſtimonies of Reſpect. Gratitude to God, is the Duty of every Creature that hath a Senſe of it ſelf. The more excellent Being any enjoy, the more devout ought to be the Acknowledgment. How often doth *David* ſtir up, not only himſelf, but ſummon all Creatures, even the *inſenſible ones*, to joyn in the Conſort? * He calls to the *Deeps, Fire, Hail, Snow, Mountains* and *Hills*, to bear a part in this Work of Praiſe; not that they are able to do it actively, but to ſhew that Man is to call in the whole Creation to aſſiſt him paſſively, and ſhould have ſo much Charity to all Creatures, as to receive what they offer, and ſo much Affection to God as to preſent to him what he receives from him. Snow and Hail cannot bleſs and praiſe God, but Man ought to praiſe God for thoſe things, wherein there is a Mixture of Trouble and Inconvenience, ſomething to moleſt our Senſe, as well as ſomething that improves the Earth for Fruit. This God requires of us, for this he inſtituted ſeveral Offerings, and required a little Portion of Fruits to be preſented to him, as an Acknowledgment they held the whole from his Bounty. And the End of the Feſtival Days among the *Jews*, was to revive the Memory of thoſe ſignal Acts wherein his Power for them, and his Goodneſs to them, had been extraordinarily evident. 'Tis no more but our Mouths to praiſe him, and our Hand to obey him, that he exacts at our Hands. He commands us not to expend what he allows us, in the erecting ſtately Temples to his Honour; all the Coyn he requires to be paid with for his Expence, is, the *Offering of Thanksgiving* *: And this we ought to

*Pſal. 148.

*Pſal. 50. 14.

do as much as we can, ſince we cannot do it as much as he merits, for *who can ſhew forth all his Praiſe* †? If we have the Fruit of his Goodneſs, 'tis fit he ſhould have the *Fruit of our Lips* *. The leaſt Kindneſs ſhould enflame our Souls with a kindly Reſentment: Though ſome of his Benefits have a brighter, ſome a darker Aſpect towards us, yet they all come from this common Spring; His Goodneſs ſhines in all; there are the Footſteps of Goodneſs in the leaſt, as well as the Smiles of Goodneſs in the greateſt; the meaneſt therefore is not to paſs without a regard of the Author. As the Glory of God is more illuſtrious in ſome Creatures than in others, yet it glitters in all, and the loweſt as well as the higheſt adminiſters matter of Praiſe. But they are not only little things, but the choicer Favours he hath beſtowed upon us. How much doth it deſerve our Acknowledgment, that he ſhould contrive our Recovery, when we had plotted our Ruine? That when he did from Eternity behold the Crimes wherewith we would incenſe him, he ſhould not according to the Rights of Juſtice, caſt us into Hell, but prize us at the rate of the Blood and Life of his only Son, in Value above the Blood of Men and Lives of Angels. How ſhould we bleſs that God, that we have yet a Goſpel among us, that we are not driven into the utmoſt Regions, that we can attend upon him in the Face of the Sun, and not forced to the ſecret Obſcurities of the Night? Whatſoever we enjoy, whatſoever we receive we muſt own him as the Donor, and read his Hand in it. Rob him not of any Praiſe, to give to an Inſtrument. No Man hath wherewithal to do us good, nor a Heart to do us good, nor Opportunities of benefiting us, without him. When the *Cripple* received the Soundneſs of his Limbs from *Peter*, he praiſed the Hand that ſent it, not the Hand that brought it: * He *praiſed God*. When we want any thing that is good, let the Goodneſs of the Divine Nature move us to *David*'s Practice, to *thirſt after God* *: And when we feel the Motions of his Goodneſs to us, let us imitate the Temper of the ſame Holy Man; **Bleſs the Lord, O my Soul: and forget not all his benefits.* 'Tis an unworthy Carriage, to deal with him as a Traveller doth with a Fountain, kneel down to drink of it when he is Thirſty, and turn his back upon it, and perhaps never think of it more after he is ſatisfied.

† Pſal. 106. 2.
* Heb. 13. 15.
*Acts 3. 6. *Verſe* 8.
*Pſal. 42. 1.
*Pſal. 103. 2.

4. And laſtly, *Imitate this Goodneſs of God.* If his Goodneſs hath ſuch an Influence upon us as to make us love him, it will alſo move us with an ardent Zeal to imitate him in it. Chriſt makes this Uſe from the Doctrine of Divine Goodneſs, * *Do good to them that hate you, that you may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven, for he makes his Sun to riſe on the evil and on the good.* As Holineſs is a Reſemblance of God's Purity, ſo Charity is a Reſemblance of God's Goodneſs: And this our Saviour calls Perfection; *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.* As God would not be a perfect God without Goodneſs, ſo neither can any be a perfect Chriſtian without Kindneſs; Charity and Love being the Splendor and Lovelineſs of all Chriſtian Graces, as Goodneſs is the Splendor and Lovelineſs of all Divine Attributes. This, and Holineſs are order'd in the Scripture to be the grand Patterns of our Imitation: Imitate the Goodneſs of God in two things.

* Matth. 5. 44, 45.
Verſe 48.

1. *In relieving and aſſiſting others in diſtreſs.* Let our Heart be as large in the Capacity of Creatures, as God is in the Capacity of a Creator. A large Heart from him to us, and a ſtrait Heart from us to others, will not ſuit: Let us not think any ſo far below us, as to be unworthy of our Care, ſince God thinks none, that are infinitely diſtant from him, too mean for his. His infinite Glory mounts him above the Creature, but his infinite Goodneſs ſtoops him to the meaneſt Works of his Hands. As he lets not the Tranſgreſſions of Proſperity paſs without Puniſhment, ſo he lets not the Diſtreſs of his afflicted People paſs him without ſupport. Shall God provide for the Eaſe of Beaſts, and ſhall not we have ſome Tenderneſs towards thoſe that are of the ſame Blood with our ſelves, and have as good Blood to boaſt of, as runs in the Veins of the Mightieſt Monarch on Earth; and as mean and as little as they are, can lay claim to as ancient a Pedigree as the ſtateſieſt Prince in the World, who cannot aſcend to Anceſtors beyond *Adam?* Shall we glut our ſelves with Divine Beneficence to us, and wear his Livery only on our own Backs, forgetting the Afflictions of ſome dear *Joſeph*; when God, who hath an unblemiſh'd Felicity in his own Nature, looks out himſelf to view and relieve the Miſeries of poor Creatures? Why hath God increaſed the Doles of his Treaſures to ſome more than others? Was it meerly for themſelves, or rather that they might have a Bottom, to attain the Honour of imitating him? Shall we embezzle his Goods to our own Uſe, as if we were abſolute Proprietors, and not Stewards entruſted for others? Shall we make a Difficulty to part with ſomething to others, out of that abundance he hath beſtowed upon any of us? Did not his Goodneſs ſtrip his Son of the Glory of Heaven for a time to enrich us? and ſhall we ſhrug when we are to part with a little to pleaſure him? 'Tis not very becoming for any to be backward in ſupplying the Neceſſities of others with a few Morſels, who have had the Happineſs to have had their greateſt Neceſſities ſupplied with his Son's Blood. He demands not that we ſhould ſtrip our ſelves of all for others, but of a Pittance, ſomething of Superfluity, which will turn more to our Account, than what is vainly and uprofitably conſumed on our Backs and Bellies. If he hath given much to any of us, 'tis rather to lay aſide part for the Income of his Service; Elſe we would Monopolize Divine Goodneſs to our ſelves, and ſeem to diſtruſt under our preſent Experiments, his future Kindneſs, as though the laſt thing he gave us was attended with this Language, *Hoard up this, and expect no more from me:* Uſe it only to the glutting your Avarice, and feeding your Ambition; which would be againſt the whole Scope of Divine Goodneſs. If we do not endeavour to write after the Comely Copy he hath ſet us, we may provoke him to harden himſelf againſt us, and in Wrath beſtow that on the Fire, or on our Enemies, which his Goodneſs hath imparted to us for his Glory, and the ſupplying the Neceſſities of poor Creatures. And on the contrary, he is ſo delighted with this kind of Imitation of him, that a Cup of cold Water, when there is no more to be done, ſhall not be unrewarded.

2. Imitate God in his Goodneſs, *in a Kindneſs to our worſt Enemies.* The beſt Man is more unworthy to receive any thing from God, than the worſt can be to receive from us. How kind is God to thoſe that blaſpheme him, and gives them the ſame Sun, and the ſame Showers, that he doth to the beſt Men in the World! Is it not more our Glory to imitate God, in *doing good to thoſe that hate us*, than to imitate the Men of the World in requiting Evil, by a return of a ſevenfold Miſchief? This would be a Goodneſs which would vanquiſh the

the Hearts of Men, and render us greater than *Alexanders* and *Cæſars*, who did only triumph over Miſerable Carcaſes; Yea, it is to triumph over our ſelves, in being good againſt the Sentiments of Corrupt Nature. Revenge makes us Slaves to our Paſſions as much as the Offenders, and good Returns render us Victorious over our Adverſaries. *Rom. 12. 21. *Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.* When we took up Arms againſt God, his Goodneſs contrived not our Ruine, but our Recovery. This is ſuch a Goodneſs of God, as could not be diſcover'd in an Innocent State; While Man had continued in his Duty, he could not have been guilty of an Enmity; And God could not but affect him, unleſs he had denied himſelf: So this of being good to our Enemies, could never have been practiſed in a State of Rectitude; ſince where was a perfect Innocence, there could be no ſpark of Enmity to one another. It can be no Diſparagement to any Man's Dignity, to caſt his Influences on his greateſt Oppoſers, ſince God, who acts for his own Glory, thinks not himſelf diſparag'd by ſending forth the Streams of his Bounty on the wickedeſt Perſons, who are far meaner to him than thoſe of the ſame Blood can be to us. Who hath the worſt Thoughts of the Sun for ſhining upon the Earth, that ſends up Vapours to cloud it? It can be no Diſgrace to reſemble God; if his Hand and Bowels be open to us, let not ours be ſhut to any.

A DISCOURSE UPON GOD's Dominion.

PSALM CIII. 19.

The Lord hath prepared his Throne in the Heavens: And his Kingdom Ruleth over all.

THE *Pſalm* begins with the Praiſe of God, wherein the *Pen-man* excites his Soul to a right and elevated Management of ſo great a Duty, *ver.* 1. *Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, and all that is within me, bleſs his Holy Name:* And becauſe himſelf, and all Men were inſufficient to offer up a Praiſe to God, anſwerable to the Greatneſs of his Benefits, he ſummons, in the end of the *Pſalm*, the *Angels* and all *Creatures* to join in Conſort with him.

Obſerve.

1. *As Man is too ſhallow a Creature to comprehend the Excellency of God, ſo he is too dull and ſcanty a Creature to offer up a true Praiſe to God*, both in regard of the Excellency of his Nature, and the multitude and greatneſs of his Benefits.

2. *We are apt to forget Divine Benefits, our Souls muſt therefore be often jogg'd and rous'd up. All that is within me*, every Power of my rational, and every Affection of my ſenſitive Part. All his Faculties, all his Thoughts. Our Souls will hang back from God in every Duty, much more in this, if we lay not a ſtrict Charge upon them. We are ſo void of a pure and intire Love to God, that we have no mind to thoſe Duties. Wants will ſpur us on to Prayer, but a pure Love to God can only ſpirit us to Praiſe. We are more ready to reach out a hand to receive his Mercies, than to lift up our heart to recognize them after the Receipt.

After the *Pſalmiſt* had ſummoned his own Soul to this Task, he enumerates the Divine Bleſſings received by him, to awaken his Soul by a ſenſe of them to ſo noble a Work. He begins at the firſt and Foundation Mercy to himſelf, the pardon of his Sin, and Juſtification of his Perſon, the renewing of his ſickly and languiſhing Nature, *Verſe* 3. *Who forgives all thy Iniquities, and heals all thy Diſeaſes.* His Redemption from Death or Eternal Deſtruction; his expected Glorification thereupon, which he ſpeaks of with that Certainty as if it were preſent, *ver.* 4. *Who redeems thy life from deſtruction, who crowns thee with loving kindneſs and tender Mercies.* He makes his Progreſs to the Mercy manifeſted to the Church in Protection of it againſt, or delivery of it from Oppreſſions, *ver.* 6. *The Lord executeth Righteouſneſs and Judgment for all that are oppreſſed.* In the Diſcovery of his Will and Law, and the glory of his merciful Name to it. *Verſe* 7, 8. *He made known his ways unto* Moſes, *and his acts unto the children of* Iſrael. *The Lord is Merciful and Gracious, ſlow to Anger, and plenteous in Mercy.* Which latter Words may refer alſo to the free and unmerited ſpring of the Benefits he had reckoned up, *viz.* The Mercy of God, which he mentions alſo *ver.* 10. *He hath not dealt with us after our ſins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities*; and then extols the Perfection of Divine Mercy, in the pardoning of Sin, *ver.* 11, 12. The Paternal Tenderneſs of God. *Verſe* 13. The Eternity of his Mercy. *Verſe* 17. But reſtrains it to the proper Object. *Verſe* 11, 17. *To them that fear him*, i. e. To them that believe in him: *Fear* being the word commonly uſed for *Faith* in the Old Teſtament, under the legal Diſpenſation wherein the Spirit of Bondage was more eminent than the Spirit of Adoption, and their Fear more than their Confidence.

Obſerve.

1. *All the true Bleſſings grow up from the pardon of ſin*, ver. 3. *Who forgives all thine iniquities.* That is the firſt Bleſſing, the Top and Crown of all other Favours, which draws all other Bleſſings after it; and ſweetens all other Bleſſings with it. The principal Intent of Chriſt was Expiation of ſin, Redemption from Iniquity; the Purchaſe of other Bleſſings was conſequent upon it. Pardon of ſin is every Bleſſing vertually, and in the root and ſpring it flows from the Favour of God, and is ſuch a gift as cannot be tainted with a Curſe, as outward things may.

2. *Where ſin is pardoned, the ſoul is renewed*, verſe 3. *Who heals all thy Diſeaſes.* Where guilt is remitted, the Deformity and Sickneſs of the Soul is cur'd. Forgiveneſs is a teeming Mercy, it never goes ſingle; when we have an Intereſt in Chriſt, as bearing the Chaſtiſement of our Peace, we receive alſo a balſom from his Blood, to heal the wounds we feel in our Nature, *Iſaiah* 53. 5. *The chaſtiſement of our Peace was upon him, and with his ſtripes we are healed.* As there is a guilt in ſin, which binds us over to puniſhment, ſo there is a Contagion in ſin, which fills us with peſtilent Diſeaſes, when the one is removed the other is cur'd. We ſhould not know how to love the one without the other. The renewing the Soul is neceſſary for a delightful reliſh of the other Bleſſings of God. A condemn'd Malefactor infected with a Leproſie, or any other loathſom Diſtemper, if pardon'd, could take little Comfort in his Freedom from the Gibbet, without a Cure of his Plague.

3. *God is the ſole and ſovereign Author of all ſpiritual Bleſſings. Who forgives all thy Iniquities, and heals all thy Diſeaſes.* He refers all to God, nothing to himſelf in his own merit and ſtrength.

All,

All, not the pardon of one sin merited by me, not the cure of one Disease can I owe to my own power, and the strength of my free Will, and the operations of Nature. He, and he alone is the Prince of pardon, the Physician that restores me, the Redeemer that delivers me; 'tis a Sacriledge to divide the praise between God and our selves. God only can knock off our Fetters, expel our Distempers, and restore a deformed Soul to its decayed beauty.

4. *Gracious Souls will bless God as much for Sanctification as for Justification.* The Initials of Sanctification (and there are no more in this Life) are worthy of solemn acknowledgment. 'Tis a sign of growth in Grace, when our Hymns are made up of acknowledgments of God's sanctifying, as well as pardoning Grace. In blessing God for the one, we rather shew a Love to our selves; in blessing God for the other, we cast out a pure beam of Love to God: Because by purifying Grace we are fitted to the Service of our Maker, prepared to every good Work which is delightful to him; by the other, we are eas'd in our selves. Pardon fills us with inward Peace, but Sanctification fills us with an Activity for God. Nothing is so capable of setting the Soul in a Heavenly tune, as the consideration of God as a Pardoner and as a Healer.

5. *Where sin is pardon'd, the punishment is remitted*, Verse 3, 4. *Who forgives all thy iniquities, and redeems thy life from destruction.* A Malefactors pardon puts an end to his Chains, frees him from the stench of the Dungeon, and fear of the Gibbet. Pardon is nothing else but the remitting of guilt, aud guilt is nothing else but an obligation to punishment, as a penal debt for sin. A Creditors tearing a Bond, frees the Debtor from payment and rigour.

6. *Growth in Grace is always annex'd to true Sanctification*, Verse 3. So that *thy youth is renew'd like the Eagles.* Interpreters trouble themselves much about the manner of the Eagles renewing its youth, and regaining its vigour: * He speaks best, that saith the *Psalmist*, speaks only according to the Opinion of the vulgar, and his design was not to write a Natural History. Growth always accompanies Grace, as well as it doth Nature in the Body; not that it is without its qualms and languishing fits, as Children are not, but still their Distempers make them grow; Grace is not an idle, but an active Principle. 'Tis not like the *Psalmist* means it, of the strength of the Body, or the Prosperity and Stability of his Government, but the vigour of his Grace and Comfort, since they are Spiritual Blessings here that are the matter of his Song. The healing the Disease, conduceth to the sprouting up and flourishing of the Body. 'Tis the Nature of Grace to go *from strength to strength.*

* *Amyrald. in loc.*

7. *When sin is pardoned, 'tis perfectly pardon'd*, Verse 11, 12. *as far as the East is from the West, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us* The East and West are the greatest distance in the World, the terms can never meet together. When sin is pardoned, it is never charged again; the guilt of it can no more return, than East can become West, or West become East.

8. *Obedience is necessary to an interest in the mercy of God*, Verse 17. *The mercy of the Lord is to them that fear him, to them that remember his Commandments to do them.* Commands are to be remembred in order to Practice, a vain Speculation is not the intent of the Publication of them.

After the *Psalmist* had enumerated the Benefits of God, he reflects upon the greatness of God, and considers him on his Throne encompass'd with the Angels, the Ministers of his Providence, Verse 19. *The Lord hath prepared his Throne in the Heavens, and his kingdom rules over all.* He brings in this of his Dominion, just after he had largely treated of his Mercy. Either,

1. To signifie, That *God is not only to be praised for his mercy, but for his Majesty*, both for the height and extent of his Authority.

2. *To extol the greatness of his Mercy and Pity.* What I have said now, Oh my Soul, of the Mercy of God, and his Paternal Pity, is commended by his Majesty; his Grandeur hinders not his Clemency: Though his Throne be high, his Bowels are tender. He looks down upon his meanest Servants from the height of his Glory. Since his Majesty is infinite, his Mercy must be as great as his Majesty. It must be a greater pity lodging in his Breast, than what is in any Creature, since it is not damp'd by the greatness of his Sovereignty.

3. *To render his Mercy more comfortable.* The Mercy I have spoken of, Oh my Soul, is not the Mercy of a Subject, but of a Sovereign. An Executioner may torture a Criminal, and strip him of his Life, and a vulgar pity cannot relieve him, but the Clemency of the Prince can perfectly pardon him. 'Tis that God who hath none above him to controul him, none below him to resist him, that hath performed all the Acts of Grace to thee. If God by his Supream Authority pardons us, who can reverse it? If all the Subjects of God in the World should pardon us, and God with-hold his grant, what will it profit us? Take Comfort, Oh my Soul, since God from his Throne in the highest, and that God who rules over every particular of the Creation, hath granted and sealed thy Pardon to thee. What would his Grace signifie, if he were not a Monarch, extending his Royal Empire over every thing, and swaying all by his Scepter?

4ly, *To render the Psalmist's confidence more firm in any pressures*, Verse 15, 16. He had considered the misery of Man in the shortness of his Life; his *place should know him no more*, he should never return to his Authority, Employments, Opportunities, that death would take from him; but howsoever the Mercy and Majesty of God were the ground of his confidence. He draws himself from poring upon any Calamities which may assault him, to Heaven, the place where God orders all things that are done on the Earth. He is able to protect us from our dangers, and to deliver us from our distresses; whatsoever Miseries thou mayest lie under, Oh my Soul, cast thy eye up to Heaven, and see a pitying God in a Majestick Authority. A God who can perform what he hath promised to them that fear him; since he hath a Throne above the Heavens, and bears sway over all that envy thy Happiness, and would stain thy Felicity, A God whose Authority cannot be curtailed and dismembred by any. When the *Prophet* sollicites the *sounding* of the Divine Bowels, he urgeth him by his *dwelling in Heaven*, the habitation of his Holiness, *Isaiah* 63. 15. *His Kingdom ruleth over all:* There is none therefore hath any Authority to make him break his Covenant or violate his Promise.

5. *As an incentive to Obedience*, The Lord is merciful, saith he to them, that *remember his Commandments to do them*, Verse 17, 18. And then brings in the *Text* as an Encouragement to observe his *Precepts*; he hath a Majesty that deserves it from us, and an Authority to protect us in it; if a King in a small spot of Earth is to be obeyed by his Subjects, how much more is God, who is more Majestick than all the Angels in Heaven, and Monarchs on Earth? who hath a Majesty to exact our

Obedience, and a Mercy to allure it! We ſhould not ſet upon the performance of any Duty, without an Eye lifted up to God as a great King. It would make us willing to ſerve him; the more Noble the Perſon, the more Honourable and Powerful the Prince, the more glorious is his Service. A view of God upon his Throne, will make us think his Service our Privilege, his Precepts our Ornaments, and Obedience to him the greateſt Honour and Nobility. It will make us weighty and ſerious in our Performances. It would ſtake us down to any duty. The reaſon we are ſo looſe, and unmannerly in the carriage of our Souls before God, is becauſe we conſider him not as a *great King*, Malachy 1. 14. *Our Father which art in Heaven*, in regard of his Majeſty, is the Preface to Prayer.

Let us now conſider the Words in themſelves. *The Lord hath prepared his Throne in the Heavens, and his Kingdom rules over all.*

The Lord hath prepared.] The word ſignifies eſtabliſh'd as well as prepared, and might ſo be rendered. Due preparation is a natural way to the Eſtabliſhment of a thing. Haſty Reſolves break and moulder. This notes,

1. *The Peculiarity of his Authority.* He prepares it, none elſe for him. 'Tis a Dominion that originally reſides in his Nature, not deriv'd from any by Birth or Commiſſion, he alone prepar'd it. He is the ſole cauſe of his own Kingdom; his Authority therefore is unbounded, as infinite as his Nature: None can ſet Laws to him, becauſe none but himſelf prepar'd his Throne for him. As he will not impair his own Happineſs, ſo he will not abridge himſelf of his own Authority.

2. *Readineſs to exerciſe it upon due occaſions.* He hath prepared his Throne, he is not at a loſs, he needs not ſtay for a Commiſſion or Inſtructions from any, how to act. He hath all things ready for the aſſiſtance of his People, he hath Rewards, and Puniſhments; his Treaſures, and Axes the great marks of Authority lying by him, the one for the good, the other for the wicked. His *Mercy he keeps by him for thouſands*, Exod. 34. 7. His *Arrows* he hath prepared by him for Rebels, *Pſal.* 7. 13.

3. *Wiſe management of it*; 'Tis prepared; Preparations imply Prudence; the Government of God is not a raſh and heady Authority. A Prince upon his Throne, a Judge upon the Bench, manages things with the greateſt Diſcretion, or ſhould be ſuppoſed ſo to do.

4. *Succeſsfulneſs and duration of it.* He hath prepared or eſtabliſhed. 'Tis fixed, not tottering; 'tis an immoveable Dominion, all the Struglings of Men and Devils cannot overturn it, nor ſo much as ſhake it. 'Tis eſtabliſhed above the reach of obſtinate Rebels; he cannot be depoſed from it, he cannot be mated in it. His Dominion, as himſelf, abides for ever. And as his Counſel ſo his Authority ſhall ſtand, and *he will do all his pleaſure*, Iſaiah 46. 10.

His Throne in the Heavens.] This is an expreſſion to ſignifie the Authority of God, for as God hath no Member properly, though he be ſo repreſented to us, ſo he hath properly no Throne. It ſignifies his power of reigning, and judging. A Throne is proper to Royalty, the Seat of Majeſty in its Excellency, and the place where the deepeſt Reſpect and Homage of Subjects is paid, and their Petitions preſented. That the Throne of God is in the Heavens, that there he ſits as a Sovereign, is the Opinion of all that acknowledge a God; when they ſtand in need of his Authority to aſſiſt them, their eyes are lifted up, and their hands ſtretched out to Heaven; ſo his Son Chriſt prayed, he *lifted up his eyes to Heaven*, as the place where his Father ſat in Majeſty, as the moſt adorable Object, *John* 17. 1. Heaven hath the Title of his *Throne*, as the Earth hath that of his *Footſtool*, Iſaiah 66. 1. And therefore Heaven is ſometimes put for the Authority of God, *Dan.* 4. 26. *After that thou ſhalt have known, that the Heavens do rule*, i. e. That God who hath his Throne in the Heavens, orders earthly Princes and Scepters as he pleaſes, and rules over the Kingdoms of the World.

His Throne in the Heavens, Notes,

1. *The Glory of his Dominion.* The Heavens are the moſt ſtately and comely pieces of the Creation. His Majeſty is there moſt viſible, his Glory moſt ſplendid. *Pſal.* 19. 1. The Heavens ſpeak out with a full mouth his Glory. 'Tis therefore called, *The habitation* of his *Holineſs and of his Glory*, Iſa. 63. 15. There is the greater glifter and brightneſs of his Glory. The whole Earth indeed is full of his Glory, full of the beams of it, the Heaven is full of the body of it; as the Rays of the Sun reach the Earth, but the full Glory of it is in the Firmament. In Heaven his Dominion is more acknowledged by the Angels, ſtanding at his beck, and by their readineſs and ſwiftneſs obeying his Commands, going and returning as a flaſh of Lightning, *Ezek.* 1. 14. His Throne may well be ſaid to be in the Heavens, ſince his Dominion is not diſputed there by the Angels that attend him, as it is on Earth by the Rebels that arm themſelves againſt him.

2. *The Supremacy of his Empire.* The Heavens are the loftieſt part of the Creation, and the only fit Palace for him; 'tis in the Heavens his Majeſty and Dignity are ſo ſublime, that they are elevated above all earthly Empires.

3. *Peculiarity of this Dominion.* He rules in the Heavens alone. There is ſome ſhadow of Empire in the World. Royalty is communicated to Men as his Subſtitutes. He hath diſpoſed a vicarious Dominion to Men in his Footſtool the Earth, he gives them ſome ſhare in his Authority; and therefore the Title of his Name, *Pſal.* 82. 6. *I have ſaid ye are Gods*; but in Heaven he reigns alone, without any Subſtitutes; his Throne is there: He gives out his Orders to the Angels himſelf, the marks of his immediate Sovereignty are the moſt viſible. He hath no Vicars-General of that Empire. His Authority is not delegated to any Creature, he rules the bleſſed Spirits by himſelf; but he rules Men that are on his Footſtool by others of the ſame kind, Men of their own Nature.

4. *The vaſtneſs of his Empire.* The Earth is but a ſpot to the Heavens; what is *England* in a Map to the whole Earth, but a ſpot, you may cover with your Finger? Much leſs muſt the whole Earth be to the extended Heavens; 'Tis but a little Point or Atome to what is viſible; the Sun is vaſtly bigger than it, and ſeveral Stars are ſuppoſed to be of a greater bulk than the Earth; and how many and what Heavens are beyond, the Ignorance of Man cannot underſtand. If the *Throne* of God be there, 'tis a larger Circuit he rules in, than can well be conceived. You cannot conceive the many millions of little Particles there are in the Earth, and if all put together be but one point to that place where the Throne of God is ſeated, how vaſt muſt his Empire be? He rules there over the Angels, which *excel in ſtrength*, thoſe *Hoſts* of his *which do his pleaſure*, in compariſon of whom all the Men in the World, and the Power of the greateſt Potentates is no more than the Strength of an *Ant* or *Fly*; Multitudes of them encircle his Throne, and liſten to his Orders without roving, and execute them without Diſputing. And ſince his Throne is in the Heavens, it will follow, that all things under

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the Heavens are parts of his Dominion; his Throne being in the higheſt Place, the inferior things of Earth cannot but be ſubject to him; and it neceſſarily includes his Influence on all things below: Becauſe the Heavens are the Cauſe of all the Motion in the World, the immediate thing the Earth doth naturally addreſs to for Corn, Wine and Oyl, above which there is no Superior but the Lord. *Hoſ.* 2. 21, 22. *The Earth hears the Corn, Wine and Oyl; the Heavens hear the Earth, and the Lord hears the Heavens.*

5. *The Eaſineſs of managing this Government.* His Throne being placed on high, he cannot but behold all things that are done below; the height of a Place gives Advantage to a pure and clear Eye to behold things below it. Had the Sun an Eye, nothing could be done in the open Air out of its Ken. The *Throne* of God being in Heaven, he eaſily looks from thence upon all the Children of Men, *Pſal.* 14. 2. *The Lord looked down from Heaven upon the Children of Men, to ſee if there were any that did underſtand.* He looks not down from Heaven as if he were in regard of his Preſence confined there; but he looks down Majeſtically, and by way of Authority; not as the look of a bare Spectator, but the look of a Governor, to paſs Sentence upon them as a Judge. His being in the Heavens renders him capable of doing whatſoever *he pleaſes*, *Pſal.* 115. 3. His Throne being there, he can by a Word, in ſtopping the Motions of the Heavens, turn the whole Earth into Confuſion. In this reſpect it is ſaid, *He rides upon the Heaven in thy Help*, Deut. 33. 26. Diſcharges his Thunders upon Men, and makes the Influences of it ſerve his Peoples Intereſt. By one turn of a Cock, as you ſee in Grotto's, he can cauſe Streams from ſeveral parts of the Heavens to refreſh, or ruin the World.

6. *Duration of it.* The Heavens are incorruptible, his Throne is placed there in an incorruptible State. Earthly Empires have their Decays and Diſſolutions. The Throne of God out-lives the Diſſolution of the World.

His Kingdom rules over all.] He hath an abſolute Right over all things within the Circuit of Heaven and Earth; though his Throne be in Heaven, as the Place where his Glory is moſt eminent and viſible, his Authority moſt exactly obey'd, yet his Kingdom extends it ſelf to the lower parts of the Earth. He doth not Muffle and Cloud up himſelf in Heaven, or confine his Soveraignty to that Place; his Royal Power extends to all viſible, as well as inviſible things: He is Proprietor and Poſſeſſor of all, *Deut.* 10. 14. *The Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens is the Lord's thy God: the Earth alſo, with all that is there.* He hath Right to diſpoſe of all as he pleaſes. He doth not ſay, his Kingdom Rules all that fear him, but *over all*; ſo that it is not the Kingdom of *Grace* he here ſpeaks of, but his *natural* and univerſal Kingdom. Over Angels and Men, Jews and Gentiles, Animate and Inanimate things.

The *Pſalmiſt* conſiders God here as a Great Monarch and General; and all Creatures as his Hoſts and Regiments under him; and takes notice Principally of two things.

1. *The Eſtabliſhment of his Throne, together with the Seat of it.* [*he hath prepared his Throne in the Heavens.*]

2. *The Extent of his Empire.*] *His Kingdom rules over all.*

This Text, in all the Parts of it, is a fit *Baſis* for a Diſcourſe upon the *Dominion of God*; and the Obſervation will be this.

Doctrine. *God is Soveraign Lord and King, and exerciſeth a Dominion over the whole World, both Heaven and Earth.*

This is ſo clear, that nothing is more ſpoken of in *Scripture*. The very Name, *Lord*, imports it; a Name Originally belonging to God, and from him tranſlated to others. And he is frequently called, *The Lord of Hoſts*, becauſe all the Troops and Armies of Spiritual and Corporeal Creatures are in his Hands, and at his Service. This is one of his principal Titles. And the Angels are called, *His Hoſts*, *v.* 21. following the Text, his Camp and Militia. But more plainly, 1 *Kings* 22. 19. God is preſented upon his *Throne*, encompaſt with all the *Hoſt of Heaven* ſtanding on his *Right* Hand, and on his *Left*; which can be underſtood of no other than of the Angels that wait for the Commands of their Sovereign, and ſtand about, not to counſel him, but to receive his Orders. The *Sun*, *Moon*, and *Stars*, are called his *Hoſts*, *Deut.* 4. 19. Appointed by him for the Government of inferior things. He hath an abſolute Authority over the greateſt and the leaſt Creatures; over thoſe that are moſt dreadful, and thoſe that are moſt beneficial; over the *good* Angels that willingly obey him, over the *evil* Angels that ſeem moſt uncapable of Government. And as he is thus Lord of Hoſts, he is the *King of Glory*, or a glorious King, *Pſal.* 24. 10. You find him called a *great King*; the *moſt High*, *Pſal.* 92. 1. The ſupream Monarch, there being no Dignity in Heaven or Earth, but what is dim before him, and infinitely inferior to him; yea, he hath the Title of *Only* King, 1 *Tim.* 6. 15. The Title of Royalty, truly and properly only belongs to him. You may ſee it deſcribed very magnificently by *David*, at the Free-will-offering for the Building of the Temple. 1 *Chron.* 29. 11, 12. *Thine, O Lord, is the Greatneſs, and the Power, and the Glory, and the Victory, and the Majeſty: Thine is the Kingdom, O God, and thou art exalted as head over all. Both Riches and Honour come of thee, and thou reigneſt over all, and in thy Hand is Power and Might, and in thy Hand it is to make Great, and to give Strength to all.* He that hath an Eminency of Power or Authority above all. All Earthly Princes received their Diadems from him, yea, even thoſe that will not acknowledge him, and he hath a more abſolute Power over them, than they can challenge over their meaneſt Vaſſals. As God hath a Knowledge infinitely above our Knowledge; ſo he hath a Dominion incomprehenſibly above any Dominion of Man: and by all the Shadows drawn from the Authority of one Man over another, we can have but weak Glimmerings of the Authority and Dominion of God.

There is a Threefold Dominion of God.

1. *Natural:* Which is abſolute over all Creatures, and is founded in the *Nature* of God as Creator.

2. *Spiritual* or *Gracious:* Which is a Dominion over his Church as Redeemed, and founded in the *Covenant* of Grace.

3. *A glorious Kingdom* at the winding up of all, wherein he ſhall Reign over all, either in the *Glory* of his Mercy, as over the glorified Saints; or in the *Glory* of his Juſtice in the condemn'd Devils and Men. The firſt Dominion is founded in *Nature*. The ſecond, in *Grace*. The third, in regard of the Bleſſed in *Grace*; in regard of the damn'd, in demerit in them, and *Juſtice* in him.

He is Lord of all things, and always in regard of Propriety. *Pſal.* 24. 1. *The earth is the Lord's, and the fulneſs thereof: the world and all that dwell therein.* The Earth, with the Riches and Treaſures in the Bowels of it; the habitable World, with every thing that moves upon it, are his; he hath the ſole Right, and what Right ſoever any others have, is deriv'd from him. In regard alſo of Poſ-

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ſeſſion, *Gen.* 14. 22. *The moſt High God, Poſſeſſor of Heaven and Earth.* In reſpect of whom, Man is not the Proprietary nor Poſſeſſor, but Uſufructuary at the Will of this Grand Lord.

In the Proſecution of this,

I. *I ſhall lay down ſome general Propoſitions for the clearing and confirming it.*

II. *I ſhall ſhew whereon this Right of Dominion is founded.*

III. *What the Nature of it is.*

IV. *Wherein it conſiſts; and how 'tis manifeſted.*

I. Some *general Propoſitions* for the clearing and confirming of it.

1. *We muſt know the Difference between the Might or Power of God, and his Authority.* We commonly mean by the *Power* of God, the Strength of God, whereby he is able to effect all his Purpoſes. By the *Authority* of God, we mean the Right he hath to act what he pleaſes. Omnipotence is his *Phyſical Power*, whereby he is *able* to do what he will. Dominion is his *moral Power*, whereby it is *lawful* for him to do what he will. Among Men, Strength and Authority are two diſtinct things. A Subject may be a *Giant*, and be ſtronger than his Prince, but yet he hath not the ſame Authority as his Prince. Worldly Dominion may be ſeated not in a brawny Arm, but a ſickly and infirm Body. As Knowledge and Wiſdom are diſtinguiſht; Knowledge reſpects the Matter, Being, and Nature of a Thing. Wiſdom reſpects the Harmony, Order, and actual uſefulneſs of a thing. Knowledge ſearcheth the Nature of a thing, and Wiſdom employs that thing to its proper Uſe. A Man may have much Knowledge, and little Wiſdom; ſo a Man may have much Strength and little or no Authority. A greater Strength may be ſetled in the Servant, but a greater Authority reſides in the Maſter; Strength is the natural Vigour of a Man. God hath an infinite Strength, he hath a Strength to bring to paſs whatſoever he decrees; he acts without *fainting* and weakneſs, *Iſaiah* 40. 28. and impairs not his Strength by the Exerciſe of it. As God is *Lord* he hath a Right to *Enact*; as he is Almighty, he hath a Power to *Execute*. His Strength is the executive Power belonging to his Dominion: In regard of his Sovereignty, he hath a Right to command all Creatures. In regard of his Almightineſs, he hath Power to make his Commands be obey'd; or to puniſh Men for the Violation of them. His Power is that whereby he ſubdues all Creatures under him; his Dominion is that, whereby he hath a Right to ſubdue all Creatures under him.

This Dominion is a Right of making what he pleaſes, of poſſeſſing what he made, of diſpoſing of what he doth poſſeſs; whereas his Power is an Ability to make, what he hath a Right to Create, to hold what he doth poſſeſs, and to execute the manner, wherein he reſolves to diſpoſe of his Creatures.

2. *All the other Attributes of God refer to this Perfection of Dominion.* They all beſpeak him fit for it, and are diſcovered in the Exerciſe of it, (which hath been manifeſted in the Diſcourſes of thoſe Attributes, we have paſſed through hitherto.) His Goodneſs fits him for it, becauſe he can never uſe his Authority but for the Good of the Creatures, and conducting them to their true End. His Wiſdom can never be miſtaken in the Exerciſe of it, his Power can accompliſh the Decrees, that flow from his abſolute Authority. What can be more Rightful, than the placing Authority in ſuch an infinite Goodneſs, that hath Bowels to pity, as well as a Scepter to ſway his Subjects? That hath a Mind to contrive, and a Will to regulate his Contrivances for his own Glory, and his Creatures Good; and an Arm of Power to bring to paſs, what he orders. Without this Dominion ſome Perfections, as Juſtice and Mercy, would lye in Obſcurity, and much of his Wiſdom would be ſhrouded from our Sight and Knowledge.

3. *This of Dominion, as well as that of Power, hath been acknowledged by all.* The *High Prieſt* was to *wave the Offering*, or ſhake it to and fro, *Exod.* 29. 24. which the *Jews* ſay, was cuſtomarily from *Eaſt* to *Weſt*, and from *North* to *South*, the four Quarters of the World, to ſignify God's Soveraignty over all the parts of the World. And ſome of the *Heathens* in their Adorations, turned their Bodies to all Quarters, to ſignifie the extenſive Dominion of God throughout the whole Earth. That Dominion did of right pertain to the Deity, was confeſt by the *Heathen* in the Name of *Baal*, given to their *Idols*, which ſignifies *Lord*; and was not the Name of one Idol, adored for a God, but common to all the Eaſtern Idols. God hath interwoven the Notion of his Sovereignty in the Nature and Conſtitution of Man, in the nobleſt and moſt inward Acts of his Soul, in that Faculty or Act which is moſt neceſſary for him, in his Converſe in this World, either with God or Man. 'Tis ſtampt upon the Conſcience of Man, and flaſhes in his Face in every act of Self-Judgment Conſcience paſſes upon a Man. Every Reflection of Conſcience implies an Obligation of Man to ſome Law *written in his Heart*, *Rom.* 2. 15. This Law cannot be without a Legiſlator, nor this Legiſlator without a Sovereign Dominion; theſe are but natural and eaſie Conſequences in the Mind of Man from every Act of Conſcience. The indelible Authority of Conſcience in Man, in the whole Exerciſe of it, bears a reſpect to the Soveraignty of God, clearly proclaims, not only a Supream Being, but a Supream Governour, and points Man directly to it, that a Man may as ſoon deny his having ſuch a reflecting Principle within him, as deny God's Dominion over him, and conſequently over the whole World of rational Creatures.

4. *This Notion of Soveraignty is inſeparable from the Notion of a God.* To acknowledge the *Exiſtence* of a God, and to acknowledge him a *Rewarder* are linkt together. *Heb.* 11. 6. To acknowledge him a Rewarder, is to acknowledge him a Governor; Rewards being the Marks of Dominion. The very Name of a God includes in it a Supremacy, and an actual Rule. He cannot be conceived as God, but he muſt be conceived as the higheſt Authority in the World. 'Tis as poſſible for him not to be God, as not to be Supream. Wherein can the Exerciſe of his Excellencies be apparent, but in his Soveraign Rule? To fancy an infinite Power without a Supream Dominion, is to fancy a mighty ſenſleſs Statue fit to be beheld, but not fit to be obey'd; as not being able, or having no right to give out Orders, or not caring for the Exerciſe of it. God cannot be ſuppoſed to be the chief Being, but he muſt be ſuppoſed to give Laws to all, and receive Laws from none. And if we ſuppoſe him with a Perfection of Juſtice and Righteouſneſs (which we muſt do, unleſs we would make a lame and imperfect God) we muſt ſuppoſe him to have an entire Dominion, without which he could never be able to manifeſt his Juſtice. And without a Supream Dominion, he could not manifeſt the Supremacy, and Infiniteneſs of his Righteouſneſs.

1. *We cannot ſuppoſe God a Creator, without ſuppoſing a Sovereign Dominion in him.* No Creature can be made without ſome Law in its Nature, if it had not Law, it would be created to no purpoſe, to nor egular end; it would be utterly unbecoming an Infinite Wiſdom to create a lawleſs Creature, a Creature wholly vain; much leſs can a rational

Creature

Creature be made without a Law; if it had no Law, it were not rational: For the very Notion of a rational Creature implies Reason to be a Law to it, and implies an acting by Rule. * If you could suppose rational Creatures without a Law, you might suppose, that they might Blaspheme their Creator, and Murder their Fellow Creatures, and commit the most abominable Villanies destructive to humane Society, without Sin; for *where there is no Law, there is no transgression.* But those things are accounted Sins by all Mankind, and Sins against the Supream Being: So that a Dominion and the Exercise of it is so fast linkt to God, so intirely in him, so intrinsick in his Nature, that it cannot be imagined that a rational Creature, can be made by him without a Stamp and Mark of that Dominion in his very Nature, and Frame; 'tis so inseparable from God in his very Act of Creation.

* *Maccov. Colleg. Theolog. 10. Disput. 18, p. 6, 7. or thereabout.*

2. *'Tis such a Dominion as cannot be renounced by God himself.* 'Tis so intrinsick and connatural to him, so in-laid in the Nature of God, that he cannot strip himself of it, nor of the Exercise of it, while any Creature remains. 'Tis preserv'd by him, for it could not subsist of its self; 'tis govern'd by him, it could not else answer its end. 'Tis impossible there can be a Creature, which hath not God for his Lord. Christ himself, though in regard of his Deity equal with God, yet in regard of his created State, and assuming our Nature, was God's Servant, was govern'd by him in the whole of his Office, acted according to his Command and Directions; God calls him his Servant, *Isaiah* 42. 1. And Christ in that Prophetick *Psalm* of him, calls God his *Lord.* Psal. 16. 2. *Oh my Soul, Thou hast said unto the Lord, thou art my Lord.* It was impossible it should be otherwise, Justice had been so far from being satisfy'd, that it had been highly incensed, if the order of things in the due subjection to God had been broke, and his Terms had not been complied with. It would be a Judgment upon the World, if God should give up the Government to any else, as it is when he gives *Children to be Princes,* Isaiah 3. 4. *i. e.* Children in understanding.

3. *'Tis so inseparable that it cannot be communicated to any Creature.* No Creature is able to exercise it, every Creature is unable to perform all the Offices that belong to this Dominion. No Creature can impose Laws upon the *Consciences* of Men: Man knows not the inlets into the Soul, his Pen cannot reach the inwards of Man. What Laws he hath power to propose to Conscience, he cannot see executed: because every Creature wants Omniscience, he is not able to perceive all those breaches of the Law, which may be committed at the same time in so many Cities, so many Chambers. Or suppose an *Angel,* in regard of the height of his standing, and the Insufficiency of Walls, and Darkness, and distance to obstruct his view, can behold Mens Actions, yet he cannot know the internal acts of Mens Minds, and Wills without some outward Eruption and Appearance of them. And if he be ignorant of them, how can he execute his Laws? If he only understand the outward Fact without the inward Thought, how can he dispense a Justice proportionable to the crime? He must needs be ignorant of that, which adds the greatest Aggravation sometimes to a sin, and inflict a lighter punishment upon that which receives a deeper Tincture from the inward posture of the Mind, than another Fact may do, which in the outward act may appear more base and unjust; and so while he intends Righteousness, may act a degree of Injustice. * Besides, no Creature can inflict a due Punishment for sin; that which is due to sin, is a loss of the Vision, and sight of God; but none can deprive any of that but God himself; nor can a Creature reward another with Eternal Life, which consists in Communion with God, which none but God can bestow.

* *Maccovii Colleg. Theolog. Disp. 18. p. 12, 13.*

II. Thing, *Wherein the Dominion of God is founded.*

1. *On the Excellency of his Nature.* Indeed a bare Excellency of Nature bespeaks a fitness for Government, but doth not properly convey a right of Government. Excellency speaks aptitude, not Title: A Subject may have more Wisdom than the Prince, and be fitter to hold the Reins of Government, but he hath not a Title to Royalty. A Man of large Capacity, and strong Vertue, is fit to serve his Country in Parliament, but the Election of the People conveys a Title to him. Yet a strain of Intellectual and Moral Abilities beyond others, is a Foundation for Dominion. And it is commonly seen that such Eminences in Men, though they do not invest them with a Civil Authority, or an Authority of Jurisdiction, yet they create a Veneration in the Minds of Men; their Vertue attracts Reverence, and their Advice is regarded as an Oracle. Old Men by their Age, when stored with more Wisdom and Knowledge by reason of their long experience, acquire a kind of power over the younger in their Dictates and Counsels, so that they gain by the strength of that Excellency a real Authority in the Minds of those Men they converse with, and possess themselves of a deep respect from them. God therefore being an incomprehensible Ocean of all Perfection, and possessing infinitely all those Vertues, that may lay a Claim to Dominion, hath the first Foundation of it in his own Nature. His incomparable and unparallel'd Excellency, as well as the Greatness of his Work, attracts the voluntary Worship of him as a Sovereign Lord, *Psal.* 86. 8. *Among the Gods there is none like unto thee, neither are there any Works like unto thy Work. All Nations shall come and Worship before thee.* Though his Benefits are great Engagements to our Obedience, and Affection, yet his infinite Majesty and Perfection requires the first place in our Acknowledgments and Adorations. Upon this account God claims it, *Isa.* 46. 9. *I am God, and there is none like me, I will do all my pleasure:* And the Prophet *Jeremy* upon the same account acknowledgeth it, *Jer.* 10. 6, 7. *Forasmuch as there is none like unto thee, Oh Lord, thou art great, and thy name is great in might: Who would not fear thee, O King of Nations? For to thee doth it appertain: Forasmuch as there is none like unto thee.* And this is a more noble Title of Dominion, it being an uncreated Title, and more eminent than that of Creation or Preservation. * This is the natural Order God hath plac'd in his Creatures, that the more excellent should rule the inferiour. He committed not the Government of lower Creatures to *Lions* and *Tygers,* that have a delight in Blood, but no knowledge of Vertue; but to *man,* who had an eminence in his Nature above other Creatures, and was formed with a perfect rectitude, and a height of reason to guide the Reins over them. In Man the Soul being of a more sublime nature, is set of right to rule over the Body; the Mind, the most excellent Faculty of the Soul, to rule over the other Powers of it; and Wisdom the most excellent habit of the Mind, to guide and regulate that in its determinations; and when the Body and sensitive Appetite controul the Soul and Mind, 'tis an Usurpation against Nature, not a Rule according to Nature; the Excellency therefore of the Divine Nature is the natural Foundation for his Dominion. He hath Wisdom to know what is fit for him to do, and an immutable Righteousness whereby he cannot do any thing base and unworthy. He hath a fore-knowledge whereby he is able to order all things to answer his own glo-

* *Raynaud. Theolog. Nat. pag. 757.*

rious Deſigns, and the end of his Government; that nothing can go awry, nothing put him to a ſtand, and conſtrain him to meditate new Counſels.

* *Camero* p. 271. *Amyrald* Differt. p. 72, 73.

* So that if it could be ſuppoſed, that the World had not been created by him, that the parts of it had met together by chance, and been compacted into ſuch a Body; none but God the ſupream and moſt excellent being in the World, could have merited, and deſervedly challenged the Government of it: Becauſe nothing had an Excellency of Nature, to capacitate it for it, as he hath, or to enter into a Conteſt with him for a Sufficiency to govern.

2. *'Tis founded in his Act of Creation.* He is the Sovereign Lord, as he is the Almighty Creator. The Relation of an entire Creator induceth the Relation of an abſolute Lord; he that gives Being, Life, Motion, that is the ſole cauſe of the Being of a thing, which was before nothing, that hath nothing to concur with him, nothing to aſſiſt him, but by his ſole Power commands it to ſtand up into Being, is the unqueſtionable Lord and Proprietor of that thing, that hath no dependance but upon him. And by this Act of Creation which extended to all things, he became univerſal Sovereign over all things. And thoſe that wave the Excellency of his Nature as the Foundation of his Government, eaſily acknowledge the ſufficiency of it upon his actual Creation. His Dominion of Juriſdiction reſults from Creation. When God himſelf makes an Oration in defence of his Sovereignty, *Job* 38. His chief Arguments are drawn from Creation, and *Pſal.* 95. 3, 5. *The Lord is a great King above all Gods, the Sea is his, and he made it.* And ſo the *Apoſtle* in his Sermon to the *Athenians.* As he *made the World and all things therein*, he is ſtiled *Lord of Heaven and Earth*, Acts 17. 24. His Dominion alſo of property ſtands upon this *Baſis*, Pſal. 89. 7. *The Heavens are thine, the Earth alſo is thine, as for the World and the fulneſs thereof thou haſt founded them.* Upon this Title of forming *Iſrael* as a Creature, or rather as a Church, he demands their Service to him as their Sovereign. *Oh Jacob and Iſrael, thou art my Servant, I have formed thee, thou art my Servant, Oh Iſrael*, Iſaiah 44. 21. The Sovereignty of God naturally ariſeth from the Relation of all things to himſelf as their intire Creator, and their natural and inſeparable dependance upon him in regard of their Being and well Beings. It depends not upon the Election of Men; God hath a natural Dominion over us as Creatures, before he hath a Dominion by conſent over us as Converts. As ſoon as ever any thing began to be a Creature, it was a Vaſſal to God, as a Lord. Every Man is acknowledged to have a right of poſſeſſing what he hath made, and a power of Dominion over what he hath fram'd. He may either cheriſh his own work, or daſh it in pieces; he may either add a greater comlineſs to it, or deface what he hath already imparted. He hath a right of property in it; no other Man can without injury pilfer his own Work from him. The Work hath no Propriety in its ſelf: the right muſt lie in the immediate framer, or in the Perſon that imployed him. The *Firſt Cauſe* of every thing hath an unqueſtionable Dominion of Propriety in it upon the ſcore as Juſtice. By the Law of Nations, the firſt finder of a Country is eſteemed the rightful Poſſeſſor, and Lord of that Country, and the firſt Inventor of an Art hath a right of exerciſing it. If a Man hath a juſt claim of Dominion over that thing, whoſe Materials were not of his framing, but from only the addition of a new Figure from his Skill; as a Limner over his Picture, the Cloth whereof he never made, nor the Colours wherewith he draws it, were ever endued by him with their diſtinct Qualities, but only he applies them by his Art, to compoſe ſuch a Figure; much more hath God a rightful claim of Dominion over his Creatures, whoſe entire Being both in Matter and Form, and every Particle of their Excellency was breathed out by the Word of his Mouth. He did not only give the Matter a Form, but beſtowed upon the Matter it ſelf a Being; it was formed by none to his hand, as the Matter is on which an *Artiſt* works. He had the Being of all things in his own Power, and it was at his Choice whether he would impart it or no; there can be no juſter and ſtronger ground of a claim than this. A Man hath a right to a piece of Braſs, or Gold by his purchaſe, but when by his engraving he hath form'd it into an excellent Statue, there reſults an increaſe of his Right upon the account of his Artifice. God's Creation of the Matter of Man gave him a Right over Man; but his Creation of him in ſo eminent an Excellency, with reaſon to guide him, a clear Eye of Underſtanding to diſcern Light from Darkneſs, and Truth from Falſhood, a freedom of Will to act accordingly, and an original Righteouſneſs as the varniſh and beauty of all: Here is the *ſtrongeſt foundation* for a claim of Authority over Man; and the ſtrongeſt Obligation on Man for ſubjection to God. If all thoſe things had been paſt over to God by another hand, he could not be the ſupream Lord, nor could have an abſolute Right to diſpoſe of them at his pleaſure: That would have been the Invaſion of another's Right. Beſides, *Creation* is the only firſt Diſcovery of his Dominion. * Before the World was framed there was nothing but God himſelf, and properly nothing is ſaid to have Dominion over its ſelf; this is a Relative Attribute, reflecting on the Works of God. He had a right of Dominion in his Nature from Eternity, but before Creation he was actually Lord only of a nullity: Where there is nothing, it can have no Relation, nothing is not the ſubject of Poſſeſſion nor of Dominion. There could be no exerciſe of this Dominion without Creation; What exerciſe can a Sovereign have without Subjects? *Sovereignty* ſpeaks a Relation to Subjects; and none is properly a Sovereign, without Subjects. To conclude from hence doth reſult *God's univerſal Dominion:* For being maker of all, he is the Ruler of all. *And his perpetual Dominion:* For as long as God continues in the Relation of Creator, the Right of his Sovereignty as Creator cannot be aboliſh'd.

* *Stoughton* Righteous Mans Plea, Serm. 6. p. 28.

3. *As God is the final Cauſe, or End of all, he is Lord of all.* * The *End* hath a greater Sovereignty in actions, than the *Actor it ſelf:* The Actor hath a Sovereignty over others in action, but the end for which any one works hath a Sovereignty over the Agent himſelf. A Limner hath a Sovereignty over the Picture he is framing, or hath fram'd, but the end for which he fram'd it, either his profit he deſign'd from it, or the Honour and Credit of Skill he aim'd at in it, hath a Dominion over the Limner himſelf. The end moves, and excites the Artiſt to work, it ſpirits him in it, conducts him in his whole buſineſs, poſſeſſes his Mind, and ſits triumphant in him in all the progreſs of his work; 'Tis the firſt cauſe for which the whole work is wrought. Now God in his actual Creation of all, is the Sovereign end of all; *For thy pleaſure they are, and were created*, Rev. 4. 11. *The Lord hath made all things for himſelf*, Prov. 16. 4. Man indeed is the ſubordinate and immediate end of the lower Creation: And therefore had the Dominion over other Creatures granted to him. But God being the ultimate and principal end, hath the Sovereign and principal Dominion; all things as much refer to him as the laſt end, as they flow from him as the firſt Cauſe. So that as I ſaid before, if the World had been compacted together by a jumbling

* Vid. *Leſſium de perfect.* Divin. p. 77. 78.

jumbling chance without a wiſe hand, as ſome have fooliſhly imagined, none could have been an Antagoniſt with God for the government of the World, but God in regard of the Excellency of his Nature, would have been the Rector of it, unleſs thoſe Atomes that had compoſed the World, had had an ability to govern it. Since there could be no univerſal end of all things but God, God only can claim an intire right to the Government of it: For though Man be the end of the lower Creation, yet Man is not the end of himſelf, and his own Being, he is not the end of the Creation of the ſupream Heavens, he is not able to govern them, they are out of his ken, and out of his reach. None fit in regard of the Excellency of Nature, to be the chief end of the whole World but God: And therefore none can have a right to the Dominion of it but God. In this regard God's Dominion differs from the Dominion of all Earthly Potentates. All the Subjects in Creation were made for God as their end, ſo are not People for Rulers, but Rulers made for People for their Protection, and the Preſervation of order in Societies.

4. *The Dominion of God is founded upon his preſervation of things*, Pſal. 95.3,4. *The Lord is a great King above all Gods*, Why? *In his hand are all the deep places of the Earth.* While his hand holds things, his hand hath a Dominion over them. He that holds a ſtone in the Air, exerciſeth a Dominion over its natural Inclination in hindring it from falling. The Creature depends wholly upon God in its Preſervation; as ſoon as that Divine hand which ſuſtains every thing, were withdrawn, a languiſhment and ſwooning would be the next turn in the Creature. He is call'd *Lord*, *Adonai* in regard of his ſuſtentation of all things by his continual influx. The Word coming of אדן which ſignifies a baſis or pillar, that ſupports a Building. God is the Lord of all, as he is the ſuſtainer of all by his Power, as well as the Creator of all by his Word. The Sun hath a Sovereign Dominion over its own beams, which depend upon it, ſo that if he withdraws himſelf, they all attend him, and the World is left in darkneſs. God maintains the vigour of all things, conducts them in their Operations; ſo that nothing that they are, nothing that they have, but is owing to this preſerving Power. The Maſter of this great Family may as well be called the Lord of it, ſince every Member of it depends upon him for the ſupport of that being, he firſt gave them, and holds of his Empire. As the right to govern reſulted from Creation, ſo it is perpetuated by the preſervation of things.

5. *The Dominion of God is ſtrengthened by the innumerable benefits he beſtows upon his Creatures.* The Benefits he confers upon us after Creation, are not the original ground of his Dominion. A Man hath not Authority over his Servant from the Kindneſs he ſhews to him, but his Authority commenceth before any Act of Kindneſs, and is founded upon a right of purchaſe, conqueſt, or compact. Dominion doth not depend upon meer benefits: Then Inferiours might have Dominion over Superiours. A Peaſant may ſave the Life of a Prince, to whom he was not ſubject; he hath not therefore a right to ſtep up into his Throne, and give Laws to him. And Children that maintain their Parents in their Poverty, might then acquire an Authority over them, which they can never climb to: Becauſe the benefits they confer, cannot parallel the benefits they have received from the Authors of their Lives. The Bounties of God to us add nothing to the intrinſick right of his natural Dominion, they being the Effects of that Sovereignty, as he is a Rewarder and Governour. As the benefits a Prince beſtows upon his Favourite increaſes not that right of Authority, which is inherent in the Crown: But ſtrengthens that Dominion, as it ſtands in relation to the Receiver, by increaſing the Obligation of the Favourite to an Obſervance of him, not only as his natural Prince, but his gracious Benefactor. The Beneficence of God adds, though not an original Right of Power, yet a Foundation of a ſtronger upbraiding the Creature, if he walk in a Violation and Forgetfulneſs of thoſe benefits, and pull in pieces that ingenuous Duty they call for; and an Occaſion of exerciſing of Juſtice in puniſhing the Delinquent; which is a part of his Empire, *Iſaiah* 1.2. *Hear O Heavens, and give Ear O Earth, the Lord hath ſpoken, I have nouriſhed Children, and they have rebelled againſt me.* Thus the fundamental Right as Creator, is made more indiſputable by his Relation as a Benefactor, and more as being ſo after a Forfeiture of what was enjoyed by Creation. The benefits of God are innumerable, and ſo magnificent, that they cannot meet with any Compenſation from the Creature: And therefore do neceſſarily require a ſubmiſſion from the Creature, and an Acknowledgment of Divine Authority. But that benefit of Redemption doth add a ſtronger Right of Dominion to God: Since he hath not only as a Creator given them Being, and Life as his Creatures, but paid a price, the price of his Sons Blood for their reſcue from Captivity, ſo that he hath a Sovereignty of Grace as well as Nature, and the ranſom'd ones belong to him as Redeemer, as well as Creator, 1 *Cor.* 6. 19, 20. *Ye are not your own: For ye are bought with a price*, therefore your Body and your Spirit are God's. By this he acquir'd a Right of another kind, and bought us from that uncontroulable Lordſhip, we affected over our ſelves by the Sin of *Adam*, that he might uſe us as his own peculiar, for his own Glory and Service. By this Redemption there reſults to God a Right over our Bodies, over our Spirits, over our Services, as well as by Creation, and to ſhew the ſtrength of this Right, the Apoſtle repeats it; *you are bought*, a purchaſe cannot be without a price paid; but he adds price alſo [*bought with a price.*] To ſtrengthen the Title. Purchaſe gave him a new Right; and the greatneſs of the Price eſtabliſhed that Right. The More a Man pays for a thing, the more uſually we ſay, he deſerves to have it, he hath paid enough for it. It was indeed price enough, and too much for ſuch vile Creatures as we are.

III. The Third thing is, *The Nature of this Dominion.*

1. This Dominion is *Independent*. His Throne is in the Heavens; the Heavens depend not upon the Earth, nor God upon his Creatures. Since he is *Independent* in regard of his Eſſence, he is ſo in his Dominion, which flows from the Excellency and Fulneſs of his Eſſence. As he receives his Eſſence from none, ſo he derives his Dominion from none. All other Dominion except paternal Authority, is rooted originally in the Wills of Men. * The firſt Title was the Conſent of the People, or the Conqueſt of others by the help of thoſe People that firſt conſented. And in the Exerciſe of it, earthly Dominion depends upon Aſſiſtance of the Subjects, and the Members being join'd with the Head carry on the work of Government, and prevent Civil Diſſentions; in the ſupport of it, it depends upon the Subjects Contributions, and Taxes. The Subjects in their ſtrength are the Arms, and in their Purſes the Sinews of Government. But God depends upon none in the Foundation of his Government; he is not a Lord by the Votes of his Vaſſals. Nor is it ſucceſſively handed to him by any Predeceſſor, nor conſtituted by the Power of a Superiour. Nor forced he his way by War, and Conqueſt, nor precariouſly attained it by Suit or Flattery, or bribing Promiſes. He holds not the Right of his Empire from any other; he hath no Superior to hand him to his

* *Raynaud.* Theolog. Natural. *p.* 760, 761, 762.

Throne, and ſettle him by Commiſſion. He is therefore called *King of Kings*, and *Lord of Lords*, having none above him. *A great King above all Gods*, Pſal. 95. 3. Needing no Licence from any when to act, nor direction how to act, or aſſiſtance in his action: He owes not any of thoſe to any perſon; he was not ordered by any other to create, and therefore receives not Orders from any other to rule over what he hath created. He received not his Power and Wiſdom from another, and therefore is not ſubject to any for the Rule of his Government. He only made his own Subjects, and from himſelf hath the ſole Authority; his own Will was the cauſe of their Beings, and his own Will is the director of their actions. He is not determined by his Creatures, in any of his Motions, but determines the Creatures in all. His Actions are not regulated by any Law without him, but by a Law within him, the Law of his own Nature. 'Tis impoſſible he can have any Rule without himſelf: Becauſe there is nothing Superior to himſelf. Nor doth he depend upon any in the Exerciſe of his Government, he needs no Servants in it, when he uſes Creatures it is not out of want of their help, but for the Manifeſtation of his Wiſdom and Power. What he doth by his Subjects, he can do by himſelf: *The Government is upon his Shoulder*, Iſaiah 9. 6. To ſhew that he needs not any ſupporters. All other Governments flow from him, all other Authorities depend upon him; *Dei Gratia*, or *Dei Providentia* is in the Style of Princes. As their Being is derived from his Power, ſo their Authority is but a branch of his Dominion. They are Governors by Divine Providence; God is Governor by his ſole nature. All Motions depend upon the firſt Heaven, which moves all; but that depends upon nothing. The Government of Chriſt depends upon God's increated Dominion, and is by Commiſſion from him; Chriſt aſſum'd not this Honour to himſelf, *But he that ſaid unto him thou art my Son*, beſtow'd it upon him. *He put all things under his feet*, but not himſelf, 1 *Cor.* 15. 27. *When he ſaith all things are put under him, he is excepted, which did put all things under him.* He ſits ſtill as an Independent Governour upon his Throne.

2. This Dominion is *Abſolute*. If his Throne be in the Heavens, there is nothing to controul him. If he be Independent, he muſt needs be Abſolute; ſince he hath no cauſe in Conjunction with him as Creator, that can ſhare with him in his Right, or reſtrain him in the Diſpoſal of his Creature. His Authority is unlimited: in this regard the Title of Lord becomes not any but God *properly*. *Tiberius* thought none of the beſt, though one of the ſubtileſt Princes, accounted the Title of *Lord* a Reproach to him: Since he was not abſolute.*

* *Sueton* de Tiberio cap. 27.

1. *Abſolute in regard of Freedom and Liberty.*

1. Thus *Creation* is a work of *meer Sovereignty*; he *Created*, becauſe it was his pleaſure to create, *Rev.* 4. 11. He is not neceſſitated to do this or that. He might have choſen, whether he would have fram'd an Earth, and Heavens, and laid the Foundations of his Chambers in the Waters. He was under no Obligation, to reduce things from nullity to exiſtence.

2. *Preſervation* is the fruit of his *Sovereignty*. When he had called the World to ſtand out, he might have ordered it to return into its dark Den of nothingneſs, ript up every part of its Foundation, or have given Being to many more Creatures than he did. If you conſider his abſolute Sovereignty, why might he not have deveſted *Adam* preſently of thoſe rational Perfections, wherewith he had endowed him? And might he not have metamorphos'd him into ſome Beaſt, and elevated ſome Beaſt into a rational Nature? Why might he not have degraded an *Angel* to a Worm, and advanc'd a Worm to the Nature and Condition of an *Angel*? Why might he not have revok'd that grant of Dominion, which he had paſſed to Man over all Creatures? It was free to him to permit Sin to enter into the Earth, or to have excluded it out of the Earth, as he doth out of Heaven.

3. *Redemption* is a fruit of his Sovereignty. By his abſolute Sovereignty he might have confirmed all the Angels in their ſtanding by Grace, and prevented the revolt of any of their Members from him; and when there was a revolt both in Heaven and Earth, it was free to him, to have call'd out his Son to aſſume the Angelical, as well as the Humane Nature, or have exerciſed his Dominion in the deſtruction of Men and Devils, rather than in the Redemption of any; he was under no Obligation to reſtore either the one or the other.

4. *May he not impoſe what terms he pleaſes?* May he not impoſe what Laws he pleaſe, and exact what he will of his Creatures without promiſing any Rewards? May he not uſe his own for his own Honour, as well as Men uſe for their Credit what they do poſſeſs by his Indulgence?

5. *Affliction* is an Act of his Sovereignty. By this Right of Sovereignty may not God take away any Man's Goods, ſince they were his Doles? As he was not indebted to us, when he beſtow'd them, ſo he cannot wrong us, when he removes them. He takes from us what is more his own, than it is ours, and was never ours but by his Gift, and that for a time only, not for ever. By this Right, he may determine our times, put a period to our days, when he pleaſes, ſtrip us of one Member, and lop off another. Man's being was from him, and why ſhould he not have a Sovereignty to take, what he had a Sovereignty to give? Why ſhould this ſeem ſtrange to any of us, ſince we our ſelves exerciſe an abſolute Dominion over thoſe things in our Poſſeſſion, which have ſenſe and feeling; as well as over thoſe that want it? Doth not every Man think he hath an Abſolute Authority over the Utenſils of his Houſe, over his Horſe, his Dog, to preſerve, or kill him, to do what he pleaſe with him, without rendring any other reaſon, than *'tis my own*? May not God do much more? Doth not his Dominion over the Work of his hands tranſcend that which a Man can claim over his Beaſt, that he never gave Life unto? He that dares diſpute againſt God's Abſolute Right, fancies himſelf as much a God as his Creator; underſtands not the vaſt difference between the Divine Nature and his own; between the Sovereignty of God and his own, which is all the Theam God himſelf diſcourſeth upon in thoſe ſtately *Chapters*, Job 38, 39, *&c.* Not mentioning a word of *Job*'s Sin, but only vindicating the Rights of his own Authority. Nor doth *Job* in his reply, *Job* 40. 4. ſpeak of his Sin, but of his natural Vileneſs as a Creature in the Preſence of his Creator.

By this Right God unſtops the Bottles of Heaven in one place, and ſtops them in another, cauſing it *to Rain upon one City and not upon another*, Amos 4. 7. Ordering the Clouds to move to this or that quarter, where he hath a mind to be a *Benefactor* or a *Judge*.

6. *Unequal Diſpenſations are Acts of his Sovereignty.* By this Right he is patient toward thoſe, whoſe Sins by the common Voice of Men deſerve ſpeedy Judgments, and pours out pain upon thoſe, that are patterns of Vertue to the World. By this he gives ſometimes the worſt of Men an Ocean of Wealth and Honour to ſwim in, and reduceth an uſeful and exemplary Grace to a ſcanty Poverty. By this he *Rules the Kingdoms of men*, and ſets a Crown upon the Head of the *baſeſt of men*, Dan. 4. 17. While he depoſeth another, that ſeem'd to

deſerve

deſerve a weightier Diadem. This is, as he is the Lord of the Ammunition of his Thunders, and the Treaſures of his Bounty.

7. *He may inflict what torments he pleaſes.* Some ſay by this right of Sovereignty he may inflict what torments he pleaſeth upon an innocent perſon; which indeed will not bear the nature of a puniſhment as an effect of Juſtice, without the ſuppoſal of a crime; but a torment as an effect of that Sovereign Right he hath over his Creature, which is as abſolute over his work, as the *Potters* power is *over his own clay*, Jerem. 18. 6. Rom. 9. 21. *May not the Potter after his labour, either ſet his *veſſel* up to adorn his Houſe, or knock it in pieces, and fling it upon the *Dunghill*; ſeparate it to ſome noble uſe, or condemn it to ſome ſordid Service? Is the right of God over his Creatures leſs than that of the Potter over his Veſſel, ſince God contributed all to his Creature, but the Potter never made the Clay, which is the ſubſtance of the Veſſel, nor the Water which was neceſſary, to make it tractable, but only moulded the ſubſtance of it into ſuch a ſhape? The Veſſel that is fram'd, and the Potter that frames it differ only in Life, the Body of the Potter whereby he executes his Authority, is of no better a mould than the Clay the matter of his Veſſel; ſhall he have ſo abſolute a power over that, which is ſo near him, and ſhall not God over that which is ſo infinitely diſtant from him? The *Veſſel* perhaps might plead for it ſelf, that it was once part of the Body of a Man, and as good as the *Potter* himſelf; whereas no Creature can plead, it was part of God, and as good as God himſelf. Though there be no Man in the World, but deſerves affliction, yet the *Scripture* ſometimes lays affliction upon the ſcore of God's Dominion, without any reſpect to the ſin of the afflicted perſon, *James* 5. 15. Speaking of a ſick perſon, *if he have committed ſins they ſhall be forgiven him*, whereby is implied, that he might be ſtruck into ſickneſs by God, without any reſpect to a particular ſin, but in a way of Tryal; and that his affliction ſprung not from any exerciſe of Divine Juſtice, but from his abſolute Sovereignty. And ſo in the caſe of the blind man, when the Diſciples askt, for what ſin it was, whether for his *own*, or his *Parents Sin* he was born blind, *John* 9. 3. *Neither hath this man ſinned nor his Parents*; which ſpeaks in its ſelf not againſt the whole current of Scripture; but the words import thus much, that God in this blindneſs from the birth, neither reſpected any ſin of the Man's own, nor of his Parents, but he did it as an abſolute Sovereign, to manifeſt his own Glory in that miraculous Cure, which was wrought by Chriſt. Though afflictions do not happen without the deſert of the Creature, yet ſome afflictions may be ſent without any particular reſpect to that deſert, meerly for the manifeſtation of God's Glory, ſince the Creature was made for God himſelf and his honour, and therefore may be uſed in a ſerviceableneſs to the Glory of the Creator.

*Leſſius de perfect. Divin. p. 66, 67.

2. *His Dominion is abſolute in regard of unlimitedneſs by any Law without him.* He is an abſolute Monarch, that makes Laws for his Subjects, but is not bound by any himſelf, nor receives any Rules and Laws from his Subjects for the Management of his Government. But moſt Governments in the World are bounded by Laws made by common Conſent. But when Kings are not limited by the Laws of their Kingdoms, yet they are bounded by the Law of Nature, and by the Providence of God. But God is under no Law without himſelf, his Rule is within him, the Rectitude and Righteouſneſs of his own Nature, he is not under that Law he hath preſcribed to Man. The Law was not made for a *Righteous Man*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 9. Much leſs for a Righteous God. God is his own Law, his own Nature is his Rule; as his own Glory is his End, himſelf is his End, and himſelf is his Law. He is moved by nothing without himſelf, nothing hath the Dominion of a Motive over him, but his own Will, which is his Rule for all his Actions in Heaven and Earth. *Dan.* 4. 32. *He rules in the Kingdom of Men, and gives it to whomſoever he will.* And *Rom.* 9. 18. *He hath Mercy on whom he will have Mercy*; As all things are wrought by him, according to his own Eternal Ideas in his own mind, ſo all is wrought by him according to the inward Motive in his own Will, which was the Manifeſtation of his own Honour. The greateſt Motives therefore that the beſt Perſons have uſed, when they have pleaded for any Grant from God, was his own Glory, which would be advanced by an Anſwer of their Petition.

3. His Dominion is Abſolute *in regard of Supremacy and uncontroulableneſs.* None can implead him, and cauſe him to render a reaſon of his actions. He is the Sovereign King, *Who may ſay unto him what doſt thou?* Eccleſ. 8. 4. 'Tis an abſurd thing for any to diſpute with God, *Rom.* 9. 20. *Who art thou, O Man, that replyeſt againſt God?* Thou a Man, a piece of Duſt, to argue with God, incomprehenſibly above thy Reaſon, about the reaſon of his Works. Let the Potſheard ſtrive with the Potſheards of the Earth, but *not with him that faſhioned them*, Iſaiah 45. 9. In all the deſolations he works, he aſſerts his own Supremacy to ſilence men, *Pſal.* 46. 10. *Be ſtill, and know, that I am God.* Beware of any quarrelling motions in your minds, 'tis ſufficient that I am God, that is, ſupream, and will not be impleaded, and cenſur'd, or worded with by any Creature about what I do. He is not bound to render a reaſon of any of his proceedings. Subjects are accountable to their Princes, and Princes to God, God to none; ſince he is not limited by any Superior, his Prerogative is Supream.

4. His Dominion is Abſolute *in regard of Irreſiſtibleneſs.* Other Governments are bounded by Law, ſo that what a Governour hath ſtrength to do, he hath not a right to do. Other Governours have a limited ability, that what they have a right to do, they have not always a ſtrength to do, they may want a power, to execute their own Counſels. But God is deſtitute of neither; he hath an infinite right, and an infinite Strength; his word is a Law, he commands things to ſtand out of nothing, and they do ſo. *He commanded*, or *ſpake* ὁ ἐπέταξε, *light to ſhine out of darkneſs*, 2 Cor. 4. 6. There is no diſtance of time between his Word, *Let there be Light, and there was Light*, Gen. 1. 3. Magiſtrates often uſe not their Authority for fear of giving occaſion to Inſurrections, which may over-turn their Empire. But if the Lord will work, *Who ſhall let it?* Iſaiah 43. 19. And if God will not work, who ſhall force him? He can check, and overturn all other Powers, his Decrees cannot be ſtopped, nor his Hand held back by any; if he wills to daſh the whole World in pieces, no Creature can maintain its Being againſt his Order. He ſets *the Ordinances of the Heavens*, and *the Dominion thereof in the Earth.* And *ſends Lightnings, that they may go and ſay* unto him, *here we are*, Job 38. 33, 34.

3. Yet *this Dominion, though it be Abſolute, is not Tyrannical; but 'tis managed by the Rules of Wiſdom, Righteouſneſs, and Goodneſs.* If his Throne be in the Heavens, it is Pure, and Good: becauſe the Heavens are the pureſt Parts of the Creation, and influence by their Goodneſs, the lower Earth. Since he is his own Rule, and his Nature is infinitely Wiſe, Holy, and Righteous, he cannot do a thing but what is unqueſtionably agreeable with

Wiſdom,

Wiſdom, Juſtice, and Purity. In all the Exerciſes of his Soveraigh Right, he is never unattended with thoſe Perfections of his Nature. Might not God by his abſolute Power have pardon'd Mens Guilt, and thrown the invading Sin out of his Creatures? But in regard of his Truth pawn'd in his Threatning, and in regard of his Juſtice, which demanded Satisfaction, he would not. Might not God by his abſolute Soveraignty, admit a Man into his Friendſhip, without giving him any Grace? But in regard of the Incongruity of ſuch an Act to his Wiſdom and Holineſs, he will not. May he not by his abſolute Power, refuſe to accept a Man that deſires to pleaſe him, and reject a purely innocent Creature? But in regard of his Goodneſs and Righteouſneſs he will not. Though innocence be amiable in its own Nature, yet it is not neceſſary in regard of God's Soveraignty, that he ſhould love it; but in regard of his Goodneſs it is neceſſary, and he will never do otherwiſe. As God never acts to the utmoſt of his Power, ſo he never exerts the utmoſt of his Soveraignty: becauſe it would be inconſiſtent with thoſe other Properties, which render him perfectly adorable to the Creature. As no intelligent Creature, neither Angel nor Man, can be framed without a Law in his Nature; ſo we cannot imagine God without a Law in his own Nature, unleſs we would fancy him a rude, tyrannical, fooliſh Being, that hath nothing of Holineſs, Goodneſs, Righteouſneſs, Wiſdom. If he *made the Heavens in Wiſdom*, *Pſal.* 136. 5. He made them by ſome Rule, not by a meer Will, but a Rule within himſelf, not without. A wiſe Work is never the reſult of an abſolute unguided Will.

1. *This Dominion is managed by the Rule of Wiſdom.* What may appear to us, to have no other Spring than abſolute Sovereignty, would be found to have a Depth of amazing Wiſdom and accountable Reaſon, were our ſhort Capacities long enough to fathom it. When the *Apoſtle* had been diſcourſing of the eternal Counſels of God, in ſeizing upon one Man, and letting go another, in rejecting the *Jews*, and gathering in the *Gentiles*, which appears to us to be Reſults only of an abſolute Dominion, yet he reſolves not thoſe amazing Acts into that, without taking it for granted, that they were govern'd by exact Wiſdom, though beyond his Ken to ſee, and his Line to ſound. *Rom.* 11. 33. *Oh the depth of the Riches both of the Wiſdom and Knowledge of God; how unſearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways paſt finding out?* There are ſome things in Matters of State that may ſeem to be Acts of meer Will, but if we were acquainted with the *Arcana Imperii*, the inward Engines which moved them, and the Ends aimed at in thoſe Undertakings, we might find a rich Vein of Prudence in them, to incline us to judge otherwiſe than bare arbitrary Proceedings. The other Attributes of Power and Goodneſs are more eaſily perceptible in the Works of God, than his Wiſdom. The firſt view of the Creation ſtrikes us with this Sentiment, that the Author of this great Fabrick was mighty and beneficial; but his Wiſdom lies deeper, than to be diſcern'd at the firſt Glance, without a diligent Enquiry. As at the firſt caſting our Eyes upon the Sea, we behold its Motion, Colour, and ſomething of its Vaſtneſs, but we cannot preſently fathom the Depth of it, and underſtand thoſe lower Fountains, that ſupply that great Ocean of Waters: 'Tis part of God's Soveraignty, as it is of the wiſeſt Princes, that he hath a Wiſdom beyond the reach of his Subjects; 'tis not for a finite Nature to underſtand an infinite Wiſdom, nor for a fooliſh Creature, that hath loſt his Underſtanding by the Fall, to judge of the Reaſon of the Methods of a wiſe Counſellor. Yet thoſe Actions that favour moſt of Sovereignty, preſent Men with ſome Glances of his Wiſdom. Was it meer Will, that he ſuffered ſome Angels to fall? But his Wiſdom was in it for the Manifeſtation of his Juſtice; as it was alſo in the Caſe of *Pharaoh*. Was it meer Will that he ſuffered Sin to be committed by Man? Was not his Wiſdom in this for the Diſcovery of his Mercy, which never had been known without that, which ſhould render a Creature miſerable? *Rom.* 11. 32. *He hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.* Though God had ſuch an abſolute Right to have annihilated the World, as ſoon as ever he had made it, yet how had this conſiſted with his Wiſdom, to have erected a Creature after his own Image one Day, and deſpis'd it ſo much the next, as to caſhier it from Being? What Wiſdom had it been, to make a thing only to deſtroy it? To repent of his Work as ſoon as ever it came out of his Hands, without any Occaſion offered by the Creature. If God be ſuppoſed to be Creator, he muſt be ſuppoſed to have an End in Creation; what End can that be but Himſelf and his own Glory, the Manifeſtation of the Perfection of his Nature? What Perfection could have been diſcovered in ſo quick an annihilation, but that of his Power in Creating, and of his Soveraignty in ſnatching away the Being of his Rational Creature, before it had laid the Methods of Acting? What Wiſdom to make a World and a reaſonable Creature for no Uſe? Not to praiſe and honour him, but to be broken in pieces and deſtroy'd by him?

2. *His Soveraignty is managed according to the Rule of Righteouſneſs.* Worldly Princes often fancy Tyranny and Oppreſſion to be the chief Marks of Soveraignty, and think their Scepters not beautiful, till died in Blood, nor the Throne ſecure, till eſtabliſhed upon ſlain Carcaſſes. But *Juſtice and Judgment are the Foundation of the Throne* of God, *Pſal.* 89. 14. Alluding perhaps to the Supporters of Arms, and Thrones, which among Princes are the Figures of Lions, Emblems of Courage, as *Solomon* had, 1 *Kings* 10. 19. But God makes not ſo much Might, as Right the ſupport of his. He ſits on a *Throne of Holineſs*, *Pſal.* 47. 8. As he Reigns over the Heathens, referring to the calling of the *Gentiles* after the rejecting of the *Jews*; the *Pſalmiſt* here praiſing the Righteouſneſs of it, as the Apoſtle had the unſearchable Wiſdom of it. *Rom.* 11. 33. *In all his ways he is righteous*, *Pſal.* 145. 17. In his Ways of Terror, as well as thoſe of Sweetneſs; in thoſe Works wherein little elſe but that of his Soveraignty appears to us. 'Tis always linkt with his Holineſs, that he will not do by his abſolute Right any thing but what is conformable to it: ſince his Dominion is founded upon the Excellency of his Nature, he will not do any thing but what is agreeable to it, and becoming his other perfections. Though he be an abſolute Sovereign, he is not an Arbitrary Governour; *Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?* Gen. 18. 25. *i. e.* 'Tis impoſſible, but he ſhould act righteouſly in every punctilio of his Government, ſince his Righteouſneſs capacitates him to be a Judge, not a Tyrant of all the Earth. The *Heathen Poets* repreſented their chief God *Jupiter* with *Themis*, or Right, ſitting by him upon his Throne in all his Orders. God cannot by his abſolute Sovereignty command ſome things: Becauſe they are directly againſt unchangeableneſs as to command a Creature to hate, or blaſpheme the Creator, not to own him, nor praiſe him. It would be a manifeſt unrighteouſneſs, to order the Creature not to own him, upon whom he depends both in its Being and well Being: This would be againſt that natural Duty, which is indiſpenſably due from every rational Creature to God. This would be to order him, to lay aſide his

Reaſon

Reaſon while he retains it, to diſown him to be the Creator, while Man remains his Creature. This is repugnant to the Nature of God, and the true Nature of the Creature: Or to exact any thing of Man, but what he had given him a Capacity, in his original Nature to perform. If any Command were above our natural Power, it would be unrighteous; as to command a Man to graſp the Globe of the Earth, to ſtride over the Sea, to lave out the Waters of the Ocean; theſe things are impoſſible, and become not the Righteouſneſs and Wiſdom of God to enjoyn. There can be no Obligation on Man to an Impoſſibility. God had a free Dominion over Nullity, before the Creation, he could call it out into the Being of Man and Beaſt: But he could not do any thing in Creation Fooliſhly, becauſe of his infinite Wiſdom; nor could he by the Right of his abſolute Sovereignty make Man ſinful, becauſe of his infinite Purity. As it is impoſſible for him not to be Soveraign; 'tis impoſſible for him to deny his Deity, and his Purity. 'Tis lawful for God to do what he will; but his Will being ordered by the Righteouſneſs of his Nature, as Infinite as his Will, he cannot do any thing but what is Juſt: and therefore in his dealing with Men, you find him in *Scripture* ſubmitting the Reaſonableneſs and Equity of his Proceedings to the Judgment of his deprav'd Creatures, and the inward Dictates of their own Conſciences. *Iſaiah* 5. 3. *And now, Oh inhabitants of Jeruſalem, and men of Judah, judge I pray you, between me and my Vineyard.* Though God be the great Soveraign of the World, yet he acts not in a way of abſolute Soveraignty.

He rules by Law, *he* is a *Lawgiver*, as well as a *King*, *Iſaiah* 33. 22. It had been repugnant to the Nature of a Rational Creature, to be ruled otherwiſe; to be govern'd as a Beaſt, this had been to fruſtrate thoſe Faculties of Will and Underſtanding, which had been given him. To conclude this; when we ſay God cannot do this or that, or command this or that, his Authority is not bounded, and limited properly. Who can reaſonably detract from his Almightineſs, becauſe he cannot do any thing which ſavours of Weakneſs; and what detracting is it from his Authority, that he cannot do any thing unſeemly for the Dignity of his Nature? 'Tis rather from the Infiniteneſs of his Righteouſneſs than the Straitneſs of his Authority; at moſt it is but a voluntary bounding his Dominion by the Law of his own Holineſs.

3. *His Soveraignty is managed according to the Rule of Goodneſs.* Some Potentates there have been in the World, that have loved to ſuck the Blood, and drink the Tears of their Subjects, that would rule more by Fear than Love, * like *Clearchas*, the Tyrant of *Heraclia*, who bore the Figure of a *Thunderbolt* inſtead of a *Scepter*, and named his Son *Thunder*; thereby to tutor him, to terrify his Subjects. But as God's Throne is a Throne of Holineſs, ſo it is a *Throne of Grace*, *Heb.* 4. 16. A Throne encircled with a Rainbow. *Revel.* 4. 23. *In ſight like to an Emerald.* An Emblem of the Covenant, that hath the Pleaſantneſs of a Green Colour, delightful to the Eye, betokening Mercy. Though his Nature be infinitely excellent above us, and his Power infinitely tranſcendent over us, yet the Majeſty of his Government is temper'd with an unſpeakable Goodneſs. He acts not ſo much as an abſolute Lord, as a gracious Soveraign and obliging Benefactor. He delights not to make his Subjects Slaves. Exacts not of them any ſervile and fearful, but a generous and chearful Obedience. He requires them not to Fear or Worſhip him ſo much for his Power as his Goodneſs. He requires not of a Rational Creature any thing repugnant to the Honour, Dignity, and Principles of ſuch a Nature; not any thing that may ſhame, diſgrace it, and make it weary of its own Being, and the Service it owes to its Sovereign. He draws by the Cords of a Man; his Goodneſs renders his Laws as ſweet as Honey or the Honey-Comb to an unvitiated Palate, and a renew'd Mind. And tho' it be granted, he hath a full diſpoſe of his Creature, as the Potter of his Veſſel, and might by his abſolute Soveraignty, inflict upon an Innocent, an Eternal Torment, yet his Goodneſs will never permit him to uſe this Soveraign Right to the Hurt of a Creature, that deſerves it not. If God ſhould caſt an innocent Creature into the Furnace of his Wrath, who can queſtion him? But who can think that his Goodneſs will do ſo? ſince that is as infinite as his Authority? As not to puniſh the Sinner, would be a denial of his Juſtice, ſo to torment an Innocent, would be a denial of his Goodneſs. A Man hath an abſolute Power over his Beaſt, and may take away his Life, and put him to a great deal of Pain; but that moral Virtue of Pity and Tenderneſs would not permit him to uſe this right, but when it conduceth to ſome greater Good, than that can be Evil; either for the Good of Man, which is the End of the Creature, or for the Good of the poor Beaſt it ſelf, to rid him of a greater Miſery: None but a ſavage Nature, a Diſpoſition to be abhorr'd, would torture a poor Beaſt meerly for his Pleaſure. 'Tis as much againſt the Nature of God, to puniſh one Eternally, that hath not deſerved it, as it is to deny himſelf, and act any thing fooliſhly, and unbeſeeming his other Perfections, which render him Majeſtical, and Adorable. To afflict an innocent Creature for his own Good, or for the Good of the World, as in the caſe of the Redeemer, is ſo far from being againſt Goodneſs, that it is the higheſt Teſtimony of his tender Bowels to the Sons of Men. God, though he be Mighty, *withdraws not his Eyes*, i. e. his tender Reſpect *from the Righteous*, *Job* 36. 5, 7, 8, 9, 10. And if he *bind them in Fetters*, 'tis to *ſhew them their Tranſgreſſions*, and *open their Ear to Diſcipline*, and renewing Commands in a more ſenſible ſtrain, *to depart from Iniquity*. What was ſaid of *Fabritius*, you may as ſoon remove the Sun from his Courſe, as *Fabritius* from his Honeſty; may be of God, you may as ſoon daſh in Pieces his Throne, as ſeparate his Goodneſs from his Soveraignty.

4. Propoſition, *This Soveraignty is extenſive over all Creatures.* He rules all, as the Heavens do over the Earth. He is *King of Worlds*, *King of Ages*, as the World tranſlated *Eternal* ſignifies, 1 *Tim.* 1. 17. τῷ δὲ βασιλεῖ τῶν αἰώνων. And the ſame Word is tranſlated, *Heb.* 1. 2. By whom alſo he made *the Worlds*, the ſame Word is rendred Worlds, *Heb.* 11. 3. *The Worlds were framed by the Word of God.* God is King of Ages or Worlds, of the inviſible World, and the ſenſible, of all from the Beginning of their Creation, of whatſoever is meaſur'd by a time. It extends over Angels and Devils, over Wicked and Good, over Rational and Irrational Creatures; all things bow down under his Hand, nothing can be exempted from him: Becauſe there is nothing but was extracted by him from nothing into Being. All things Eſſentially depend upon him: And therefore muſt be Eſſentially ſubject to him; the Extent of his Dominion flows from the Perfection of his Eſſence, ſince his Effence is unlimited, his Royalty cannot be reſtrained. His Authority is as void of any Imperfection as his Eſſence is; it reaches out to all Points of the Heaven above, and the Earth below. Other Princes reign in a Spot of Ground. Every worldly Potentate hath the Confines of his Dominions. The *Pyrenean* Mountains divide *France* from *Spain*; and the *Alpes*, *Italy* from *France*. None are call'd Kings abſolutely, but Kings of this or

that

* *Cauſin.* Poly. Hiſt. lib. 4. cap. 22.

that Place. But God is *the* King, the ſpacious Firmament limits not his Dominion. If we could ſuppoſe him bounded by any place in regard of Preſence; yet he could never be out of his own Dominion; whatſoever he looks upon, whereſoever he were, would be under his Rule. Earthly Kings may ſtep out of their own Country into the Territory of a Neighbour Prince; and as one leaves his Country, ſo he leaves his Dominion behind him; but Heaven and Earth, and every particle of both is the Territory of God. *He hath prepared his Throne in the Heavens, and his Kingdom rules over all.*

1. *The Heaven of Angels and other excellent Creatures belong to his Authority.* He is principally call'd the *Lord of Hoſts* in relation to his intire Command over the Angelical Legions: Therefore *Verſe* 21. following the Text, they are call'd his *Hoſts*, and *Miniſters that do his pleaſure. Jacob* called him ſo before, *Gen.* 32. 1, 2. When he met the Angels of God, he calls them *the Hoſt of God*, and the *Evangeliſt* long after calls them ſo, *Luke* 2. 13. *A multitude of the Heavenly Hoſt praiſing God*, and all this Hoſt he commands, *Iſaiah* 45. 12. *My hands have ſtretched out the Heavens, and all their Hoſt have I commanded.* He employs them in his Service, and when he iſſues out his Orders to them, to do this or that, he finds no reſiſtance of his Will.

And the inanimate Creatures in Heaven are at his beck, they are his Armies in Heaven, diſpoſed in an excellent order in their ſeveral ranks, *Pſal.* 147. 4. *He calls the Stars by Name*; they render a due Obedience to him, as Servants to their Maſter; when he ſingles them out, *and calls them by Name*, to do ſome ſpecial Service, he calls them out to their ſeveral Offices, as the General of an Army appoints the ſtation of every Regiment in a Battalia. Or *he calls them by Name*, i. e. He impoſeth Name upon them, a ſign of Dominion. The giving Names to the inferior Creatures being the firſt act of *Adam*'s derivative Dominion over them. Theſe are under the Sovereignty of God. The *Stars* by their influences fight againſt *Siſera*, *Judg.* 5. 20. And the *Sun* holds in its Reins, and ſtands ſtone ſtill, to light *Joſhua* to a compleat Victory, *Joſh.* 10. 12. They are all marſhall'd in their ranks, to receive his Word of Command, and fight in cloſe Order, as being deſirous to have a ſhare in the ruine of the Enemies of their Sovereign. And thoſe Creatures which mount up from the Earth, and take their place in the lower Heavens, Vapours whereof Hail and Snow are form'd, are part of the Army, and do not only receive, but fulfil his word of Command, *Pſal.* 148. 8. Theſe are his Stores and Magazines of Judgment againſt a time of trouble, and *a day of Battle and War*, Job 38. 22, 23. The Sovereignty of God is viſible in all their motions, in their going and returning. If he ſays go, they go, if he ſay come, they come, if he ſay do this, they gird up their Loyns, and ſtand ſtiff to their Duty.

2. *The Hell of Devils belong to his Authority.* They have caſt themſelves out of the Arms of his Grace into the Furnace of his Juſtice; they have by their revolt forfeited the Treaſure of his Goodneſs, but cannot exempt themſelves from the Scepter of his Dominion; when they would not own him as a Lord Father, they are under him as a Lord Judge, they are caſt out of his Affection, but not freed from his yoke. He rules over the good Angels as his Subjects, over the evil ones as his Rebels. In whatſoever relation he ſtands, either as a Friend or Enemy, he never loſes that of a Lord. A Prince is the Lord of his Criminals, as well as of his Loyalleſt Subjects. By this right of his Sovereignty, he uſes them to puniſh ſome, and be the occaſion of benefit to others; on the wicked he employs them as inſtruments of Vengeance, towards the godly, as in the caſe of *Job*, as an inſtrument of kindneſs for the manifeſtation of his ſincerity againſt the Intention of that malicious Executioner. Though the Devils are the Executioners of his Juſtice, 'tis not by their own Authority but God's; as thoſe that are employed either to rack, or execute a Malefactor, are Subjects to the Prince not only in the quality of Men, but in the execution of their function. * The Devil by drawing Men to ſin acquires no right to himſelf over the ſinner: For Man by Sin offends not the Devil, but God; and becomes guilty of puniſhment under God. When therefore the Devil is us'd by God for the puniſhment of any 'tis an act of his Sovereignty for the manifeſtation of the order of his Juſtice. And as moſt Nations uſe the vileſt perſons in Offices of execution, ſo doth God thoſe vile Spirits. He doth not ordinarily uſe the good Angels in thoſe Offices of Vengeance, but in the preſervation of his People. When he would ſolely puniſh, he employs *evil Angels*, Pſal. 78. 49. A Troop of Devils. His Sovereignty is extended over the *deceiver and the deceived*, Job 12. 16. Over both the Malefactor and the Executioner, the Devil and his Priſoner. He uſeth the natural malice of the Devils for his own juſt ends, and by his Sovereign Authority orders them to be the Executioners of his Judgments upon their own Vaſſals, as well as ſometimes inflicters of puniſhments upon his own Servants.

* *Suarez.* vol. 2. lib. 8. cap. 20. p. 736.

3. *The Earth of Men, and other Creatures belong to his Authority*, Pſal. 47. 7. God is the King of *all the Earth*, and rules to the ends of it, *Pſal.* 59. 13. Ancient Atheiſts confin'd God's Dominion to the Heavenly Orbs, and bounded it within the Circuit of the Celeſtial Sphear, *Job* 22. 14. *He walks in the Circuit of Heaven*, i. e. he exerciſeth his Dominion only there. * *Pedum poſitio* was the ſign of the poſſeſſion of a piece of Land, and the Dominion of the poſſeſſor of it; and Land was reſign'd by ſuch a Ceremony, as now by the delivery of a *Twig* or *Turf*.

* *Bolduc.* in loc.

But his *Dominion* extends.

1. *Over the leaſt Creatures.* All the Creatures of the Earth are liſted in Chriſt's Muſter-roll, and make up the number of his Regiments. He hath an Hoſt on Earth, as well as in Heaven, *Gen.* 2. 1. *The Heavens and the Earth were finiſhed, and all the Hoſt of them.* And they are *all his Servants*, Pſal. 119. 91. and move at his pleaſure. And he vouchſafes the Title of his Army to the *Locuſt*, *Caterpillar*, and *Palmer Worm*, Joel 2. 25. And deſcribes their motions by Military Words, *climbing the Walls*, *marching* not *breaking their ranks*, Verſe 7. He hath the Command as a great General over the higheſt *Angel*, and the meaneſt *Worm*; all the kinds of the ſmalleſt *Inſects* he preſſeth for his Service. By this Sovereignty he muzled the devouring nature of the Fire, to preſerve the three Children, and let it looſe to conſume their Adverſaries: And if he ſpeak the word, the *ſtormy Waves* are huſh, as if they had no principle of rage within them, *Pſal.* 89. 9. Since the meaneſt Creature attains its end, and no Arrow that God hath by his power ſhot into the World, but hits the mark he aim'd at; we muſt conclude, that there is a Sovereign hand, that governs all. Not a ſpot of Earth, or Air, or Water in the World, but is his Poſſeſſion, not a Creature in any Element, but is his Subject.

2. *His Dominion extends over Men.* It extends over the higheſt Potentate, as well as the meaneſt Peaſant, the proudeſt Monarch is no more exempt than the moſt languiſhing Beggar. He lays not aſide his Authority to pleaſe the Prince, nor ſtrains it up to terrifie the indigent. *He accepts not the perſons of Princes, nor regards the rich more than the poor:*

poor: For they are all the work of his hands, Job 34. 19. Both the powers and weakneſſes, the Gallantry and Peaſantry of the Earth ſtand and fall at his Pleaſure. Man in innocence was under his Authority as his Creature, and Man in his revolt, is further under his Authority as a Criminal. As a Perſon is under the Authority of a Prince as a Governour, while he obeys his Laws, and further under the Authority of the Prince as a Judge, when he violates his Laws. Man is under God's Dominion in every thing, in his Settlement, in his Calling, in the ordering his very Habitation, *Acts* 17. 26. *He determines the bounds of their Habitations.* He never yet permitted any to be univerſal Monarch in the World, nor over the fourth part of it, though ſeveral in the Pride of their heart, have deſign'd, and attempted it. The Pope who hath bid the faireſt for it in ſpirituals, never attain'd it, and when his power was moſt flouriſhing, there were multitudes, that would never acknowledge his Authority.

3. But eſpecially *this Dominion in the peculiarity of its extents, is ſeen in the exerciſe of it over the Spirits and Hearts of Men.* Earthly Governours have by his indulgence a ſhare with him in a dominion over Mens Bodies, upon which account he graceth *Princes* and *Judges* with the Title of *God*, Pſal. 82. 6. But the higheſt Prince is but a Prince *according to the fleſh*, as the *Apoſtle* calls Maſters in the relation to their Servants, *Coloſ.* 3. 22.

God is the Sovereign; Man rules over the Beaſt in Man, the Body; and God rules over the Man in Man, the Soul. It ſticks not in the outward Surface, but pierceth to the inward Marrow. 'Tis impoſſible God ſhould be without this; if our Wills were independent on him, we were in ſome ſort equal with himſelf in part Gods as well as Creatures. 'Tis impoſſible a Creature, either in whole or in part, can be exempted from it: Since he is the faſhioner of Hearts as well as of Bodies. He is the Father of Spirits: And therefore hath the right of a paternal dominion over them. When he eſtabliſhed Man Lord of the other Creatures, he did not ſtrip himſelf of the propriety. And when he made Man a free Agent, and Lord of the acts of his Will, he did not deveſt himſelf of the Sovereignty.

His Sovereignty is ſeen.

1. *In Gifting of the Spirits of Men.* Earthly Magiſtrates have hands too ſhort, to inſpire the Hearts of their Subjects with worthy Sentiments. When they confer an employment, they are not able to convey an ability with it for the ſtation. They may as ſoon frame a Statue of liquid Water, and guild, or paint it over with the coſtlieſt colours, as impart to any a State-Head, for a State-Miniſtry. But when God chuſeth a *Saul* from ſo mean an employment as ſeeking of Aſſes, he can treaſure up in him a Spirit fit for Government. And fire *David*, in Age a ſtripling, and by Education a Shepherd, with Courage to encounter, and Skill to defeat a maſſy *Goliah*. And when he deſigns a Perſon for Glory to ſtand before his Throne, he can put a *new* and a Royal *Spirit into him*, Ezek. 36. 26. God only can infuſe Habits into the Soul, to capacitate it to act nobly and generouſly.

2. His Sovereignty is ſeen *in regard of the inclinations of mens Wills.* No Creature can immediately work upon the Will, to guide it to what point he pleaſeth, though mediately it may, by propoſing Reaſons which may maſter the Underſtanding, and thereby determine the Will. But God bows the hearts of Men by the Efficacy of his Dominion, to what Centre he pleaſeth. When the more overweening ſort of Men, that thought their own Heads as fit for a Crown as *Saul*'s ſcornfully deſpis'd him, yet *God touched* the Hearts of a Band of Men, to follow and adhere to him, 1 *Sam.* 10. 26, 27. When the Antichriſtian Whore ſhall be ripe for deſtruction, God ſhall *put it into the heart* of the ten Horns or Kings, *to hate the Whore, burn her with Fire, and fulfil his Will*, Rev. 17. 16, 17. He *faſhions the Hearts* alike, and tunes one String to anſwer another, and both to anſwer his own Deſign. *Pſal.* 33. 15. And while Men ſeem to gratifie their own Ambition and Malice, they execute the Will of God by his ſecret touch upon their Spirits, guiding their Inclinations, to ſerve the glorious Manifeſtation of his Truth. While the Jews would in a reproachful diſgrace to Chriſt, crucifie two Thieves with him, to render him more uncapable to have any Followers; they accompliſh'd a Propheſie, and brought to light a mark of the *Meſſiah*, whereby he had been charactered in one of their Prophets, *Iſaiah* 53. 12. That he ſhould be *numbred among Tranſgreſſours.* He can make a Man of not willing, willing; the Wills of all Men are in his hand, *i. e.* under the power of his Scepter, to retain, or let go upon this or that errand, to bend this or that way; as Water is carried by Pipes, to what Houſe or Place the Owner of it is pleas'd to order, *Prov.* 21. 1. *The Kings heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the Rivers of waters he turns it, whitherſoever he will*, without any limitation. He ſpeaks of the Heart of Princes: Becauſe, in regard of their height, they ſeem to be more abſolute and impetuous Waters; yet God holds them in his hand under his Dominion, turns them to acts of Clemency or Severity, like Waters, either to overflow and dammage, or to refreſh and fructifie. He can convey a *Spirit to them*, or *cut it off* from them, *Pſal.* 76. 12. 'Tis with reference to his efficacious power, in graciouſly turning the heart of *Paul*, that the Apoſtle breaks off his diſcourſe of the ſtory of his Converſion, and breaks out into a magnifying and glorifying of God's Dominion, 1 *Tim.* 1. 17. *Now unto the King eternal, &c. be honour and glory for ever and ever.* Our hearts are more ſubject to the Divine Sovereignty, than our members in their motions are ſubject to our own Wills. As we can move our hand Eaſt or Weſt to any quarter of the World, ſo can God bend our Wills to what mark he pleaſes. The *ſecond Cauſe* in every motion depends upon the *firſt*, and that Will being a ſecond Cauſe, may be furthered or hindered in its inclinations or executions by God; he can bend or unbend it, and change it from one actual Inclination to another. 'Tis as much under his Authority and Power to move or hinder, as the vaſt Engine of the Heavens is in its motion or ſtanding ſtill, which he can effect by a word. The work depends upon the Workman; the Clock upon the Artificer for the Motions of it.

3. His Dominion is ſeen *in regard of Terror or Comfort.* The Heart or Conſcience is God's ſpecial Throne on Earth, which he hath reſerv'd to himſelf, and never indulg'd humane Authority to ſit upon it. He ſolely orders this in ways of conviction or comfort. He can flaſh terror into Mens ſpirits in the midſt of their earthly Jollities, and put Death into the pot of Conſcience, when they are boyling up themſelves in a high pitch of Worldly Delights; and can raiſe Mens ſpirits above the ſenſe of torment under Racks and Flames. He can draw a Hand-writing, not only in the outward Chamber but the inward Cloſet, bring the Rack into the inwards of a Man. None can infuſe Comfort, when he writes bitter things, nor can any fill the heart with Gall, when he drops in Hony. Men may order outward Duties, but they cannot unlock the Conſcience, and conſtrain Men to think them Duties, which they are forced by humane Laws outwardly to act. And as the Laws of earthly Princes are bounded by the outward Man, ſo do their Executions and Puniſhments reach no further than the caſe of the Body. But God can run upon the inward Man as a Giant, and inflict wounds and gaſhes there.

5. Propoſition, *'Tis an Eternal Dominion.* In regard of the exerciſe of it, it was not from Eternity: Becauſe there was not from Eternity any Creature under the Government of it; but in regard of the foundation of it, his Eſſence, his Excellency, 'tis Eternal: As God was from Eternity Almighty, but there was no exerciſe or manifeſtation of it, till he began to create. Men are Kings only for a time, their Lives expire like a Lamp, and their dominion is extinguiſh'd with their lives; they hand their Empire by Succeſſion to others, but many times it is ſnapt off before they are cold in their Graves. How are the famous Empires of the *Chaldeans*, *Medes*, *Perſians* and *Greeks*, mouldred away, and their place knows them no more? And how are the Wings of the *Roman Eagle* cut, and that Empire which over-ſpread a great part of the World, hath loſt moſt of its Feathers, and is confin'd to a narrower compaſs. The dominion of God flouriſheth from one Generation to another. *He ſits King for ever*, Pſal. 29. 10. His *ſeſſion* ſignifies the Eſtabliſhment, and *for ever* the Duration, and he *ſits now*, his Sovereignty is as Abſolute, as Powerful as ever. How many Lords and Princes hath this or that Kingdom had? In how many Families hath the Scepter lodg'd? When as God hath had an uninterrupted Dominion. As he hath been always the ſame in his Eſſence, he hath been always glorious in his Sovereignty. Among Men, he that is Lord to day, may be ſtript of it to morrow; the Dominions in the World vary, he that is a Prince may ſee his Royalty upon the Wings, and feel himſelf laden with Fetters. And a Priſoner may be *lifted from his dungeon* to a Throne. But there can be no Diminution of God's Government; *His Throne is from generation to generation*, Lament. 5. 19. It cannot be ſhaken. His Scepter, like *Aaron*'s Rod, is always green. It cannot be wreſted out of his Hands; none rais'd him to it: None therefore can depoſe him from it; it bears the ſame ſplendor in all humane Affairs, he is an Eternal, an *Immortal King*, 1 Tim. 1. 17. As he is eternally Mighty, ſo he is eternally Sovereign; and being an Eternal King, he is a King that gives not a momentary and periſhing, but a durable and everlaſting Life to them that obey him: A durable and eternal puniſhment to them that reſiſt him.

IV. *Wherein this Dominion and Sovereignty conſiſts, and how 'tis manifeſted.*

1. *The firſt act of Sovereignty is the making Laws.* This is Eſſential to God; no Creatures Will can be the firſt Rule to the Creature; but only the Will of God. He only can preſcribe Man his duty, and eſtabliſh the rule of it; hence the Law is call'd, *The Royal Law*, James 2. 8. It being the firſt and cleareſt manifeſtation of Sovereignty; as the Power of Legiſlation is of the Authority of a Prince. Both are join'd together in *Iſaiah* 53. 22. *The Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King.* Legiſlative Power being the great mark of Royalty. God as a King enacts Laws by his own proper Authority, and his Law is a Declaration of his own Sovereignty, and of Mens moral ſubjection to him and dependance on him. * His Sovereignty doth not appear ſo much in his Promiſes as in his Precepts: A Man's power over another is not diſcovered by promiſing: For a promiſe doth not ſuppoſe the Promiſer either ſuperior or inferior to the Perſon to whom the Promiſe is made. 'Tis not an exerciſing Authority over another, but over a Man's ſelf. No Man forceth another to the acceptance of his Promiſe, but only propoſeth and encourageth to an embracing of it. But commanding ſuppoſeth always an Authority in the Perſon giving the Precept. It obligeth the Perſon to whom the Command is directed. A Promiſe obligeth the Perſon by whom the Promiſe is made. God by his Command binds the Creature, by his promiſe he binds himſelf. He ſtoops below his Sovereignty, to lay obligations upon his own Majeſty. By a Precept he binds the Creature, by a Promiſe he encourageth the Creature to an obſervance of his Precept. What Laws God makes, Man is bound by virtue of his Creation to obſerve, that reſpects the Sovereignty of God. What Promiſes God makes, Man is bound to believe, but that reſpects the Faithfulneſs of God. God manifeſted his Dominion more to the *Jews* than to any other People in the World; he was their Law-giver, both as they were a Church and a Common-wealth. As a Church, he gave them Ceremonial Laws, for the regulating their Worſhip. As a State, he gave them Judicial Laws, for the ordering their Civil Affairs; and as both, he gave them Moral Laws; upon which, both the Laws of the Church and State were founded.

* *Suarez.* de Legib. P. 23.

This Dominion of God in this regard will be manifeſt.

1. *In the Supremacy of it.* The ſole power of making Laws doth originally reſide in him, *James* 4. 12. *There is one Law-giver, who is able to ſave, and to deſtroy.* By his own Law he judges of the eternal States of Men, and no Law of Man is Obligatory, but as it is agreeable to the Laws of this Supream Law-giver, and purſuant to his righteous Rules for the Government of the World. The power that the Potentates of the World have to make Laws, is but derivative from God. If their Dominion be from him, as it is: For *by him Kings reign*, Prov. 8. 15. Their Legiſlative Power, which is a prime Flower of their Sovereignty, is deriv'd from him alſo. And the *Apoſtle* reſolves it into this Original, when he orders us, to be *ſubject to the higher Powers, not only for wrath, but for conſcience ſake*, Rom. 13. 5. Conſcience, in its operations, ſolely reſpects God: And therefore when it is exerciſed as the Principle of Obedience to the Laws of Men, 'tis not with a reſpect to them ſingly conſidered, but as the Majeſty of God appears in their Station and in their Decrees. This power of giving Laws was acknowledged by the Heathen, to be ſolely in God by way of Original: And therefore the greateſt Law-givers among the Heathen, pretended their Laws to be received from ſome Deity, or Supernatural Power by ſpecial revelation; now whether they did this ſeriouſly, acknowledging themſelves this part of the Dominion of God: (For it is certain, that whatſoever juſt Orders were iſſued out by Princes in the World, was by the ſecret influence of God upon their Spirits, *Prov.* 8. 15. *By me Princes decree Juſtice*, by the ſecret conduct of Divine Wiſdom) or whether they pretended it only as a publick Engine, to enforce upon People the obſervance of their Decrees, and gain a greater credit to their Edicts, yet this will reſult from it, that the People in general entertain'd this common Notion, that God was the great Law-giver of the World. The firſt Founders of their Societies could never elſe have ſo abſolutely gain'd upon them by ſuch a pretence. There was always a Revelation of a Law from the mouth of God in every Age: The Exhortation of *Eliphaz* to *Job*, Job 22. 22. Of receiving a *Law from the mouth* of God, at the time before the Moral Law was publiſh'd, had been a vain Exhortation, had there been no Revelation of the mind of God in all Ages.

2. The Dominion of God is manifeſt *in the extent of his Laws.* As he is the Governour and Sovereign of the whole World, ſo he enacts Laws for the whole World. One Prince cannot make Laws for another unleſs he makes him his Subject by right of Conqueſt. *Spain* cannot make Laws for *England*, or *England* for *Spain.* But God having the Supream Government, as King over all, is a Law-giver to all, to irrational, as well as rational Creatures. The *Heavens have their Ordinances*, Job 38. 33. All Creatures have a Law imprinted on their Beings. Rational Creatures have divine Statutes copied in their heart. For Men it is clear, *Rom.* 2. 14. Every Son of *Adam* at his coming into the World, brings with him a Law in his Nature, and

 when

when Reaſon clears it ſelf up from the Clouds of ſence, he can make ſome difference between Good and Evil; diſcern ſomething of fit and juſt. Every Man finds a Law within him, that checks him if he offends it. None are without a legal Indictment, and a legal Executioner within them; God or none was the Author of this as a Sovereign Lord, in eſtabliſhing a Law in man at the ſame time, wherein, as an Almighty Creator, he imparted a Being. This Law proceeds from God's general Power of Governing, as he is the Author of Nature, and binds not barely as it is the reaſon of Man, but by the Authority of God, as it is a Law engraven on his Conſcience. And no doubt but a Law was given to the Angels; God did not govern thoſe intellectual Creatures as he doth Brutes, and in a way inferiour to his rule of Man. Some ſinned, all might have ſinned in regard of the changeableneſs of their Nature. Sin cannot be but againſt ſome rule: *Where there is no Law, there is no Tranſgreſſion*; what that Law was, is not reveal'd, but certainly it muſt be the ſame in part with the Moral Law, ſo far as it agreed with their Spiritual Natures; a love to God, a Worſhip of him, and a love to one another in their Societies and Perſons.

3. The Dominion of God is manifeſt *in the reaſon of ſome Laws, which ſeem to be nothing elſe than purely his own Will.* Some Laws there are for which a reaſon may be rendered from the nature of the thing enjoyned, as to *Love*, *Honour* and *Worſhip* God. For others, none but this, God will have it ſo; ſuch was that poſitive Law to *Adam*, of *not eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil*, Gen. 2.17. which was meerly an aſſerting his own Dominion, and was different from that Law of Nature God had written in his heart. No other reaſon of this ſeems to us but a reſolve, to try Man's Obedience in a way of abſolute Sovereignty, and to manifeſt his Right over all Creatures, to reſerve what he pleaſed to himſelf, and permit the uſe of what he pleaſed to Man, and to ſignifie to Man, that he was to depend on him who was his Lord, and not on his own Will. There was no more hurt in it ſelf, for *Adam* to have eaten of that, than of any other in the Garden; the Fruit was pleaſant to the Eye, and good for Food, but God would ſhew the right he had over his own Goods, and his Authority over Man, to reſerve, what he pleaſes of his own Creation from his touch; that ſince Man could not claim a propriety in any thing, he was to meddle with nothing but by the leave of his Sovereign; either diſcovered by a ſpecial or general Licence. Thus God ſhewed himſelf the Lord of Man, and that Man was but his Steward, to act by his Orders. If God had forbidden Man the uſe of more Trees in the Garden, his command had been juſt; ſince as a Sovereign Lord he might diſpoſe of his own Goods; and when he had granted him the whole compaſs of that pleaſant Garden, and the whole World round about for him and his Poſterity, it was a more tolerable exerciſe of his Dominion, to reſerve this *one Tree*, as a mark of his Sovereignty, when he had left *all others* to the uſe of *Adam*. He reſerv'd nothing to himſelf as Lord of the Mannor, but this; and *Adam* was prohibited nothing elſe but this one, as a ſign of his ſubjection. Now for this no reaſon can be rendered by any Man, but meerly the Will of God; this was meerly a fruit of his Dominion.

For the Moral Laws a Reaſon may be rendred; to *Love* God, hath reaſon to enforce it beſides God's Will, *viz.* The *Excellency of his Nature*, and the Greatneſs and Multitudes of his Benefits. To love our Neighbour, hath enforcing Reaſons, *viz.* the Conjunction in Blood, and the preſervation of Humane Society, and the need we may ſtand in of their love our ſelves. But no Reaſon can be aſſign'd of this poſitive Command about the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, but meerly the pleaſure of God. It was a Branch of his pure Dominion, to try Man's Obedience; and a mark of his Goodneſs, to try it by ſo eaſie and light a Precept, when he might have extended his Authority further. Had not God given this or the like Order, his Abſolute Dominion had not been ſo conſpicuous. 'Tis true, *Adam* had a Law of Nature in him, whereby he was obliged to perpetual Obedience; and though it was a part of God's Dominion to implant it in him, yet his Supream Dominion over the Creatures had not been ſo viſible to Man, but by this, or a Precept of the ſame kind. What was commanded, or prohibited by the Law of Nature, did beſpeak a comelineſs in it ſelf, it appear'd Good or Evil to the Reaſon of Man, but this was neither Good nor Evil in it ſelf, it receiv'd its ſole Authority from the abſolute Will of God, and nothing could reſult from the Fruit it ſelf, as a Reaſon why Man ſhould not taſte it, but only the ſole Will of God. And as God's Dominion was moſt conſpicuous in this Precept, ſo Man's Obedience had been moſt eminent in obſerving it. For in his Obedience to it, nothing but the ſole Power and Authority of God, which is the proper Rule of Obedience, could have been reſpected, not any Reaſon from the thing it ſelf.

To this we may refer ſome other Commands, as that of appointing the time of ſolemn and publick Worſhip, the *Seventh Day*; though the Worſhip of God be a part of the Law of Nature, yet the appointing a particular Day, wherein he would be more formally and ſolemnly acknowledged than on other Days, was grounded upon his abſolute Right of Legiſlation: For there was nothing in the time it ſelf, that could render that Day more holy than another, though God reſpected his *finiſhing the work of Creation* in his Inſtitution of that Day, *Gen.* 2. 3. Such were the *Ceremonial Commands* of Sacrifices, and Waſhings under the Law, and the Commands of Sacraments under the Goſpel: The one to laſt till the *firſt Coming* of Chriſt, and his Paſſion; the other to laſt till the *ſecond Coming* of Chriſt, and his Triumph. Thus he made natural and unavoidable uncleanneſſes to be ſins, and the touching a dead Body to be pollution, which in their own nature were not ſo.

4. The Dominion of God appears *in the Moral Law, and his Majeſty in publiſhing it.* As the *Law of Nature* was writ by his own Fingers in the Nature of Man, ſo it was Engraven by his own Finger in the *Tables of Stone*, Exod. 31. 18. Which is very emphatically expreſt to be a mark of God's Dominion, *Exod.* 32. 16. *And the Tables were the work of God; and the Writing, was the Writing of God engraven upon the Tables*; and when the *firſt Tables* were broken, though he orders *Moſes* to frame the Tables, yet the *Writing of the Law*, he reſerves to himſelf, *Exod.* 34. 1. 'Tis not ſaid of any part of the *Scripture*, that it was writ by the Finger of God, but only of the *Decalogue*; herein he would have his Sovereignty eminently appear; it was publiſh'd by God in ſtate, with a numerous attendance of his *Heavenly Militia*, Deut. 32.2. And the Artillery of Heaven was ſhot off at the ſolemnity: And therefore it is call'd *a fiery Law*, coming *from his right hand*, i.e. His Sovereign Power. It was publiſh'd with all the marks of Supream Majeſty.

5. The Dominion of God appears *in the Obligation of the Law, which reacheth the Conſcience.* The Laws of every Prince are fram'd for the outward conditions of Men; they do not by their Authority bind the Conſcience; and what obligations do reſult from them upon the Conſcience, is either from their being the ſame immediately with Divine Laws, or as they are according to the juſt power of the Magiſtrate, founded on the Law of God. Conſcience hath a protection from the King of Kings, and cannot be arreſted by any humane Power. God hath given Man but an Authority over half the Man, and the worſt half too, that which is of an Earthly Original; but reſerved the Authority over the better and more heavenly half to himſelf. The Dominion of Earthly Princes extends only to the Bodies of Men, they have

no Authority over the Soul, their puniſhment and rewards cannot reach it: And therefore their Laws by their ſingle Authority cannot bind it, but as they are co-incident with the Law of God, or as the Equity of them is ſubſervient to the preſervation of humane Society, a regular and righteous thing, which is the Divine end in Government, and ſo they bind, as they have a relation to God as the Supream Magiſtrate. The Conſcience is only intelligible to God in its ſecret Motions, and therefore only guidable by God; God only pierceth into the Conſcience by his Eye: And therefore only can conduct it by his Rule. Man cannot tell whether we embrace this Law in our Heart and Conſciences, or only in appearances. *He only can judge it*, Luke 12. 3, 4. And therefore he only can impoſe Laws upon it; 'tis out of the reach of humane penal Authority, if their Laws be tranſgreſs'd inwardly by it. Conſcience is a Book in ſome ſort as Sacred as the Scripture, no addition can be lawfully made to it, no ſubſtraction from it. Men cannot diminiſh the duty of Conſcience, or raze out the Law God hath ſtampt upon it. They cannot put a *ſuperſedeas* to the Writ of Conſcience, or ſtop its mouth with a *Noli Proſequi*. They can make no addition by their Authority to bind it; 'tis a Flower in the Crown of Divine Sovereignty only.

2. His Sovereignty appears *in a power of diſpenſing with his own Laws*. 'Tis as much a part of his Dominion, to diſpenſe with his Laws, as to enjoin them; he only hath the power of relaxing his own right, no Creature hath power to do it; that would be to uſurp a Superiority over him, and order above God himſelf. Repealing or diſpenſing with the Law, is a Branch of Royal Authority. 'Tis true, God will never diſpenſe with thoſe Moral Laws, which have an eternal reaſon in themſelves, and their own nature: As for a Creature to Fear, Love, and Honour God; this would be to diſpenſe with his own Holineſs, and the Righteouſneſs of his Nature, to ſully the purity of his own Dominion; it would write folly upon the firſt Creation of Man after the Image of God, by writing mutability upon himſelf, in framing himſelf after the corrupted Image of Man. It would null and fruſtrate the Excellency of the Creature, wherein the Image of God moſtly ſhines; nay, it would be to diſpenſe with a Creatures being a Creature, and make him independent upon the Sovereign of the World in Moral Obedience.

But God hath a Right to diſpenſe with the ordinary Laws of Nature in the inferiour Creatures; he hath a power to alter their courſe by an arreſt of Miracles, and make them come ſhort, or go beyond his Ordinances eſtabliſhed for them. He hath a right to make the Sun ſtand ſtill, or move backward; to bind up the Womb of the Earth, and bar the influences of the Clouds, bridle in the Rage of the Fire, and the fury of Lions, make the liquid Waters ſtand like a Wall, or pull up the Dam which he hath ſet to the Sea, and command it to overflow the neighbouring Countries. He can diſpenſe with the natural Laws of the whole Creation, and ſtrain every ſtring beyond its ordinary pitch.

Poſitive Laws he hath revers'd, as the Ceremonial Law given to the Jews: The very nature indeed of that Law requir'd a Repeal, and fell of Courſe; when that which was intended by it was come, it was of no longer ſignificancy; as before it was a uſeful ſhadow, it would afterwards have been an empty one. Had not God took away this, Chriſtianity had not in all likelihood been propagated among the Gentiles. This was the *partition wall between Jews and Gentiles*, Eph. 2. 14. Which made them a diſtinct Family from all the World, and was the occaſion of the enmity of the Gentiles againſt the Jews. When God had by bringing in what was ſignified by thoſe Rites, declar'd his decree for the ceaſing of them; and when the *Jews*, fond of thoſe Divine Inſtitutions, would not allow him the Right of Repealing what he had the Authority of enacting, he reſolved for the aſſerting his Dominion, to bury them in the ruines of the Temple and City, and make them for ever uncapable of practiſing the main and eſſential parts of them: For the Temple being the Pillar of the legal Service, by demoliſhing that, God hath taken away the Right of Sacrificing, it being peculiarly annex'd to that place; they have no Altar dignified with a Fire from Heaven to conſume their Sacrifices, no legal High Prieſt to offer them, God hath by his Providence chang'd his own Law, as well as by his Precept.

Yea, he hath gone higher by virtue of his Sovereignty, and chang'd the whole ſcene and methods of his Government after the Fall, from King Creator to King Redeemer. He hath revok'd the Law of Works as a Covenant, releas'd the penalty of it from the believing Sinner, by transferring it upon the Surety who interpos'd himſelf by his own Will and Divine Deſignation. He hath eſtabliſh'd another Covenant upon other Promiſes in a higher root, with greater Privileges and eaſier Terms. Had not God had this right of Sovereignty, not a Man of *Adam*'s Poſterity could have been bleſſed; he and they muſt have lain groaning under the miſery of the Fall, which had render'd both himſelf, and all in his loyns, unable to obſerve the Terms in the firſt Covenant.

He hath, as ſome ſpeak, diſpens'd with his own Moral Law in ſome Caſes; in commanding *Abraham* to ſacrifice his Son, his only Son, a righteous Son, a Son whereof he had the Promiſe, that *in Iſaac ſhould his Seed be call'd*; yet he was commanded to ſacrifice him by the Right of his abſolute Sovereignty, as the Supream Lord of the Lives of his Creatures, from the higheſt Angel to the loweſt Worm, whereby he bound his Subjects to this Law, not himſelf. Our Lives are due to him when he calls for them, and they are a juſt forfeit to him at the very moment we ſin, at the very moment we come into the World, by reaſon of the venom of our Nature againſt him, and the diſturbance the firſt ſin of Man (whereof we are inheritors) gave to his Glory. Had *Abraham* ſacrificed his Son of his own head, he had ſinned, yea in attempting it; but being Authoriz'd from Heaven, his act was Obedience to the Sovereign of the World, who had a power to diſpenſe with his own Law; and with this Law he had before diſpens'd, in the caſe of *Cain*'s murder of *Abel*, as to the immediate puniſhment of it with Death, which indeed was ſetled afterwards by his Authority, but then omitted becauſe of the paucity of Men, and for the Peopling the World; but ſettled afterwards, when there was almoſt, though not altogether, the like occaſion of omitting it for a time.

3. His Sovereignty appears *in puniſhing the Tranſgreſſion of his Law.*

1. *This is a branch of God's Dominion as Law-giver.* So was the vengeance God would take upon the *Amalekites*, Exod. 17. 16. *The Lord hath ſworn, that the Lord will have war.* The *Hebrew* is, *the hand upon the Throne of the Lord*, as in the Margent. As a *Law-giver* he *ſaves or deſtroys*, James 4. 12. He acts according to his own Law, in a congruity to the Sanction of his own Precepts; though he be an Arbitrary Law-giver, appointing what Laws he pleaſes, yet he is not an Arbitrary Judge. As he commands nothing, but what he hath a Right to command, ſo he puniſheth none but whom he hath a right to puniſh, and with ſuch puniſhment as the Law hath denounced. All his acts of Juſtice and Inflictions of Curſes, are the effects of this Sovereign Dominion, *Pſal.* 29. 10. *He ſits King upon the floods*: Upon the Deluge of Waters wherewith he drown'd the World, ſay ſome. 'Tis a Right belonging to the Authority of Magiſtrates, to pull up the infectious Weeds that corrupt a Common-wealth. 'Tis no leſs the Right of God as the Law-giver and Judge of all the Earth.

Earth, to ſubject Criminals to his Vengeance, after they have rendered themſelves abominable in his Eyes, and carried themſelves unworthy Subjects of ſo great and glorious a King. The firſt name whereby God is made known in Scripture, is *Elohim*, Gen. 1. 1. *In the beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth.* A Name which ſignifies his Power of judging, in the opinion of ſome Criticks; from him it is deriv'd to Earthly Magiſtrates; their Judgment is ſaid therefore to be the *Judgment of God*, Deut. 1. 17. When Chriſt came, he propos'd this great motive of Repentance, from the *Kingdom of Heaven being at hand*; the Kingdom of his Grace, whereby to invite Men; the Kingdom of his Juſtice, in the puniſhment of the neglecters of it, whereby to terrifie Men, Puniſhments, as well as Rewards, belong to Royalty; it iſſued accordingly; thoſe that believ'd and repented, came under his gracious Scepter; thoſe that neglected and rejected it, fell under his Iron Rod. *Jeruſalem* was deſtroyed, the Temple demoliſh'd, the Inhabitants loſt their Lives by the edge of the Sword, or linger'd them out in the Chains of a miſerable Captivity. This term of Judge, which ſignifies a Sovereign Right to govern and puniſh Delinquents, *Abraham* gives him, when he came to root out the People of *Sodom*, and make them the Examples of his Vengeance, *Gen.* 18. 25.

2. *Puniſhing the Tranſgreſſions of his Law; This is a neceſſary branch of Dominion.* His Sovereignty in making Laws would be a trifle, if there were not alſo an Authority to vindicate thoſe Laws from Contempt and Injury; he would be a Lord only ſpurn'd at by Rebels. Sovereignty is not preſerved without Juſtice. When the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks of the Majeſty of God's Kingdom, he tells us, That *Righteouſneſs and Judgment are the Habitation of his Throne*, Pſal. 97. 1, 2. Theſe are the Engines of Divine Dignity, which render him Glorious and Majeſtick. A Legiſlative power would be trampled on without executive; by this the reverential Apprehenſions of God are preſerved in the World. He is known to be Lord of the World, *by the Judgments which he executes*, Pſal. 9. 16. When he ſeems to have loſt his Dominion, or given it up in the World, he recovers it by puniſhment. When he takes ſome away *with a whirlwind, and in his wrath*, the natural conſequence Men make of it, is this, *Surely there is a God that judgeth the Earth*, Pſal. 58. 9, 11. He reduceth the Creature by the laſh of his Judgments, that would not acknowledge his Authority in his Precepts. Thoſe ſins which diſown his Government in the Heart and Conſcience, as Pride, inward Blaſphemy, &c. he hath reſerved a time hereafter to reckon for. He doth not preſently ſhoot his arrows into the marrow of every Delinquent, but thoſe ſins which traduce his Government of the World, and tear up the Foundations of humane converſe, and a publick reſpect to him, he reckons with particularly here as well as hereafter, that the Life of his Sovereignty might not always faint in the World.

3. *This of puniſhing was the ſecond diſcovery of his Dominion in the World.* His firſt act of Sovereignty was the giving a Law; the next, his appearance in the State of a Judge. When his Orders were violated, he reſcues the Honour of them by an execution of Juſtice. He firſt judg'd the Angels, puniſhing the evil ones for their crime; the *firſt* Court he kept among them as a Governour, was to give them a Law; the *ſecond* Court he kept, was as a Judge trying the Delinquents, and adjudging the Offenders, to be *reſerved in chains of darkneſs* till the final Execution, *Jude* 6. And at the ſame time probably he confirmed the good ones in their obedience by Grace. So the firſt Diſcovery of his Dominion to Man, was the giving him a Precept; the next, was the inflicting a puniſhment for the breach of it. He ſummons *Adam* to the Bar, indicts him for his Crime, finds him guilty by his own Confeſſion, and paſſeth Sentence on him, according to the Rule he had before acquainted him with.

4. *The means whereby he puniſheth, ſhews his Dominion.* Sometimes he muſters up *hail* and *mildew*; ſometimes he ſends Regiments of wild Beaſts, ſo he threatens *Iſrael*, Levit. 26. 22. Sometimes he ſends out a party of Angels, to beat up the quarters of Men, and make a carnage among them, 2 *Kings* 19. 35. Sometimes he mounts his *Thundring* Battery, and ſhoots forth his Ammunition from the Clouds; as againſt the *Philiſtines*, 1 *Sam.* 7. 10. Sometimes he ſends the ſlighteſt Creatures to ſhame the Pride, and puniſh the Sin of Man; as *Lice*, *Frogs*, *Locuſts*; as upon the *Egyptians*, the 8, 9, 10. *chap.* of *Exodus*.

2. *This Dominion is manifeſted by God, as a proprietor and Lord of his Creatures, and his own Goods.*

And this is evident,

1. *In the choice of ſome perſons from Eternity.* He hath ſet apart ſome from Eternity, wherein he will diſplay the invincible Efficacy of his Grace, and thereby infallibly bring them to the fruition of Glory, *Eph.* 1. 4, 5. *According as he hath choſen us in him before the Foundation of the World, that we ſhould be Holy and without blame before him in Love, having predeſtinated us to the Adoption of Children by Jeſus Chriſt to himſelf, according to the good pleaſure of his Will.* Why doth he write ſome Names in the *Book of Life*, and leave out others? Why doth he enroll ſome, whom he intends to make Denizons of Heaven, and refuſe to put others in his Regiſter? The *Apoſtle* tells us, 'tis the pleaſure of his Will. You may render a Reaſon for many of God's Actions, till you come to this the top and Foundation of all; and under what head of Reaſon can Man reduce this Act, but to that of his Royal Prerogative? Why doth God ſave ſome, and condemn others at laſt? Becauſe of the Faith of the one, and unbelief of the other. Why do ſome Men believe? Becauſe God hath not only given them the means of Grace, but accompanied thoſe means with the Efficacy of his Spirit. Why did God accompany thoſe means with the Efficacy of his Spirit in ſome, and not in others? Becauſe he had decreed by Grace to prepare them for Glory. But why did he decree, or chuſe ſome, and not others? Into what will you reſolve this, but into his Sovereign Pleaſure? Salvation and Condemnation at the laſt upſhot, are Acts of God, as the Judge conformable to his own Law of giving Life to Believers, and inflicting Death upon Unbelievers; for thoſe a Reaſon may be rendred; but the choice of ſome, and preterition of others, is an act of God as he is a Sovereign Monarch, before any Law was actually tranſgreſs'd, becauſe not actually given. When a Prince condemns a Rebel, he acts as a Judge according to Law; but when he calls ſome out to pardon, he acts as a Sovereign by a Prerogative above Law; into this the *Apoſtle* reſolves it, *Rom.* 9. 13, 15. When he ſpeaks of God's loving *Jacob* and hating *Eſau*, and that before they had done either good or evil: It is, *Becauſe God will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and compaſſion on whom he will have compaſſion.* Though the firſt ſcope of the *Apoſtle* in the beginning of the *Chapter*, was to declare the Reaſon of God's rejecting the Jews, and calling in the Gentiles; had he only intended to demoliſh the Pride of the Jews, and flat their opinion of Merit, and aim'd no higher than that Providential act of God; he might, convincingly enough to the Reaſon of Men, have argued from the Juſtice of God, provoked by the obſtinacy of the Jews, and not have had recourſe to his Abſolute Will; but ſince he aſſerts this latter, * the ſtrength of his Argument ſeems to lie thus; If God by his Abſolute Sovereignty may reſolve and fix his love upon *Jacob*, and eſtrange it from *Eſau*, or any other of his Creatures, before they have done good or evil, and Man have no ground to call his Infinite Majeſty to account, may he not deal thus with the

* *Amyrald diſſert. p.* 101, 102.

Jews,

Jews, when their demerit would be a bar to any Complaints of the Creature againſt him? If God were conſidered here in the quality of a *Judge*, it had been fit to have conſidered the matter of Fact in the Criminal; but he is conſidered as a *Sovereign*, rendring no other Reaſon of his Action but his own Will, *whom he will he hardens*, ver. 18. And then the *Apoſtle* concludes, *ver.* 20. *Who art thou, O man, that replieſt againſt God?* If the Reaſon drawn from God's Sovereignty doth not ſatisfie in this enquiry, no other Reaſon can be found wherein to acquieſce. For the laſt Condemnation there will be ſufficient Reaſon to clear the Juſtice of his Proceedings. But in this caſe of Election, no other Reaſon but what is alledg'd, *viz. The Will of God* can be thought of, but what is liable to ſuch knotty exceptions that cannot well be untied.

1. *It could not be any merit in the Creature, that might determine God to chuſe him.* If the Decree of Election falls not under the merit of Chriſt's Paſſion, as the procuring Cauſe, it cannot fall under the merit of any part of the corrupted Maſs. The Decree of ſending Chriſt did not precede, but follow'd in order of Nature the determination of chuſing ſome. When Men were choſen as the Subjects for Glory, Chriſt was choſen as the means for the bringing them to Glory, *Eph.* 1. 4. *Choſen us in him, and predeſtinated us to the adoption of children by Jeſus Chriſt.* The choice was not meerly in Chriſt as the moving Cauſe; that the *Apoſtle* aſſerts, to be *the good pleaſure of his Will*; but in Chriſt, as the means of conveying to the choſen ones the fruits of their Election. What could there be in any Man, that could invite God to this act, or be a cauſe of diſtinction of one branch of *Adam* from another? Were they not all hew'd out of the ſame Rock, and tainted with the ſame corruption in Blood? Had it been poſſible to inveſt them with a power of merit at the firſt, had not that venom contracted in their nature, degraded all of Power for the future? What merit was there in any but of wrathful puniſhment, ſince they were all conſidered as Criminals, and the curſed brood of an ungrateful Rebel? What dignity can there be in the nature of the pureſt part of clay, to be made a Veſſel of Honour, more than in another part of Clay as pure as that which was form'd into a Veſſel for mean and ſordid uſe? What had any one to move his mercy more than another; ſince they were all Children of Wrath, and equally dawb'd with original Guilt and Filth? Had not all an equal Proportion of it to provoke his Juſtice? What Merit is there in one dry Bone more than another, to be inſpir'd with the Breath of a Spiritual Life? Did not all lye wallowing in their own filthy Blood; and what could the Steam and Noyſomneſs of that deſerve at the Hands of a pure Majeſty, but to be caſt into a Sink furtheſt from his Sight? were they not all conſidered in this deplorable Poſture with an equal Proportion of Poyſon in their Nature, when God firſt took his Pen and ſingled out ſome Names to write in the Book of Life? It could not be Merit in any one Piece of this abominable Maſs, that ſhould ſtir up that Reſolution in God, to ſet apart this Perſon for a Veſſel of Glory, while he permitted another to putrifie in his own Gore. He loved *Jacob* and hated *Eſau*, though they were both parts of the common Maſs, the Seed of the ſame Loyns, and lodg'd in the ſame Womb.

2. *Nor could it be any Foreſight of Works to be done in time by them, or of Faith, that might determine God to chooſe them.* What Good could he foreſee reſulting from extream Corruption, and a Nature alienated from him? What could he foreſee of good to be done by them, but what he reſolved in his own Will, to beſtow an ability upon them to bring forth? His choice of them was to a Holineſs, not for a Holineſs preceding his determination, *Eph.* 1. 4. He hath choſen us, *that we might be holy* before him; he ordained us *to good works*, not for them, *Eph.* 2. 10. What is a fruit, cannot be a moving Cauſe of that whereof it is a Fruit. Grace is a Stream from the Spring of electing Love; the Branch is not the cauſe of the Root, but the Root of the Branch, nor the Stream the cauſe of the Spring, but the Spring the cauſe of the Stream. Good Works ſuppoſe Grace, and a good and right habit in the perſon; as rational acts ſuppoſe reaſon. Can any man ſay that the rational acts man performs after his Creation, were a cauſe why God created him? This would make Creation, and every thing elſe, not ſo much an act of his Will, as an act of his Underſtanding. God foreſaw no rational act in Man, before the act of his Will to give him Reaſon; nor foreſees Faith in any, before the act of his Will determining to give him Faith, *Eph.* 2. 8. *Faith is the gift of God.* In the Salvation which grows up from this firſt purpoſe of God, he regards not the Works we have done, as a principal Motive to ſettle the Top-ſtone of our Happineſs, but his own purpoſe, and the Grace given in Chriſt, 2 *Tim.* 1. 9. *Who hath ſaved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our own works, but according to his own purpoſe, and Grace which was given to us in Chriſt, before the world began.* The honour of our Salvation cannot be challeng'd by our Works, much leſs the honour of the Foundation of it. It was a pure gift of Grace, without any reſpect to any Spiritual, much leſs Natural Perfection. Why ſhould the *Apoſtle* mention that Circumſtance, when he ſpeaks of God's loving *Jacob* and hating *Eſau*, *when neither of them had done good or evil*, Rom. 9. 11. if there were any foreſight of Mens works, as the moving Cauſe of his Love or Hatred? God regarded not the *works* of either as the firſt cauſe of his Choice, but acted by his own Liberty without reſpect to any of their actions, which were to be done by them in time. If Faith be the Fruit of Election, the preſcience of Faith doth not influence the electing act of God. *Tit.* 1. 1. 'Tis called, *The Faith of God's elect.* Paul *an Apoſtle of Jeſus Chriſt, according to the Faith of God's elect*, i.e. Settled in this Office to bring the Elect of God to Faith. If Men be choſen by God upon the foreſight of Faith, or not choſen till they have Faith, they are not ſo much God's Elect, as God their Elect; they chuſe God by Faith, before God chuſeth them by love. It had not been the Faith of God's Elect, *i. e.* Of thoſe already choſen, but the Faith of thoſe that were to be choſen by God afterwards. * Election is the cauſe of Faith, and not Faith the cauſe of Election. Fire is the cauſe of Heat, and not the Heat of Fire; the Sun is the Cauſe of the Day, and not the Day the cauſe of the riſing of the Sun. Men are not choſen becauſe they believe, but they believe becauſe they are choſen: The *Apoſtle* did ill elſe to appropriate that to the Elect, which they had no more intereſt in by virtue of their Election, than the verieſt Reprobate in the World. If the foreſight of what works might be done by his Creatures, was the motive of his chuſing them, why did he not chuſe the Devils to Redemption, who could have done him better ſervice by the ſtrength of their Nature, than the whole Maſs of *Adam*'s Poſterity?

* *Dalle in loc.*

Well then, there is no poſſible way to lay the original Foundation of this act of Election, and preterition in any thing but the abſolute Sovereignty of God.

Juſtice or Injuſtice comes not into Conſideration in this Caſe. There is no debt which Juſtice or Injuſtice always reſpects in its Acting: If he had pleaſed, he might have choſen all, if he had pleaſed, he might have choſen none. It was in his Supream Power, to have reſolved to have left all *Adam*'s Poſterity under the rack of his Juſtice; if he determined to ſnatch out any, it was a part of his Dominion, but without any injury to the Creatures he leaves under their own guilt. Did he not paſs by the Angels, and take Man? And by the ſame right of Dominion may he pick out ſome Men from the common Maſs, and lay aſide others to bear the puniſhment of their Crimes. Are they not all his Subjects? All are his Criminals, and may

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be dealt with at the pleasure of their undoubted Lord and Sovereign. This is a work of Arbitrary Power: Since he might have chosen none, or chosen all, as he saw good himself. 'Tis at the liberty of the Artificer, to determine his Wood or Stone to such a Figure, that of a Prince or that of a Toad; and his Materials have no right to complain of him, since it lies wholly upon his own liberty. They must have little sence of their own vileness, and God's infinite Excellency above them by right of Creation, that will contend that God hath a lesser right over his Creatures, than an Artificer over his Wood or Stone. If it were at his Liberty whether to redeem Man, or send Christ upon such an undertaking; 'tis as much at his liberty, and the prerogative is to be allow'd him, what persons he will resolve to make capable of enjoying the Fruits of that Redemption. One Man was as fit a subject for Mercy as another; as they all lay in their Original Guilt. Why would not divine Mercy cast its eye upon this Man, as well as upon his Neighbour? There was no cause in the creature, but all in God, it must be resolved into his own Will.

Yet not into a Will without Wisdom. God did not chuse hand over head, and act by meer Will without Reason and Understanding; an infinite Wisdom is far from such a kind of procedure; but the reason of God is inscrutable to us: unless we could understand God, as well as he understands himself; the whole ground lies in God himself, no part of it in the Creature, *Rom.* 9. 15,16. *Not in him that wills, nor in him that runs, but in God that shews mercy.* Since God hath revealed no other Cause than his Will, we can resolve it into no other than his Sovereign Empire over all Creatures. 'Tis not without a stop to our Curiosity, that in the same place where God asserts the absolute Sovereignty of his Mercy to *Moses*, he tells him he could not see his Face, *Exod.* 33. 19,20. *I will be Gracious, to whom I will be Gracious:* and he said, *Thou canst not see my Face.* The Rays of his infinite Wisdom, are too bright and dazling for our weakness. The *Apostle* acknowledged, not only a Wisdom in this Proceeding, but a riches and treasure of *Wisdom*, not only that, but a depth and vastness of those riches of *Wisdom*, but was unable to give us an Inventory and Scheme of it, *Rom.* 11.33. The secrets of his Counsels are too deep for us to wade into; in attempting to know the reason of those acts, we should find our selves swallowed up into a bottomless Gulf. Though the Understanding be above our capacity, yet the admiration of his Authority and Submission to it, are not. *We should cast our selves down at his feet, with a full resignation of our selves to his Sovereign pleasure* *. This is a more comely carriage in a Christian, than all the contentious endeavours to measure God by our line.

* This was Dr. *Goodwin's* Speech when he was in trouble.

2. *In bestowing Grace where he pleases.* God in Conversion and Pardon, works not as a natural Agent, putting forth strength to the utmost, which God must do, if he did renew Man naturally, as the Sun shines, and the Fire burns, which always act, *ad extremum virium*, unless a Cloud interpose, to eclipse the one, and Water to extinguish the other. But God acts as a voluntary Agent, which can freely exert his Power when he please, and suspend it when he please. Though God be necessarily good, yet he is not necessitated to manifest all the Treasures of his Goodness to every Subject; he hath power to distil his Dews upon one part and not upon another. If he were necessitated to express his Goodness without a liberty, no thanks were due to him. Who thanks the Sun for shining on him, or the Fire for warming him? None, because they are necessary Agents, and can do no other.

What is the reason he did not reach out his Hand to keep all the Angels from sinking as well as some, or recover them when they were sunk? What is the reason he engrafts one Man into the true Vine, and lets another remain a wild Olive? Why is not the efficacy of the Spirit always link'd with the motions of the Spirit? Why doth he not mould the heart into a Gospel frame, when he fills the ear with a Gospel sound? Why doth he strike off the chains from some, and tear the vail from the heart, while he leaves others under their natural Slavery and *Egyptian* Darkness? Why do some lie under the bands of Death, while another is rais'd to a Spiritual Life? What reason is there for all this, but his absolute Will? The *Apostle* resolves the question, if the question be ask'd why he begets one and not another? Not from the Will of the Creature, but *his own Will* is the determination of one, *James* 1. 18. Why doth he work in one, *to will and to do*, and not in another? Because of *his good pleasure*, is the answer of another, *Phil.* 2. 13. He could as well new Create every one, as he at first created them, and make Grace as universal as Nature and Reason; but it is not his pleasure so to do.

1. *'Tis not for want of strength in himself.* The Power of God is unquestionably able to strike off the chains of unbelief from all; he could surmount the obstinacy of every Child of Wrath, and inspire every Son of *Adam* with Faith as well as *Adam* himself. He wants not a Vertue superior to the greatest resistance of his Creature; a victorious beam of light might be shot into their Understandings, and a Flood of Grace might over-spread their Wills with one word of his Mouth, without putting forth the utmost of his Power. What hindrance could there be in any created Spirit, which cannot be easily pierced into, and new moulded by the Father of Spirits? Yet he only breaths this efficacious Vertue into some, and leaves others under that insensibility and hardness which they love, and suffers them to continue in their benighting Ignorance, and consume themselves in the embraces of their dear, though deceitful *Dalilah's*.

He could have conquered the resistance of the *Jews*, as well as chased away the darkness and ignorance of the *Gentiles*. No doubt, but he could over-power the Heart of the most malicious Devil, as well as that of the simplest and weakest Man. But the Breath of the Almighty Spirit is in his own Power, to breath *where he lists*, John 3. 8. 'Tis at his liberty, whether he will give to any the feeling of the invincible efficacy of his Grace. He did not want strength to have kept Man as firm as a Rock against the Temptation of Satan, and pour'd in such fortifying Grace, as to have made him impregnable against the Powers of Hell, as well as he did secure the standing of the *Angels* against the Sedition of their Fellows. But it was his Will to permit it to be otherwise.

2. *Nor is it from any Prerogative in the Creature.* He converts not any for their *natural* Perfection: Because he seizeth upon the most ignorant. Not for their *moral* Perfection: Because he converts the most sinful. Nor for their *civil* Perfection: Because he turns the most despicable.

1. *Not for their natural Perfection of knowledge.* He opened the minds and hearts of the more ignorant. Were the nature of the Gentiles better manur'd than that of the *Jews*, or did the Tapers of their Understandings burn clearer? No, the one were skill'd in the Prophesies of the *Messiah*, and might have compared the Predictions they own'd with the Actions and Sufferings of Christ, which they were spectators of. He let alone those that had expectations of the *Messiah*, and expectations about the time of Christ's Appearance, both grounded upon the Oracles wherewith he had intrusted them. The Gentiles were unacquainted with the Prophets, and therefore destitute of the Expectations of the *Messiah*, Eph. 2. 12. They were *without Christ*. Without any Revelation of Christ, because *aliens from the Common-wealth of Israel, and strangers to the Covenant of Promise, having no hope, and without God in the World*, without any knowledge of God, or promises of Christ. The *Jews* might sooner in a way of reason have been wrought upon, than the Gentiles who were ignorant of the Prophets,

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by whoſe Writings they might have examined the Truth of the *Apoſtles* declarations; thus are they refus'd, that were the kindred of Chriſt according to the Fleſh, and the Gentiles that were at a greater diſtance from him, brought in by God. Thus he catcheth not at the ſubtle and mighty Devils, who had an Original in Spiritual Nature more like to him, but at weak and ſimple Man.

2. *Not for any Moral Perfection:* Becauſe he converts the moſt ſinful. The Gentiles ſteep'd in Idolatry and Superſtition. He ſow'd more Faith among the *Romans* than in *Jeruſalem*, more Faith in a City that was the common Sewer of all the Idolatry of the Nations conquered by them, than in that City which had ſo ſignally been own'd by him, and had not practiſed any Idolatry ſince the *Babyloniſh* Captivity. He planted Saintſhip at *Corinth*, a place notorious for the infamous Worſhip of *Venus*, a Superſtition attended with the groſſeſt Uncleanneſs. At *Epheſus*, that preſented the whole World with a cup of Fornication in their Temple of *Diana*. Among the *Coloſſians*, Votaries to *Cybele*, in a manner of Worſhip attended with beaſtly and laſcivious Ceremonies. And what character had the *Cretians* from one of their own Poets, mentioned by the Apoſtle to *Titus*, whom he had plac'd among them, to further the progreſs of the Goſpel, but the vileſt and moſt abominable? *Tit.* 1. 12. *Lyars*, not to be credited; *evil Beaſts*, not to be aſſociated with; *ſlow Bellies*, fit for no ſervice. What prerogative was there in the nature of ſuch putrefaction? As much as in that of a Toad, to be elevated to the dignity of an Angel. What ſteam from ſuch Dunghills could be welcome to him, and move him to caſt his eye on them, and ſweeten them from Heaven? What treaſures of worth were here, to open the treaſures of his Grace? Were ſuch filthy ſnuffs fit of themſelves to be kindled by, and become a lodging for a Goſpel beam? What invitements could he have from Lying, Beaſtlineſs, Gluttony, but only from his own Sovereignty? By this he plucked Fire-brands out of the Fire, while he left ſtraiter and more comely ſticks to conſume to aſhes.

3. *Not for any Civil Perfection.* Becauſe he turns the moſt deſpicable. He elevates not Nature to Grace, upon the account of Wealth, Honour, or any Civil ſtation in the World; he diſpenſeth not ordinarily thoſe Treaſures to thoſe that the miſtaken World fooliſhly admire and dote upon, 1 *Cor.* 1. 26. *Not many mighty not many noble.* A purple Robe is not uſually deck'd with this Jewel. He takes more of mouldy Clay than refin'd Duſt, to caſt into his Image; and lodges his Treaſures more in the Earthly Veſſels, than in the Worlds Golden ones. He gives out his richeſt Doles to thoſe that are the ſcorn and reproach of the World. Should he impart his Grace moſt to thoſe that abound in Wealth or Honour, it had been ſome Foundation for a Conception, that he had been mov'd by thoſe vulgarly eſteem'd Excellencies, to indulge them more than others. But ſuch a conceit languiſheth, when we behold the ſubjects of his Grace as void originally of any allurements, as they are full of provocations.

Hereby he declares himſelf free from all created engagements, and that he is not led by any external Motives in the Object.

3. *'Tis not from any Obligation which lies upon him.* He is indebted to none, diſoblig'd by all. No Man deſerves from him any Act of Grace, but every Man deſerves what the moſt deplorable are left to ſuffer. He is obliged by the Children of Wrath to nothing elſe but ſhowers of Wrath, owes no more a debt to fall'n Man, than to fall'n Devils, to reſtore them to their firſt ſtation by a ſuperlative Grace; how was he more bound to reſtore them, than he was to preſerve them, to catch them after they fell, than to put a bar in the way of their falling? God, as a Sovereign, gave Laws to Men, and a ſtrength ſufficient to keep thoſe Laws. What obligation is there upon God to repair that ſtrength Man wilfully loſt, and extract him out of that condition into which he voluntarily plung'd himſelf? What if man ſinned by temptation, which is a Reaſon alledged by ſome? Might not many of the Devils do ſo too? Though there was a firſt of them that ſinned without a temptation, yet many of them might be ſeduced into Rebellion by the Ring-leader. Upon that account, he is no more bound to give Grace to all Men than to Devils. If he promis'd life upon Obedience, he threatned death upon Tranſgreſſion. By Man's diſobedience God is quit of his Promiſe, and owes nothing but Puniſhment upon the violation of his Law. Indeed Man may pretend to a claim of ſufficient ſtrength from him by Creation, as God is the Author of Nature, and he had it; but ſince he hath extinguiſh'd it by his ſin, he cannot in the leaſt pretend any Obligation on God for a new ſtrength. If it be a *peradventure* whether *he will give repentance*, as it is, 2 *Tim.* 2. 25. There is no tye in the caſe, a tye would put it beyond a peradventure with a God, that never forfeited his Obligation. * No Husbandman thinks himſelf oblig'd to beſtow coſt and pains, manure and tillage upon one Field more than another; though the nature of the Ground may require more, yet he is at his liberty whether he will expend more upon one than another. He may let it lie fallow as long as he pleaſe. God is leſs oblig'd to till and prune his Creatures, than Man is oblig'd to his Field or Trees. If a King proclaim a Pardon to a company of Rebels, upon the condition of each of them paying ſuch a ſum of Money; their Eſtates before were capable of ſatisfying the condition, but their Rebellion hath reduc'd them to an indigent condition; the Proclamation it ſelf is an Act of Grace, the condition requir'd is not impoſſible in it ſelf; the Prince out of a tenderneſs to ſome, ſends them that ſum of Money he hath by his Proclamation oblig'd them to pay, and thereby enabled them to anſwer the Condition he requires: The firſt he doth by a Sovereign Authority; the ſecond he doth by a Sovereign Bounty, he was oblig'd to neither of them; puniſhment was a Debt due to all of them: If he would remit upon Condition, he did relax his Sovereign Right; and if he would by his Largeſs make any of them capable to fulfil the Condition, by ſending them preſently a ſufficient ſum to pay the Fine, he acted as Proprietor of his own Goods, to diſpoſe of them in ſuch a quantity to thoſe to whom he was not oblig'd to beſtow a mite.

* *Claude ſur la parabole des Noces, p.* 29.

5. *It muſt therefore be an Act of his meer Sovereignty.* This can only ſit Arbitrator in every gracious Act. Why did he give Grace to *Abel* and not to *Cain*, ſince they both lay in the ſame Womb, and equally deriv'd from their Parents a taint in their nature: But that he would ſhew a ſtanding example of his Sovereignty to the future ages of the world in the firſt poſterity of man? Why did he give Grace to *Abraham*, and ſeparate him from his idolatrous kindred, to dignifie him to be the root of the *Meſſiah?* Why did he confine his promiſe to *Iſaac*, and not extend it to *Iſhmael* the Seed of the ſame *Abraham* by *Hagar*, or to the children he had by *Keturah* after *Sarah*'s death? What reaſon can be alledged for this, but his ſovereign Will? Why did he not give the fallen Angels a moment of repentance after their ſin, but condemned them to irrevocable pains? Is it not as free for him to give grace to whom he pleaſe, as create what worlds he pleaſe; to form this corrupted clay into his own Image, as to take ſuch a parcel of duſt from all the reſt of the creation, whereof to compact *Adam*'s body? Hath he not as much juriſdiction over the ſinful maſs of his creatures in a new creation, as he had over the *Chaos* in the old? And what reaſon can be render'd, of his advancing this part of Matter to the nobler dignity of a Star, and leaving that other part to make up the dark body of the earth? To compact one part into a glorious Sun, and another part into a hard Rock, but his Royal Prerogative? What is

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the reason a Prince subjects one Malefactor to punishment, and lifts up another to a place of trust and profit? That *Pharaoh* honored the Butler with an attendance on his Person, and remitted the Baker to the hands of the Executioner? It was his pleasure. And is not as great a right due to God, as is allow'd to the Worms of the Earth? What is the reason he hardens a *Pharaoh*, by denying him that Grace, which should mollifie him, and allows it to another? 'Tis because *he will.* Rom. 9. 18. *Whom he will he hardens.* Hath not Man the liberty to pull up the Sluce, and let the Water run into what part of the Ground he pleases? What is the reason some have not a Heart to understand the Beauty of his Ways? Because the Lord doth *not give* it them, *Deut.* 29. 4. Why doth he not give all his Converts an equal measure of his Sanctifying Grace; some have Mites, and some have Treasures? Why doth he give his Grace to some sooner, to some later; some are inspir'd in their Infancy, others not till a full Age, and after, some not till they have fallen into some gross Sin, as *Paul*; some betimes, that they may do him service; others later, as the Thief upon the Cross, and presently snatcheth them out of the World? Some are weaker, some stronger in nature, some more beautiful and lovely, others more uncomely and sluggish. 'Tis so in supernaturals. What reason is there for this, but his own will? This is instead of all that can be assign'd on the part of God. He is the free disposer of his own Goods, and as a Father, may give a greater Portion to one Child than to another. And what reason of complaint is there against God; may not a Toad complain that God did not make it a Man, and give it a portion of reason? Or a Fly complain, that God did not make it an Angel, and give it a Garment of Light, had they but any spark of Understanding; as well as Man complain, that God did not give him Grace as well as another; Unless he sincerely desired it, and then was denyed it, he might complain of God, though not as Soveraign, yet as a Promiser of Grace to them that ask it. God doth not render his Soveraignty formidable; he shuts not up his Throne of Grace from any that seek him; he invites Man, his Arms are open, and the Scepter stretched out; and no Man continues under the arrest of his Lusts, but he that is unwilling to be otherwise, and such a one hath no reason to complain of God.

3. His Soveraignty is manifest *in disposing the means of Grace to some, not to all.* He hath caus'd the Sun to shine bright in one place, while he hath left others benighted, and deluded by the Devils Oracles. Why do the *Evangelical* dews fall in this or that place, and not in another? Why was the Gospel publish'd in *Rome* so soon, and not in *Tartary*? Why hath it been extinguish'd in some places, as soon almost as it had been kindled in them? Why hath one place been honoured with the beams of it in one Age, and been covered with darkness the next? One Country hath been made a Sphear for this Star that directs to Christ, to move in, and afterwards it hath been taken away, and placed in another: Sometimes more clearly it hath shone, sometimes more darkly in the same place; what is the reason of this? 'Tis true, something of it may be referr'd to the Justice of God, but much more to the Soveraignty of God. That the Gospel is publish'd later and not sooner, the *Apostle* tells us, *according to the Commandment of the living God*, Rom. 16. 26.

1. *The means of Grace after, the Families from* Adam *became distinct, were never granted to all the World.* After that fatal breach in *Adam*'s Family, by the death of *Abel*, and *Cain*'s separation, we read not of the means of Grace continued among *Cain*'s Posterity; it seems to be continued in *Adam*'s sole Family and not publish'd in Societies till the time of *Seth*, Gen. 4. 26. *Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord.* It was continued in that Family till the Deluge, which was 1523 *years* after the Creation, according to some; or 1656 *years* according to others. After that, when the World degenerated, it was communicated to *Abraham*, and setled in the Posterity that descended from *Jacob*: Though he left not the World without a Witness of himself, and some sprinklings of Revelations in other parts, as appears by the Book of *Job*, and the Discourses of his Friends.

2. *The Jews had this priviledge granted them above other Nations, to have a clearer Revelation of God.* God separated them from all the World, to honor them with the *depositum* of his Oracles, Rom. 3. 2. *To them were committed the Oracles of God.* In which regard all other Nations are said to be *without God*, as being destitute of so great a priviledge, *Eph.* 2. 12. The Spirit blew in *Canaan*, when the Lands about it felt not the saving breath of it. *He hath not dealt so with any Nation, and as for his Judgments they have not known them*, Psal. 147. 20. The rest had no warnings from the Prophets; no dictates from Heaven but what they had by the light of Nature, the view of the Works of Creation, and the Administration of Providence, and what remain'd among them of some ancient Traditions deriv'd from *Noah*, which in tract of time were much defaced. We read but of one *Jonah* sent to *Niniveh*, but frequent Alarms to the *Israelites* by a multitude of Prophets commissioned by God. 'Tis true, the Door of the Jewish Church was open to what Proselytes would enter themselves, and embrace their Religion and Worship: but there was no publick Proclamation made in the World; only God by his Miracles in their deliverance from *Egypt* (which could not but be famous among all the Neighbor Nations) declared them to be a people favor'd by Heaven. But the tradition from *Adam* and *Noah* was not publickly reviv'd by God in other parts, and rais'd from that Grave of forgetfulness wherein it had lain so long buried. Was there any reason in them for this Indulgence? God might have been as liberal to any other Nation, yea to all the Nations in the World, if it had been his Soveraign Pleasure. Any other People were as fit to be entrusted with his Oracles, and be Subjects for his Worship as that people; yet all other Nations, till the rejection of the *Jews*, because of their rejection of Christ, were strangers from the Covenant of Promise. These People were part of the common mass of the World: They had no Prerogative in Nature above *Adam's* Posterity. Were they the extract of an innocent part of his Loyns, and all the other Nations drain'd out of his Putrefaction? Had the blood of *Abraham*, from whom they were more immediately descended, any more precious tincture than the rest of Mankind? They as well as other Nations were made of one blood, *Acts* 17. 16. And that corrupted both in the Spring and in the Rivulets. Were they better then other Nations, when God drew them out of their slavery? We have *Joshua's* authority for it, that they had complyed with the *Egyptian Idolatry, and served other Gods* in that place of their servitude, *Josh.* 24 14. Had they had an abhorrency of the Superstition of *Egypt*, while they remain'd there, they could not so soon have erected a Golden Calf for Worship, in imitation of the *Egyptian* Idols. All the rest of Mankind had as inviting reasons to present God with as those people had. God might have granted the same priviledge to all the World as well as to them, or deny it them, and endow'd all the rest of the World with his Statutes: but the enriching such a small company of people with his Divine showers, and leaving the rest of the World

as a barren Wilderneſs in Spirituals, can be plac'd upon no other account originally, than that of his unaccountable Soveraignty of his love to them: There was nothing in them to merit ſuch high Titles from God, as his Firſt-born, his peculiar Treaſure, the Apple of his Eye. He diſclaims any righteouſneſs in them, and ſpeaks a word ſufficient to damp ſuch thoughts in them, by charging them with their wickedneſs, while he *loaded them with his Benefits*, Deut. 9. 4, 6. The Lord *gives thee not* this Land for *thy Righteouſneſs*: For thou art a *ſtiff-necked* People. It was an act of God's free Pleaſure, to *chooſe them to be a People to himſelf*, Deut. 7. 6.

3. *God afterwards rejected the Jews, gave them up to the hardneſs of their Hearts, and ſpread the Goſpel among the Gentiles.* He hath caſt off the *Children* of the Kingdom, thoſe that had been enroll'd for his Subjects for many Ages, who ſeem'd by their deſcent from *Abraham*, to have a right to the Priviledges of *Abraham*, and called Men from the *Eaſt* and from the *Weſt*, from the darkeſt Corners of the World to ſit down with *Abraham*, *Iſaac* and *Jacob*, *in the Kingdom of Heaven*, *i. e.* To partake with them of the Promiſes of the Goſpel, *Matth.* 8. 11. The People that were accounted Accurſed for the *Jews*, enjoy the means of Grace, which have been hid from thoſe, that were once dignified, theſe 1600 *Years*; that they have neither *Ephod* nor *Teraphim*, nor Sacrifice, nor any true Worſhip of God among them, *Hoſ.* 3. 4. Why he ſhould not give them Grace, to acknowledge, and own the Perſon of the *Meſſiah*, to whom he had made the Promiſes of him for ſo many ſucceſſive Ages, but let their *Hearts be Fat*, and *their Ears heavy*, Iſaiah 6. 10. Why the Goſpel at length after the Reſurrection of Chriſt ſhould be preſented to the *Gentiles*, not by Chance, but purſuant to the Reſolution, and Prediction of God declared by the Prophets, that it ſhould be ſo in Time? Why he ſhould let ſo many hundred of Years paſs over, after the World was peopled, and let the Nations all that while ſoak in their Idolatrous Cuſtoms? Why he ſhould not call the *Gentiles* without rejecting the *Jews*, and bind them both up together in the bundle of Life? Why he ſhould acquaint ſome People with it, a little after the publiſhing it in *Jeruſalem*, by the deſcent of the Spirit, and others not a long time after? Some in the firſt Ages of Chriſtianity enjoyed it, others have it not, as thoſe in *America*, till the laſt Age of the World; can be referred to nothing but his Soveraign Pleaſure.

What merit can be diſcovered in the *Gentiles?* There is ſomething of Juſtice in the Caſe of the *Jews* rejection, nothing but Soveraignty in the *Gentiles* reception into the Church. If the *Jews* were bad, the *Gentiles* were in ſome ſort worſe: The *Jews* own'd the one true God without mixture of Idols, though they own'd not the *Meſſiah* in his appearance, which they did in a Promiſe; but the *Gentiles* own'd neither the one, nor the other. Some tell us, it was for the merit of ſome of their Anceſtors. How comes the means of Grace then to be taken from the *Jew*, who had, (if any People ever had) meritorious Anceſtors for a Plea? If the merit of ſome of their former Progenitors were the Cauſe, what was the Reaſon the Debt due to their merit, was not paid to their immediate Progeny, or to themſelves, but to a Poſterity ſo diſtant from them; and ſo abominably depraved, as the *Gentile* World was, at the day of the Goſpel-Sun ſtriking into their *Horizon?* What merit might be in their Anceſtors (if any could be ſuppoſed in the moſt refined rubbiſh,) 'twas ſo little for themſelves, that no Oyl could be ſpared out of their Lamps for others. What merit their Anceſtors might have, might be forfeited by the ſucceeding Generations. 'Tis ordinarily ſeen, that what honour a Father deſerves in a State for publick Service, may be loſt by the Son, forfeited by Treaſon, and himſelf attainted.

Or was it out of a foreſight that the *Gentiles* would embrace it, and the *Jews* reject it, that the *Gentiles* would embrace it in one place and not in another? How did God foreſee it but in his own Grace, which he was reſolved to diſplay in one, not in another? It muſt be then ſtill reſolved into his Soveraign Pleaſure. Or did he foreſee it in their Wills and Nature? What, were they not all one common droſs? Was any part of *Adam* by Nature better than another? How did God foreſee that which was not, nor could be, without his pleaſure to give ability and Grace to receive?

Well then, what Reaſon but the Soveraign pleaſure of God can be alledged, why Chriſt forbad the *Apoſtles* at their firſt Commiſſion to Preach to the *Gentiles? Matth.* 10. 15. But at the ſecond and ſtanding Commiſſion orders them to Preach to *every Creature*. Why did he put a demurr to the Reſolutions of *Paul* and *Timothy*. To impart light to *Bithynia*, or order them to go into *Macedonia?* Was that Countrey more worthy upon whom lay a great part of the Blood of the World ſhed in *Alexanders* time? *Acts* 16. 6, 7, 9, 10. Why ſhould *Corazin* and *Bethſaida* enjoy thoſe means, that were not granted to the *Tyrians* and *Sidonians*, who might probably have ſooner reached out their Arms to welcome it? *Matth.* 11. 21. Why ſhould God ſend the Goſpel into our *Iſland*, and cauſe it to flouriſh ſo long here, and not ſend it, or continue it in the furtheſt *Eaſtern* parts of the World? Why ſhould the very Profeſſion of Chriſtianity poſſeſs ſo ſmall a compaſs of ground in the World, but five *parts in* Thirty, the *Mahometans* holding ſix *parts*, and the other Nineteen overgrown with *Paganiſm*, where either the Goſpel was never planted, or elſe ſince rooted up? To whom will you refer this, but to the ſame Cauſe our Saviour doth the Revelation of the Goſpel to Babes, and not to the wiſe, even to his Father? *For ſo it ſeemed good in thy ſight.* Matth. 11. 25, 26. *For ſo was thy good pleaſure before thee* (as in the Original.) 'Tis at his Pleaſure whether he will give any clear Revelation of his Goſpel, or leave them only to the Light of Nature. He could have kept up the firſt beam of the Goſpel in the Promiſe in all Nations among the Apoſtaſies of *Adam*'s Poſterity, or renewed it in all Nations, when it began to be darkned, as well as he firſt publiſht it to *Adam* after his Fall. But it was his Soveraign Pleaſure, to permit it to be obſcur'd in one Place, and to keep it lighted in another.

4. His Soveriagnty is manifeſt *in the various influences of the means of Grace.* He ſaith to theſe waters of the Sanctuary, as to the Floods of the Sea, *Hitherto you ſhall go and no further.* Sometimes they waſh away the filth of the Fleſh, and outward Man, but not that of the Spirit. The Goſpel Spiritualizeth ſome, and only moralizeth others; ſome are by the Power of it ſtruck down to Conviction, but not rais'd up to Converſion. Some have only the Gleams of it in their Conſciences, and others more powerful Flaſhes; ſome remain in their thick darkneſs under the beaming of the Goſpel every Day in their Face, and after a long inſenſibleneſs are rouz'd by its light and warmth. Sometimes there is ſuch a powerful Breath in it, that it levels the haughty Imaginations of Men, and lays them at its Feet, that before ſtrutted againſt it in the Pride of their Heart. The Foundation of this is not in the Goſpel it ſelf, which is always the ſame, nor in the Ordinances which are Channels as ſound at one time as at another, but Divine Soveraignty that Spirits them as he pleaſeth, and *blows when and where it liſts.* It has ſometimes conquered its *thouſands*, *Acts* 2. 41. At another time ſcarce its *tens*; ſometime

times the Harveſt hath been great, when the Labourers have been but few; at another time, it hath been ſmall, when the Labourers have been many. Sometimes whole Sheaves, at another time ſcarce Gleanings. The Evangelical Net hath been ſometimes full at a caſt, and at every caſt; at another time many have laboured all Night and Day too, and catched nothing. *Acts* 2. 47. *The Lord added to the Church daily.* The Goſpel Chariot doth not always return with Captives chain'd to the ſides of it, but ſometimes blurr'd and reproached, wearing the marks of Hells ſpite, inſtead of imprinting the marks of its own Beauty. In *Corinth* it triumph'd over *many* People; *Acts* 18. 10. In *Athens* 'tis mockt, and gathers but a few Cluſters, *Acts* 17. 32, 34. God keeps the Key of the Heart as well as of the Womb. The *Apoſtles* had a power of publiſhing the Goſpel, and working Miracles, but under the Divine Conduct. It was an inſtrumentality *durante bene placito*, and as God ſaw it convenient. Miracles were not upon every occaſion allow'd to them to be wrought, nor ſucceſs upon every Adminiſtration granted to them. God ſometimes lent them the Key, but to take out no more Treaſure, than was allotted to them.

There is a variety in the Time of Goſpel Operation; ſome riſe out of their Graves of Sin, and Beds of ſluggiſhneſs at the firſt appearance of this Sun, others lie ſnorting longer. Why doth not God Spirit it at one ſeaſon as well as at another, but ſet his diſtinct periods of Time; but becauſe he will ſhew his abſolute Freedom?

And do we not ſometimes Experiment that after the moſt ſolemn Preparations of the Heart, we are fruſtrated of thoſe incomes we expected: Perhaps it was becauſe we thought Divine returns were due to our Preparations, and God ſtops up the Channel, and we return dryer than we came, that God may confute our falſe Opinion, and preſerve the Honour of his own Soveraignty. Sometimes we leap with *John Baptiſt* in the Womb at the appearance of Chriſt; ſometimes we lye upon a lazy Bed when he knocks from Heaven. Sometimes the Fleece is dry and ſometimes wet, and God with-holds to drop down his Dew of the Morning upon it. The dews of his Word, as well as the droppings of the Clouds belong to his Royalty. Light will not ſhine into the Heart, though it ſhine round about us, without the Soveraign Order of that God, *who commanded Light to ſhine out of the darkneſs* of the Chaos, 2 *Cor.* 4. 6. And it is not ſeen alſo in regard of the refreſhing Influences of the Word? Sometimes the ſtrongeſt Arguments, and cleareſt Promiſes prevail nothing towards the quelling, black and deſpairing Imaginations, when afterwards we have found them frighted away by an unexpected Word, that ſeem'd to have leſs virtue in it ſelf, than any that paſſed in vain before it. The reaſonings of Wiſdom have dropt down like Arrows againſt a brazen Wall, when the Speech of a weaker Perſon hath found an Efficacy. 'Tis God, by his Soveraignty Spirits one word and not another. Sometimes a Secret Word comes in, which was not thought of before, as dropt from Heaven, and gives a refreſhing, when emptineſs was found in all the reſt. One Word from the Lips of a Soveraign Prince is a greater Cordial than all the Harangues of ſubjects without it. What is the Reaſon of this variety, but that God would increaſe the Proofs of his own Soveraignty? That as it was a part of his Dominion to Create the Beauty of a World, ſo it is no leſs, to Create the Peace as well as the Grace of the Heart. *Iſaiah* 57. 19. *I create the Fruit of the Lips Peace.*

Let us learn from hence to have adoring thoughts of, not murmuring Fancies againſt the Soveraignty of God. To acknowledge it with thankfulneſs in what we have, to implore it with a Holy Submiſſion, in what we want. To own God as a Soveraign in a way of dependance, is the way to be own'd by him as Subjects in a way of Favour.

5. *His Soveraignty is manifeſted in giving a greater meaſure of knowledge to ſome, than to others.* What Parts, Gifts, excellency of Nature any have above others, are God's donative. *He gives Wiſdom to the Wiſe, and Knowledge to them that know Underſtanding*, Dan. 2. 31. Wiſdom the habit, and Knowledge the right uſe of it in diſcerning the right Nature of Objects, and the fitneſs of Means, conducing to the end; all is but a Beam of Divine Light; and the different Degrees of Knowledge in one Man above another, are the Effects of his Soveraign Pleaſure. He enlightens not the Minds of all Men, to know every Part of his Will; one *eats with a doubtful Conſcience*, another in *Faith* without any ſtaggering. *Romans* 14. 2. *Peter* had a deſire to keep up Circumciſion, not fully underſtanding the Mind of God in the Abolition of the Jewiſh Ceremonies. While *Paul* was clear in the Truth of that Doctrine. A Thought comes into our Mind, that like a Sun-beam makes a Scripture-Truth viſible in a Moment, which before we were poring upon without any ſucceſs; this is from his Pleaſure. One in the Primitive Times had the Gift of Knowledge, another of Wiſdom, one the Gift of Propheſie, another of Tongues, one the Gift of Healing, another that of diſcerning Spirits; why this Gift to one Man, and not to another? Why ſuch a Diſtribution in ſeveral Subjects? Becauſe it is his Soveraign Pleaſure. *The Spirit divides to every Man ſeverally as he will*, 1 Cor. 12. 11. Why doth he give *Bezaleel* and *Aholiab* the Gift of Engraving, and making Curious Works for the Tabernacle, *Exod.* 31. 3. and not others? Why doth he beſtow the Treaſures of Evangelical Knowledge upon the meaneſt of Earthen Veſſels, the Poor *Galileans*, and neglect the *Phariſees* ſtor'd with the Knowledge both of Naturals and Morals? Why did he give to ſome, and not to others, *to know the Myſteries of the Kingdom of Heaven*, Mat. 13. 11. The Reaſon is implyed in the Words: *Becauſe it was the Myſtery of his Kingdom*, and therefore was the Act of his Soveraignty. How would it be a Kingdom and Monarchy, if the Governour of it were bound to do what he did? 'Tis to be reſolv'd only into the Soveraign right of Propriety of his own Goods, that he furniſheth Babes with a ſtock of Knowledge, and leaves the *Wiſe* and *Prudent* empty of it. *Matth.* 11. 26. *Even ſo Father, for ſo it ſeem'd good in thy ſight.* Why did he not reveal his Mind to *Eli* a grown Man, and in higheſt Office in the *Jewiſh* Church, but open it to *Samuel* a ſtripling; Why did the Lord go from the one to the other? Becauſe his Motion depends upon his own Will. Some are of ſo dull a Conſtitution, that they are uncapable of any Impreſſion, like Rocks too hard for a ſtamp; others like Water, you may ſtamp what you pleaſe, but it vaniſheth as ſoon as the Seal is remov'd. 'Tis God forms Men as he pleaſeth, ſome have Parts to govern a Kingdom, others ſcarce brains to Conduct their own Affairs. One is fit to Rule Men, and another ſcarce fit to keep Swine. Some have capacious Souls in crazy and deform'd Bodies, others contracted Spirits and heavier Minds in a richer and more beautiful Caſe. Why are not all ſtones alike? Some have a more ſparkling Light, as Gems, more Orient then Pebbles. Some are Stars of firſt, and others of leſs Magnitude, others as mean as Glo-worms, a ſlimy Luſtre: 'Tis becauſe he is the Soveraign diſpoſer, of what belongs to him; and gives here, as well as at the Reſurrection, to one

a *Glory of the Sun*, to another that of the *Moon*, and to a third a leſs, reſembling that of a *Star*, 1 *Cor.* 15. 40. And this God may do by the ſame right of Dominion, as he exerciſed, when he endow'd ſome kinds of Creatures with a greater Perfection than others, in their Nature. Why may he not as well garniſh one Man with a greater Proportion of Gifts, as make a Man differ in excellency from the Nature of a Beaſt? Or frame Angels to a more purely ſpiritual Nature than a Man? Or make one Angel a *Cherubim*, or *Seraphim* with a greater Meaſure of Light than another? Though the Foundation of this is his Dominion, yet his Wiſdom is not unintereſted in his Soveraign diſpoſal; he garniſheth thoſe with a greater ability, whom he intends for greater ſervice, than thoſe that he intends for leſs, or none at all: As an Artificer beſtows more labour, and carves a more excellent figure upon thoſe Stones, that he deſigns for a more honourable Place in the building. But tho' the intending this or that Man for ſervice, be the motive of laying in a greater Proviſion in him than in others, yet ſtill it is to be referred to his Soveraignty ſince that firſt Act of culling him out for ſuch an end, was the fruit ſolely of his Soveraign Pleaſure. As wen he reſolv'd to make a Creature, actually to glorifie him, in Wiſdom he muſt give him Reaſon; yet the making ſuch a Creature was an Act of his abſolute Dominion.

6. His Soveraignty is manifeſt *in the calling ſome to a more ſpecial ſervice in their Generation.* God ſettles ſome in immediate Offices of his ſervice, and perpetuates them in thoſe Offices with a neglect of others, who ſeem to have a greater pretence to them. *Moſes* was a greater ſufferer for *Iſrael*, the ſollicitor for them in *Egypt*, and the conductor of them from *Egypt* to *Canaan*; yet he was not choſen to the high Prieſthood, but that was an Office ſetled upon *Aaron*, and his poſterity after him in a lineal deſent; *Moſes* was only pitched upon for the preſent reſcue of the Captiv'd *Iſraelites*, and to be the inſtrument of Divine Miracles; but notwithſtanding all the ſucceſs he had in his conduct, his faithfulneſs in his employment, and the tranſcendent familiarity he had with the great Ruler of the World, his poſterity were left in the common level of the Tribe of *Levi* without any ſpecial mark of dignity upon them above the reſt for all the ſervices of that great Man. Why *Moſes* for a Temporary Magiſtracy, *Aaron* for a perpetual Prieſthood above all rhe reſt of the *Iſraelites*, hath little reaſon but the abſolute pleaſure God who deſtributes his employments, as he pleaſeth; and as a Maſter orders this Servant to do the nobleſt work, and another to labour in baſer Offices according to his pleaſure? Why doth he call out *David* a Shepherd to ſway the Jewiſh Scepter above the reſt of the Brothers, that had a fairer appearance, and had been bred in Arms, and enur'd to the Toils and Watchings of a Camp? Why ſhould *Mary* be the Mother of Chriſt, and not ſome other of the ſame Family of *David* of a more ſplendid birth, and a nobler education? Though ſome other Reaſons may be rendr'd, yet that which affords the greateſt acquieſcence, is the Soveraign Will of God. Why did Chriſt chooſe out of the meaneſt of the People the *Twelve Apoſtles*, to be Heralds of his Grace in *Judæa* and other parts of the World? And afterwards ſelect *Paul* before *Gamaliel* his Inſtructor, and others of the *Jews*, as Learned as himſelf, and advance him to be the moſt eminent Apoſtle above the heads of thoſe who had miniſtred to Chriſt in the days of his Fleſh? Why ſhould he preſerve Eleven of thoſe he firſt called, to propagate and enlarge his Kingdom, and leave the other to the employment of ſhedding his Blood? Why in the times of our Reformation he ſhould chooſe a *Luther* out of a Monaſtery, and leave others in their ſuperſtitious naſtineſs, to periſh in the Traditions of their Fathers? Why ſet up *Calvin* as a Bulwark of the Goſpel, and let others as Learned as himſelf, wallow in the ſink of Popery? 'Tis his pleaſure to do ſo. The Potter hath power to ſeparate this part of the Clay to form a Veſſel for a more publick uſe, and another part of the Clay to form a Veſſel for a more private one. God takes the meaneſt Clay to form the moſt excellent and honourable Veſſels in his Houſe. As he form'd Man, that was to Govern the Creatures, of the ſame Clay and Earth, whereof the Beaſts were form'd and not of that nobler Element of Water, which gave birth to the Fiſh and Birds. So he forms ſome that are to do him the greateſt ſervice, of the meaneſt materials, to manifeſt the abſolute right of his Dominion.

7. *His Soveraignty is manifeſt in the beſtowing much Wealth and Honour upon ſome, and not vouchſafing it to the more induſtrious and Labourious attempts of others.* Some are abas'd and others are elevated, ſome are enricht, and others impoveriſht, ſome ſcarce feel any Croſs, and others ſcarce feel any Comfort in their whole Lives. Some Sweat and Toil, and what they labour for, runs out of their reach; others ſit ſtill, and what they wiſh for, falls into their lap. One of the ſame Clay hath a Diadem to beautifie his Head, and another wants a covering to protect him from the weather. One hath a ſtately Palace to Lodge in, and another is ſcarce Maſter of a Cottage where to lay his Head. A Scepter is put into one Mans Hand, and a Spade into anothers. A rich Purple garniſheth one Mans Body, while another wraps himſelf in Dunghil Rags. The Poverty of ſome and the Wealth of others is an Effect of the Divine Soveraignty, whence God is ſaid, to be the *Maker of the Poor as well as the Rich*, *Prov.* 22. 2. Not only of their Perſons but of their conditions. The Earth and the fulneſs thereof is his Propriety, and he hath as much a right, as *Joſeph* had, to beſtow Changes of Rayments, upon what *Benjamins* he pleaſe. There is an Election of ſome to a greater degree of worldly Felicity, as there is an Election of ſome to a greater degree of ſupernatural Grace and Glory. As he makes it *Rain upon one City and not upon another*, Amos 4. 7. So he cauſeth Proſperity to diſtil upon the Head of one, and not upon another, Crowning ſome with earthly Bleſſings, while he croſſeth others with continual Afflictions: For he ſpeaks of himſelf as a great Proprietor, of the Corn that nouriſheth us, and the Wine that cheers us, and the Wood that warms us, *Hoſea* 2. 8, 9. *I will take away*, not your Corn and Wine, but *my Corn*, *my Wine*, *my Wooll*. his Right, to diſpoſe of the Goods of every particular Perſon, is unqueſtionable. He can take away from one, and paſs over the Propriety to another; thus he devolv'd the right of the *Egyptian* Jewels to the *Iſraelites*, and beſtow'd upon the Captives, what before he had vouchſafed to the Oppreſſors. As every Soveraign ſtate demands the Goods of their Subjects for the Publick Advantage in a caſe of Exigency, though none of that Wealth was gain'd by any Publick Office, but by their Private Induſtry, and gain'd in a Countrey, not ſubject to the Dominion of thoſe, that require a Portion of them. By this right he changes ſtrangely the ſcene of the World, ſometimes thoſe that are high, are reduc'd to a mean and ignominious condition, thoſe that are mean, are advanc'd to a ſtate of Plenty and Glory. The Counter which in accounting ſignifies now but a Penny, is preſently rais'd up to ſignify a pound. The proud Ladies of *Iſrael* inſtead of a Girdle of curious needle-word, are brought to make uſe of a *Cord*; as the vulgar Tranſlates *Rent*, a rag

or

or list of Cloth. *Isaiah* 3. 24. And Sack-cloth for a Stomacher instead of Silk. This is the Soveraign act of God, as he is the Lord of the World. Psal. 71. 6, 7. *Promotion comes neither from the East, nor from the West, nor from the South, but God is Judge, he pulls down one, and sets up another.* He doth no wrong to any man, if he lets him languish out his days in poverty, and disgrace. If he gives, or takes away, he meddles with nothing, but what is his own more than ours, If he did dispense his benefits equally to all, Men would soon think it their due. The inequality and changes preserve the notion of Gods Soveraignty, and correct our natural unmindfulness of it; if there were *no changes*, God would not be fear'd as the *King of all the Earth*, *Psal.* 55. 19. To this might also be referred his investing some Countries with greater Riches in their Bowels and on the surface. The disposing some in the fruitful and pleasant Regions of *Canaan* or *Italy*, while he settles others in the Icy and barren parts of Northern Climates.

8. His Soveraignty is manifest *in the times and seasons of dispensing his Goods.* He is Lord of the times *when*, as well as of the Goods *which* he doth dispose of to any person; these *the Father hath put in his own power*, *Acts* 1. 7. As it was his Soveraign pleasure, to restore the Kingdom to *Israel*, so he would pitch upon the time, when to do it, and would not have his Right invaded, so much as by a question out of curiosity. This disposing of opportunities, in many things can be referred to nothing else but his Soveraign pleasure. Why should Christ come at the twilight and evening of the World, at the fulness. and not at the beginning of time? Why he should be from the infancy of the World, so long wrapt up in a promise, and not appear in the flesh till the last times and gray hairs of the World, when so many persons in all Nations had been hurried out of the World without any notice of such a Redeemer? What was this but his Soveraign Will? Why the *Gentiles* should be left so long in the *Devils* chains, wallowing in the sink of their abominable superstitions, since God had declar'd his intention by the Prophets, to call multitudes of them, and reject the *Jews?* Why he should deferre it so long, can be refered to nothing but the same cause. What is the reason the vail continues so long upon the heart of the *Jews*, that is promised, one time or other, to be taken off? Why doth God delay the accomplishment of those glorious predictions of the happiness and interest of that people, is it because of the sin of their Ancestors, a reason that cannot bear much weight. If we cast it upon that account, their Conversion can never be expected, can never be effected; if for the sins of their Ancestors, is it not also for their own sins? Do their sins grow less in number, or less venimous, or provoking in quality by this delay? Is not their Blasphemy of Christ as malicious, their hatred of him as strong, and rooted, as ever? Do they not as much approve of the bloody act of their Ancestors, since so many ages are past, as their Ancestors, did applaud it at the time of the Execution? Have they not the same disposition and Will, discovered sufficiently by the scorn of Christ, and of those that profess his Name, to act the same thing over again, were Christ now in the same state in the World, and they invested with the same power of Government? If their Conversion were deferr'd one age after the death of Christ for the sins of their preceeding Ancestors, is it to be expected now, since the present generation of the *Jews* in all Countreys have the sins of those remote, the succeeding, and their more immediate Ancestors lying upon them. This therefore cannot be the reason, but as it was the Soveraign pleasure of God to foretell his intention, to overcome the stoutness of their hearts, so it is his Soveraign pleasure, that it shall not be perform'd, till the *fulness of the Gentiles be come in*, Rom. 11. 25. As he is Lord of his own Grace, so he is Lord of the *Time*, when to dispense it. Why did God create the World in *Six days*, which he could have erected, and beautified in a moment? Because it was his pleasure so to do. Why did he frame the World, when he did, and not many ages before? Because he is Master of his own work, Why did he not resolve to bring *Israel* to the fruition of *Canaan* till after *four hundred years*? Why did he draw out their deliverance to so long time after he began to attempt it? Why such a multitude of Plagues upon *Pharaoh* to work it, when he could have cut short the work by one mortal blow upon the Tyrant and his accomplices? It was his Soveraign pleasure to act so, though not without other reasons intelligible enough by looking into the story. Why doth he not bring Man to a perfection of stature in a moment after his Birth, but let him continue in a tedious infancy in a semblance to Beasts for want of an exercise of reason? Why doth he not bring this or that Man, whom he intends for service to a fitness in an instant but by long tracts of Study, and through many *Meanders* and *Labyrinths*? Why doth he transplant a hopeful person in his youth to the pleasures of another World, and let another of an eminent Holiness, continue in the misery of this, and wade through many Floods of afflictions? What can we chiefly refer all these things to, but his Soveraign pleasure? The *times are determined by God*, *Acts* 7. 26.

3. *The Dominion of God is manifested as a Governour, as well as a Law-giver and Proprietor*

1. *In disposing of States and Kingdoms.* Psalm 75. 7. *God is Judge, he pulls down one, and sets up another*; *Judge* is to be taken not in the same sence, that we commonly use the Word for a judicial Minister in a way of Tryal, but for a Governour; as you know the extraordinary Governours rais'd up among the *Jews*, were call'd Judges, whence one intire Book in the Old Testament is so denominated, the Book of *Judges*. God hath a Prerogative, to *change Times and Seasons*. Dan. 2. 21. *i. e.* The Revolutions of Government, whereby Times are alter'd *. How many Empires that have spread their wings over a great part of the World, have had their Carkasses torn in Pieces; and unheard of Nations pluckt off the wings of the *Roman* Eagle, after it had prey'd upon many Nations of the World? And the *Macedonian* Empire was as the Dew, that is dried up a short Time after it falls. He erected the *Chaldæan* Monarchy, us'd *Nebuchadnezzar* to overthrow and punish the ungrateful *Jews*; and by a Soveraign Act gave a great parcel of Land into his Hands; and what he Thought was his right by Conquest, was God's donative to him. You may read the Charter to *Nebuchadnezzar*, whom he terms his Servant. *Jer.* 27. 6. *And now I have given all those Lands*, the Lands are mentioned, *ver.* 3. *Into the Hands of Nebuchadnezzar the King of Babylon my Servant.* Which Decree he pronounceth after his asserting his right of Soveraignty over the *whole Earth*, Ver. 5. After that, he puts a Period to the *Chaldæan* Empire, and by the same Soveraign Authority decrees *Babylon* to be a spoil to the Nations of the North Country, and delivers her up as a spoil to the *Persian*, *Jer.* 50. 9, 10. And this for the Manifestation of his Soveraign Dominion, that he was the *Lord, that made Peace, and created Evil*, Isaiah 45. 6, 7. God afterwards overthrows that by the *Grecian Alexander*, propheſied of under the Figure of a *Goat*, with *one horn between his Eyes*, Dan. 8. The swift

* Mr. Mede in one of his Letters

ſwift current of his Victories, as ſwift as his Motion ſhew'd it to be from an extraordinary Hand of Heaven, and not either from the Policy or Strength of the *Macedonian*. His Strength in the Prophet is deſcribed to be leſs, being but *one horn* running againſt the *Perſian*, deſcrib'd under the Figure of a *Ram with two Horns* *. And himſelf acknowledg'd a Divine Motion exciting him to that great attempt, when he ſaw *Joddus* the High Prieſt, coming out in his Prieſtly Robes, to meet him at his approach to *Jeruſalem*; whom he was about to worſhip, acknowledging that the Viſion, which put him upon the *Perſian* War, appear'd to him in ſuch a garb. What was the Reaſon *Iſrael* was rent from *Judah*, and both ſplit into two diſtinct Kingdoms? Becauſe *Reboboam* would not hearken to ſober and ſound Counſels, but follow the advice of Upſtarts. What was the Reaſon he did not hearken to ſound Advice, ſince he had ſo advantageous an Education under his Father *Solomon* the wiſeſt Prince of the World? *The Cauſe was from the Lord*, 1 Kings 12. 15. That he might perform, what he had before ſpoke. In this he acted according to his Royal Word, but in the firſt Reſolve he acted as a Soveraign Lord that had the diſpoſal of all Nations in the World. And though *Ahab* had a numerous Poſterity, *Seventy Sons* to inherit the Throne after him, yet God by his Soveraign Authority gives them up into the Hands of *Jehu*, who ſtrips them of their Lives and Hopes together; not a Man of them ſucceeded in the Throne, but the Crown is transferr'd to *Jehu* by God's diſpoſal.

* *Joſephus.*

In Wars, whereby flouriſhing Kingdoms are overthrown, God hath the chief Hand; in reference to which it is obſerved, that in the two Prophets *Iſaiah* and *Jeremy*, God is called *the Lord of Hoſts* 130 Times. 'Tis not the Sword of the Captain, but the Sword of the Lord, bears the firſt rank; *The Sword of the Lord and of* Gideon. *Judges* 7. 18. The Sword of a Conqueror is the Sword of the Lord, and receives its *Charge* and Commiſſion from the great Soveraign. *Jerem.* 47. 6, 7. We are apt to confine our Thoughts to ſecond Cauſes, lay the fault upon the miſcarriages of Perſons, the Ambition of the one, and the Covetouſneſs of another, and regard them not as the Effects of Gods Soveraign Authority, linking ſecond Cauſes together, to ſerve his own Purpoſe. The skill of one Man may lay open the Folly of a Counſellor, an earthly force may break in Pieces the Power of a mighty Prince. But *Job* in his Conſideration of thoſe things, refers the Matter higher. *Job* 12. 18. *He looſeth the Bond of Kings, and girdeth their Loyns with a Girdle. He looſeth the Bonds of Kings*, i. e. takes off the Yokes, they lay upon their Subjects; *and gird their Loyns with a girdle*; *A Cord* as the Vulgar; he lays upon them thoſe Fetters they fram'd for others, ſuch a Girdle or Band as is the Mark of Captivity, as the Words, *Verſe* 19. confirm it. *He leads Princes away ſpoil'd, and overthrows the mighty.* God lifts up ſome to a great height, and caſts down others to a diſgraceful Ruine. All thoſe changes in the Face of the World, the Revolutions of Empires, the deſolating and Ravaging Wars which are often immediately the birth of the Vice, Ambition, and Fury of Princes, are the Royal Acts of God as Governour of the World. All Government belongs to him, he is the Fountain of all the Great and Petty Dominions in the World: And therefore may place in them what Subſtitutes and Vicegerents he pleaſeth; as a Prince may remove his Officers at Pleaſure, and take their Commiſſions from them. The higheſt are ſetled by God, *durante bene placito*, and non *quamdiu bene ſe geſſerint*. Thoſe Princes that have been the Glory of their Countrey, have ſway'd the Scepter but a ſhort Time, when the more Wolviſh ones have remain'd longer in Commiſſion, as God hath ſeen fit for the Ends of his own Soveraign Government. Now by the Revolutions in the World and Changes in Governours and Government, God keeps up the acknowledgement of his Soveraignty, when he doth arreſt grand and publick Offenders, that wear a Crown by his Providence, and employ it by their Pride againſt him, that plac'd it there. When he arraigns ſuch by a ſignal Hand from Heaven, he makes them the publick Examples of the Rights of his Soveraignty, declaring thereby, that the *Cedars* of *Lebanon* are as much at his Foot, as the *Shrubs* of the Valley; that he hath as Soveraign an Authority over the Throne in the Palace, as over the Stool in the Cottage.

2. The Dominion of God is manifeſted, *in raiſing up and ordering the Spirits of Men according to his Pleaſure.* He doth as the Father of Spirits, communicate an influence to the Spirits of Men as well as an Exiſtence; he puts what Inclinations he pleaſeth into the Will, ſtores it with what habits he pleaſe, whither natural or ſupernatural, whereby it may be render'd more ready to Act according to the Divine Purpoſe. The Will of Man is a finite Principle, and therefore ſubject to him who hath an infinite Soveriagnty over all Things; and God having a Soveraignty over the Will in the Manner of its acting, cauſeth it to Will, what he Wills, as to the outward Act, and the outward Manner of performing it. There are many Examples of this Part of his Soveraignty. God by his Soveraign Conduct, ordered *Moſes* a Protectoreſs as ſoon as his Parents had form'd an *Ark of Bulruſhes*, wherein to ſet him floting on the River, *Exod.* 2. 3, 4, 5, 6. They expoſe him to the Waves, and the Waves expoſe him to the view of *Pharaohs* Daughter, whom God by his ſecret ordering her motion, had poſted in that Place; and though ſhe was the Daughter of a Prince that inveterately hated the whole Nation, and had by various Arts endeavour'd to extirpate them; yet God inſpires the Royal Lady with Sentiments of Compaſſion to the forlorn Infant, though ſhe knew him to be one of the *Hebrews* Children, *Verſe* 6 *i. e.* one of that Race, whom her Father had devoted to the Hands of an Executioner, yet God that doth by his Soveraignty Rule over the Spirits of all Men, moves her to take that Infant into her Protection, and nouriſh him at her own Charge, give him a liberal Education, Adopt him her Son, who in Time was to be the Ruine of her Race, and the Saviour of his Nation. Thus he appointed *Cyrus* to be his *Shepherd*, and gave him a Paſtoral Spirit for the Reformation of the City, and *Temple of Jeruſalem*, Iſaiah 44. 28. And *Iſaiah* 45. 5. Tells them in the Propheſie, that he had *girded* him, though *Cyrus* had *not known* him, i. e. God had given him a Military Spirit and Strength for ſo great an attempt, though he did not know, that he was acted by God for thoſe Divine Purpoſes. And when the Time came for the Houſe of the Lord to be re-built, the Spirits of the People were rais'd up, not by themſelves, but by God. *Ezra* 1. 5. *Whoſe Spirit God had rais'd to go up.* And not only the Spirit of *Zerubbabel* the Magiſtrate, and of *Joſhua* the Prieſt, but the Spirit of all the People, from the higheſt to the meaneſt that attended him, were acted by God, to ſtrengthen their Hands, and promote the *Work. Hag.* 1. 14. The Spirits of Men, even in thoſe Works which are naturally deſirable to them, as the Reſtauration of the *City*, and rebuilding of the *Temple* was to thoſe *Jews*, are acted by God, as the Soveraign over them, much more when the Wheels of Mens Spirits are lifted up above their ordinary Temper and Motion. It was this Empire of God, good *Nehemiah* regarded, as that whence he was to hope

for

for Succeſs; he did not aſſure himſelf ſo much of it, from the Favour he had with the King, nor the reaſonableneſs of his intended Petition, but the abſolute Power God had over the Heart of that great *Monarch:* And therefore he ſupplicates the Heavenly, before he petitioned the Earthly Throne. *Nehem.* 2. 4. *So I pray'd to the God of Heaven.* The Heathens had ſome glance of this; 'tis an Expreſſion that *Cicero* hath ſome where, *That the* Roman *Common-wealth was rather Govern'd by the Aſſiſtance of the Supream Divinity over the Hearts of Men, than by their own Counſels and Management.* How often hath the feeble Courage of Men been heightned to ſuch a pitch, as to ſtare Death in the Face, which before were dampt with the leaſt Thought or Glance of it? This is a Fruit of God's Soveraign Dominion.

3. The Dominion of God is manifeſt *in reſtraining the furious paſſions of Men, and putting a block in their way.* Sometimes God doth it by a remarkable hand, as the *Babel*-Builders were diverted from their proud deſign by a ſudden confuſion of their Language, and rendring it unintelligible to one another; ſometimes by ordinary, though unexpected means; as when *Saul* like a *Hawk* was ready to prey upon *David*, whom he had hunted as a *Patridge* upon the Mountains, he had another object preſented for his arms and fury by the *Philiſtines* ſuddain invaſion of a part of his Territory, 1 *Sam.* 23. 26, 27, 28. But it is chiefly ſeen by an inward curbing mutinous affections, when there is no viſible cauſe. What reaſon but this can be rendr'd, why the Nations bordering on *Canaan*, who bore no good Will to the *Jews*, but rather wiſhed the whole race of them rooted out from the face of the Earth, ſhould not invade their Countrey, pillage their Houſes, and plunder their Cattle, while they were left naked of any Humane defence, the Males being annually employ'd at one time at *Jeruſalem* in Worſhip; what reaſon can be rendr'd but an inviſible curb God put into their Spirits? What was the reaſon not a Man of all the Buyers and Sellers in the Temple ſhould riſe againſt our Saviour, when with a high hand he began to whip them out; but a Divine Bridle upon them? though it appears by the queſtioning his Authority, that there were *Jews* enough to have chas'd out him, and his company. *John* 2. 15, 18. What was the reaſon that at the publiſhing the Goſpel by the *Apoſtles* at the firſt deſcent of the Spirit, thoſe that had us'd the Maſter ſo barbarouſly a few days before, were not all in a foam againſt the Servants, that by preaching that Doctrine upbraided them with the late Murder? Had they better ſentiments of the Lord, whom they had put to death? Were their Natures grown tamer, and their Malignity expell'd? No, but that Soveraign who loos'd the Reins of their malicious corruption, to execute the Maſter for the purchaſe of Redemption, curb'd it from breaking out againſt the Servants, to further the propagation of the Doctrine of Redemption. He that reſtrains the roaring Lion of Hell, reſtrains alſo his Welps on Earth; he, and they muſt have a Commiſſion, before they can put forth a finger, to hurt, how malicious ſoever their Nature and Will be. His Empire reaches over the Malignity of Devils, as well as the nature of Beaſts. The Lions out of the Den, are bridled by him in favour of his *Daniel*'s. His Dominion is above that of Principalities and Powers, their Decrees are at his Mercy, whither they ſhall ſtand or fall; he hath a vote above their ſtiffeſt Reſolves. His ſingle word, *I will*, or *I forbid*, outweighs the reſolute purpoſes of all the Mighty *Nimrods* of the Earth in their rendezvouſes, and Cabals, in their Aſſociations and Counſels. *Iſaiah* 8. 9, 10. *Aſſociate your ſelves, O ye people, and ye ſhall be broken in pieces, take Counſel together, and it ſhall come to naught. When the Enemy ſhall come in like a floud,* with a violent and irreſiſtable force, intending nothing but ravage and deſolation, *the Spirit of the Lord ſhall lift up a ſtandard againſt them, Iſaiah* 59. 19. Shall give a ſudden check and damp their Spirits, and put them to a ſtand. When *Laban* furiouſly purſued *Jacob* with an intent to do him an ill turn, God gave him a *Command* to do otherwiſe, *Gen.* 31. 24. Would *Laban* have reſpected that Command any more, than he did the light of Nature, when he Worſhiped Idols, had not God exerciſed his Authority, in inclining his Will to obſerve it, or laying reſtraints upon his natural inclinations, or denying his concourſe to the acting thoſe ill intentions, he had entertain'd? The ſtilling the principles of commotion in Men, and the noiſe of the Sea, are arguments of the Divine Dominion, neither the one nor the other is in the power of the moſt Soveraign Prince without Divine aſſiſtance. As no Prince can command a calm to a raging Sea, ſo no Prince can order ſtillneſs to a tumultuous People; they are both put together as equally parts of the Divine Prerogative, *Pſal.* 65. 7. Which *ſtills the noiſe of the Sea, and tumults of the People.* And *David* owns Gods Soveraignty more than his own, *in ſubduing the People under him, Pſal.* 18. 47. In this his Empire is illuſtrious, *Pſal.* 29. 10. *The Lord ſitteth upon the flouds, yea, the Lord ſitteth King for ever*; a King impoſſible to be depos'd; not only on the natural floods of the Sea, that would naturally overflow the World; but the metaphorical Floods or tumults of the People, the Sea in every man's heart, more apt to rage morally, than the Sea to foam naturally; if you will take the interpretation of an Angel, Waters and Flouds in the Prophetick ſtile ſignify the inconſtant and mutable People. *Revel.* 17. 1, 5. *The Waters where the whore ſits, are People, and Multitudes, and Nations, and Tongues.* So the Angel expounds to *John* the Viſion. which he ſaw, *Verſe.* 1. The Heathens acknowledg'd this part of God's Soverignty in the inward reſtraints of Men. Thoſe Apparitions of the Gods, and Goddeſſes, in *Homer* to ſeveral of the great Men, when they were in a Fury, were nothing elſe in the Judgment of the wiſeſt *Philoſophers*, than an exerciſe of God's Soveraignty in quelling their paſſions, checking their uncomely intentions, and controuling them in that which their rage prompted them to. And indeed did not God ſet bounds to the ſtorms in Mens hearts, we ſhoul ſoon ſee the Funeral, not only of Religion, but Civility; the one would be blown out, and the other torn up by the Roots.

4. The Dominion of God is manifeſt *in defeating the purpoſes and devices of Men.* God often makes a mock of humane projects, and doth as well accompliſh that which they never dreamt of, as diſappoint that which they confidently deſign'd. He is preſent at all Cabals, laughs at Mens formal and ſtudied Counſels, bears a hand over every Egg they hatch, thwarts their beſt compacted deſigns, ſupplants their contrivances, breaks the Engines they have been many years rearing, diverts the intentions of Men, as a mighty Wind blows an Arrow from the mark, which the Archer intended. *Job* 5. 12. *He diſappointeth the devices of the crafty, ſo that their hands cannot perform their enterprize. He taketh the wiſe in their own craftineſs, and the Council of the froward is carried headlong.* Enemies often draw an exact ſcheme of their intended proceedings, Marſhal their Companies, appoint their Rendezvous, think to make but one morſel of thoſe they hate; God by his Soveraign Dominion turns the ſcale, changeth the gloomineſs of the oppreſſed into a Sun-ſhine, and the Enemies Sun-ſhine into darkneſs. When the Nations were gathered together againſt *Sion*, and

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ſaid, *Let her be defiled, and let our Eye look upon Sion*, *Micah* 4. 11. What doth God do in this caſe? *Ver.* 12. *He ſhall gather them.* i. e. Thoſe conſpiring Nations, as *ſheaves into the floor*; then he ſounds a Trumpet to *Sion*, *Ariſe and threſh O Daughter of Sion, for I will make thy Horn Iron, and thy Hoofs Braſs, and thou ſhalt beat in pieces many People: And I will conſecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their ſubſtance unto the Lord of the whole Earth.* I will make them, and their Councels, them, and their ſtrength, the monuments and ſignal marks of my Empire over the whole Earth.

When you ſee the cunningeſt deſigns baffled by ſome ſmall thing intervening, when you ſee Men of profound Wiſdom infatuated, miſtake their way, and *grope in the noon day as in the night.* *Job.* 5. 14. bewildred in a plain way. When you ſee the hopes of mighty attempters daſht into deſpair, their Triumphs turn'd into Funerals, and their joyful exactions into ſorrowful diſappointments; when you ſee the weak devoted to deſtruction, victorious; and the moſt preſumptuous defeated in their purpoſes, then read the Divine Dominion in the deſolation of ſuch devices. How often doth God take away the Heart and Spirit of grand Deſigns, and burſt a mighty Wheel, by ſnatching but one Man out of the World? How often doth he *cut off the Spirits of Princes*, Pſalm 76. 12. either from the World by Death, or from the Execution of their Projects by ſome unforeſeen Interruption, or from favouring thoſe Contrivances, which before they cheriſh'd by a change of their Minds? How often hath Confidence in God, and Religious Prayer, edg'd the weakeſt and ſmalleſt number of Weapons, to make a carnage of the carnally Confident? How often hath Preſumption been diſappointed, and the contemn'd Enemy rejoyc'd in the ſpoils of the proud expectant of Victory. * *Phydias* made the Image of *Nemeſis* or revenge at *Marathon*, of that Marble, which the haughty *Perſians* deſpiſing the weakneſs of the *Athenian* Forces, brought with them, to erect a Trophy for an expected, but an ungain'd Victory. *Hamans* Neck by a ſudden turn was in the Halter, when the *Jews* Necks were deſign'd to the Block. *Julian* deſign'd the overthrow of all the Chriſtians, juſt before his Breaſt was pierced by an unexpected Arrow. The Powder-Traytors were all ready to give Fire to the Mine, when the Soveraign Hand of Heaven ſnatcht away the Match. Thus the great Lord of the World cuts off Men on the Pinacle of their Deſigns, when they ſeem to threaten Heaven and Earth. Puts out the Candle of the Wicked, which they thought to uſe to light them to the Execution of their Purpoſes; turns their own Counſels into a curſe to themſelves, and a Bleſſing to their Adverſaries, and makes his greateſt Enemies contribute to the effecting his Purpoſes. How may we take notice of Gods abſolute diſpoſal of Things in Private Affairs, when we ſee one Man with a ſmall meaſure of Prudence, and little Induſtry have great Succeſs, and others with a ſmall meaſure of Wiſdom, and greater Toil and labour, find their enterprizes melt between their Fingers? It was *Solomons* Obſervation, *That the Race was not to the ſwift, nor the Battle to the ſtrong, neither Bread to the Wiſe, nor Riches to Men of Underſtanding, nor yet favour to Men of skill*, Eccleſ. 9. 11.

* *Cauſin*, ſymb. lib. 2. cap. 65.

Many Things might interpoſe to ſtop the ſwift in his Race, and damp the Courage of the moſt Valiant. Things do not happen according to Mens Ability, but according to the over-ruling Authority of God. God never yet granted Man the Dominion of his own way, no more than to be Lord of his own Time: *The Way of Man is not in himſelf, it is not in him that walketh to direct his ſteps*, Jerem. 10. 23. He hath given Man a Power of acting, but not the Soveraignty to command ſucceſs. He makes even thoſe Things which Men intended for their Security, to turn to their Ruine. *Pilate* delivered up Chriſt, to be accounted a Friend to *Cæſar*, and *Cæſar* ſoon after proves an Enemy to him, removes him from his Government, and ſends him into Baniſhment. The *Jews* imagined by the Crucifying Chriſt, to keep the *Roman* Enſigns at a diſtance from them, and this haſted their March by Gods Soveraign diſpoſal, which ended in a total Deſolation. *He makes the Judges Fools*, Job 12. 17. by taking away his Light from their Underſtanding, and Suffering them to go on in the Vanity of their own Spirits; that his Soveraignty in the Management of Things may be more apparent: For then he is known to be Lord, when he *Snares the Wicked in the Work of his own Hands*, Pſalm 9. 16. You have ſeen much of this Doctrine in your Experience; and if my Judgment fail me not, you will yet ſee much more.

5. The Dominion of God is manifeſt *in ſending his Judgments upon whom he Pleaſes. He kills, and makes alive, he wounds, and heals* whom he Pleaſeth. His Thunders are his own, and he may caſt them upon what Subjects he thinks good. He hath a right in a way of Juſtice to Puniſh all Men, he hath his Choice in a way of Soveraignty, to Pick out whom he pleaſe, to make the Examples of it. Might not ſome Nations be as wicked as thoſe of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, yet have not been ſcorcht with the like dreadful Flames? *Zoar* was untoucht, while the other Cities her Neighbours were burnt to Aſhes. Were there never any Places and Perſons Succeſſors in *Sodoms* guilt? Yet thoſe only by his Soveraign Authority are ſeparated by him, to be the Examples of his *Eternal Vengeance*, *Jude* 7. Why are not Sinners as *Sodom*, like as thoſe antient ones, ſcalded to Death by the like fiery Drops; 'tis becauſe it is his Pleaſure; and the ſame Reaſon is to be rendred, Why he would in a way of Juſtice cut off the *Jews* for their Sins, and leave the *Gentiles* untoucht in the midſt of their Idolatries. When the Church was conſumed, becauſe of her Iniquities, they acknowledg'd God's Soveraignty in this, *Iſa.* 64. 7, 8. *We are the Clay, and thou art our Potter, and we all the work of thy Hands*; thou haſt a Liberty either to break or preſerve us. Judgments move according to Gods Order. When the Sword hath a charge againſt *Askelon* and the Sea-ſhore, thither it muſt March, and touch not any other Place or Perſon, as it goes, though there may be demerit enough for it to Puniſh. *Jer.* 47. 6, 7. When the Prophet had ſpake to the Sword, *Oh thou Sword of the Lord, how long will it be, ere thou be quiet? Put up thy ſelf into thy Scabbard, reſt and be ſtill.* The Prophet anſwered for the Sword, *how can it be quiet, ſeeing the Lord hath given it a charge againſt* Askelon, *there hath he appointed it?* If he hath appointed a Judgment againſt *London*, or *Weſtminſter*, or any other Place, there it ſhall drop, there it ſhall Pierce, and in no other Place without a like charge. God as a Soveraign, gives Inſtructions to every Judgment, when, and againſt whom it ſhall March, and what Cities, what Perſons it ſhall Arreſt; and he is punctually obeyed by them as a Soveraign Lord. All Creatures ſtand ready for his Call, and are prepared to be Executioners of his Vengeance, when he ſpeaks the word; they are his Hoſts by Creation, and in array for his Service; at the ſound of his Trumpet, or beat of his Drum, they Troop together with their Arms in their Hands, to put his Orders exactly in Execution.

6. The Dominion of God is manifeſt, in *appointing to every Man his Calling and Station in the World.* If the Hairs of every Mans Head fall under

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his Soveraign Care, the Calling of every Man, wherein he is to glorifie God, and ſerve his Generation, which is of a greater concern than the Hairs of the Head, falls under his Dominion. He is the Maſter of the great Family; and divides to every one his Work as he pleaſeth. The whole Work of the *Meſſiah*, the Time of every Action, as well as the Hour of his Paſſion was ordered, and appointed by God. The *Separation of* Paul *to the Preaching of the Goſpel*, was by the Soveraign diſpoſal of God, *Rom.* 1. 1. By the ſame Exerciſe of his Authority, that he *ſets every Man the bounds of his Habitation*, Acts 17. 26. He preſcribes alſo to him the Nature of his Work. He that ordered *Adam*, the Father of Mankind his Work, and the Place of it, the *dreſſing the Garden*, Gen. 2. 15 doth not let any of his Poſterity be their own chooſers, without an influence of his Soveraign Direction on them. Though our Callings are our Work, yet they are by God's Order, wherein we are to be faithful to our great Maſter and Ruler.

7. The Dominion of God is manifeſt *in the means and occaſions of Mens Converſion*. Sometimes one occaſion, ſometimes another, one word lets a Man go, another Arreſts him, and brings him before God, and his own Conſcience; 'tis as God gives out the Order. He lets *Paul* be a Priſoner at *Jeruſalem*, that his Cauſe ſhould not be determined there, moves him to appeal to *Cæſar*, not only to make him a Priſoner but a Preacher in *Cæſar*'s Court, and render his Chains an occaſion to bring in a Harveſt of Converts in *Nero*'s Palace, *Phil.* 1. 12, 13. His *Bonds in* or *for Chriſt* are *manifeſt in all the Palace*, not the bare Knowledge of his Bonds, but the Soveraign Deſign of God in thoſe Bonds, and the ſucceſs of them; the bare Knowledge of them would not make others more *Confident* for the Goſpel, as it follows *Verſe* 14. without a providential Deſign of them. *Oneſimus* running from his Maſter, is guided by God's Soveraign Order into *Pauls* Company, and thereby into Chriſt's Arms, and he who came a *Fugitive*, returns a *Chriſtian. Phil.* 10. 15. Some by a ſtrong Affliction, have had by the Divine Soveraignty their Underſtandings awakened to conſider, and their Wills ſpirited to Converſion. *Monica* being call'd *Meribibula* or Toſs-pot, was brought to conſider her Way, and reform her Life. A Word hath done that at one Time, which hath often before fallen without any Fruit. Many have come to ſuck in the Eloquence of the Miniſter, and have found in the Honey for their Ears a ſting for their Conſciences. *Auſtin* had no other intent in going to hear *Ambroſe*, but to have a taſte of his famous Oratory; but while *Ambroſe* ſpake a Language to his Ear, God ſpake a Heavenly Dialect to his Heart. No Reaſon can be render'd of the order and timeing, and influence of thoſe Things, but the Soveraign Pleaſure of God, who will attend one occaſion and ſeaſon with his Bleſſing and not another.

8. The Dominion of God is manifeſt *in diſpoſing of the Lives of Men*. He keeps the Key of Death, as well as that of the Womb in his own Hand; he hath given Man a Life, but not Power to diſpoſe of it, or lay it down at his Pleaſure: And therefore he hath order'd Man not to Murder, not another, not himſelf; Man muſt expect his Call and Grant, to diſpoſe of the Life of his Body. Why doth he cut the Thred of this Mans Life, and ſpin anothers out to a longer Term? Why doth one Dye an inglorious Death, and another more honourable? One ſilently drops away in the Multitude, while another is made a Sacrifice for the Honour of God, or the ſafety of his Countrey. This is a Mark of Honour he gives to one and not to another. *Phil.* 1. 29. *To you it is given.* The Manner of *Peters* Death was appointed, *John* 21. 19. Why doth a ſmall and ſlight Diſeaſe againſt the Rules of Phylick, and the Judgment of the beſt Practitioners, diſlodge one Mans Soul out of his Body, while a greater Diſeaſe is maſter'd in another, and diſcharges the Patient to enjoy himſelf a longer Time in the Land of the Living? Is it the Effect of Means ſo much, as of the Soveraign diſpoſer of all Things? If Means only did it, the ſame Means would alway work the ſame Effect, and ſooner maſter a Dwarfiſh than a Giant-like Diſtemper. *Our Times are only in Gods hands*, Pſalm 31. 15. Either to cut ſhort, or continue long. As his Soveraignty made the firſt Marriage knot, ſo he reſerves the ſole Authority to himſelf to make the Divorce.

4. The Dominion of God is manifeſt *in his being a Redeemer*, as well as Law-giver, Proprietor, and Governour. His Soveraignty was manifeſt in the Creation in beſtowing upon this or that Part of Matter a Form more excellent than upon another. He was a Law-giver to Men and Angels, and preſcribed them Rules according to the Council of his own Will. Theſe were his Creatures and perfectly at his diſpoſal; but in Redemption a Soveraignty is exerciſed over the Son, the *Second Perſon* in the Trinity, one equal with the Father in Eſſence and Works, by whom the Worlds were Created, and by whom they do conſiſt. The whole Goſpel is nothing elſe but a Declaration of his Soveraign Pleaſure concerning Chriſt and concerning us in him; 'tis therefore call'd *the Myſtery of his Will*, Eph. 1. 9. The Will of God as diſtinct from the Will of Chriſt, a purpoſe in himſelf, not mov'd thereunto by any; the whole Deſign was fram'd in the Deity, and as much the purpoſe of his Soveraign Will, as the contrivance of his immenſe Wiſdom. He decreed in his own Pleaſure, to have the Second Perſon aſſume our Nature for to deliver Mankind from that Miſery, whereinto it was fallen: The whole of the Goſpel and the Priviledges of it are in that Chapter reſolved into the Will and Pleaſure of God.

God is therefore called, *The Head of Chriſt*, 1 Cor. 11. 3. As Chriſt is Superior to all Men, and the Man Superiour to the Woman, ſo is God Superiour to Chriſt, and of a more eminent Dignity; in regard of the conſtituting him Mediator, Chriſt is Subject to God, as the Body to the Head. Head is a Title of Government and Soveraignty, and Magiſtrates were called the Heads of the People. As Chriſt is the Head of Man, ſo is God the Head of Chriſt, and as Man is ſubject to Chriſt, ſo is Chriſt ſubject to God; not in regard of the Divine Nature, wherein there is an equality, and conſequently no Dominion of Juriſdiction; nor only in his Humane Nature, but in the Oeconomy of a Redeemer, conſidered as one deſign'd, and conſenting to be incarnate, and take our Fleſh, ſo that after this Agreement, God had a Soveraign Right to diſpoſe of him according to the Articles conſented to. In regard of his Undertaking, and the Advantage he was to bring to the Elect of God upon the Earth, he calls God by the ſolemn Title of his *Lord*, in that Prophetick Pſalm of him, *Pſalm* 16. 2. *Oh my Soul, thou haſt ſaid unto the Lord, thou art my Lord, my Goodneſs extends not unto thee, but unto the Saints that are in the Earth.* It ſeems to be the Speech of Chriſt in Heaven, mentioning the Saints on Earth as at a diſtance from him. I can add nothing to the Glory of thy Majeſty, but the whole Fruit of my Mediation and Sufferings will redound to the Saints on Earth; and it may be obſerved, that God is call'd the Lord of Hoſts in the Evangelical Prophets, *Iſaiah*, *Haggai*, *Zachary*, and *Malachy*, more in reference to

this Affair of Redemption, and the Deliverance of the Church, than for any other Works of his Providence in the World.

1. This Soveraignty of God appears, *in requiring Satisfaction for the Sin of Man.* Had he indulg'd Man after his Fall, and remitted his Offence without a juſt Compenſation for the Injury he had received by his Rebellion, his Authority had been vilified, Man would always have been attempting againſt his Juriſdiction, there would have been a continual Succeſſion of Rebellions on Mans part, and if a continual Succeſſion of Indulgences on Gods part, he had quite diſown'd his Authority over Man, and ſtript himſelf of the flower of his Crown; ſatisfaction muſt have been requir'd ſome time or other, from the Perſon thus rebelling, or ſome other in his ſtead; and to require it after the firſt Act of Sin, was more preſervative to the right of the Divine Soveraignty, than to do it after a Multitude of repeated Revolts. God muſt have laid aſide his Authority, if he had laid aſide wholly the exacting Puniſhment for the Offence of Man.

2. This Soveraignty of God appears, *in appointing Chriſt to this Work of Redemption.* His Soveraignty was before manifeſt over Angels and Men by the right of Creation, there was nothing wanting to declare the higheſt charge of it, but his ordering his own Son to become a Mortal Creature; the Lord of all things to become lower than thoſe Angels, that had, as well as all other things, receiv'd their Being and Beauty from him, and to be reckon'd in his Death among the Duſt and Refuſe of the World: He by whom God created all things, not only became a Man, but a Crucified Man by the Will of his Father, *Gal.* 1. 4. *Who gave himſelf for our Sins according to the Will of God*; to which may referre that Expreſſion. *Prov.* 8. 22. of his being *poſſeſſed by God in the beginning of his Way.* Poſſeſſion is the Dominion of a thing inveſted in the Poſſeſſor; he was poſſeſſed indeed as a Son by Eternal Generation. He was poſſeſſed alſo in the beginning of his way or works of Creation as a Mediator by ſpecial Conſtitution; to this the Expreſſion, ſeems to referre, if you read on to the end of *Verſe* 31. wherein Chriſt ſpeaks of his *rejoycing in the habitable part of his Earth*, the Earth of the great God, who had deſign'd him to this ſpecial work of Redemption. He was a Son by Nature, but a Mediator by Divine Will; in regard of which Chriſt is often call'd Gods Servant, which is a Relation to God as a Lord. God being the Lord of all things, the Dominion of all Things inferior to him is inſeparable from him, and in this regard, the whole of what Chriſt was to do, and did actually do, was acted by him as the Will of God, and is expreſt ſo by himſelf in the Propheſie, *Pſalm* 40. 7. *Lo I come.* Verſe 8. *I delight to do thy Will*, which are put together, *Heb.* 10. 7. *Lo I come to do thy Will O God.* The deſigning Chriſt to this work was an Act of Mercy, but founded on his Soveraignty. His compaſſionate Bowels might have pitied us without his being Soveraign, but without it could not have relieved us. It was the Counſel of his own Will, as well as of his Bowels. None was his Counſellor, or Perſwader to that Mercy he ſhew'd, *Rom.* 11. 34 *Who hath been his Counſellor*, for it refers to that Mercy, in *ſending the deliverer out of Sion*, Verſe 26. as well as to other Things, the Apoſtle had been diſcourſing of. As God was at liberty to Create, or not to Create, ſo he was at liberty to Redeem or not to Redeem, and at his liberty whether to appoint Chriſt to this work, or not to call him out to it. In giving this order to his Son, his Soveraignty was exerciſed in a higher Manner, than in all the Orders and Inſtructions he hath given out to Men or Angels, and all the Employments he ever ſent them upon. Chriſt hath Names which ſignifie an Authority over him. He is called *an Angel*, and a *Meſſenger*, Mal. 3. 1. An *Apoſtle*, Heb. 3. 1. Declaring thereby, that God hath as much Authority over him, as over the Angels, ſent upon his Meſſages, or over the Apoſtles Commiſſion'd by his Authority, as he was conſider'd in the quality of Mediator.

3. This Soveraignty of God appears *in transferring our Sins upon Chriſt.* The Supream Power in a Nation can only appoint or allow of a Commutation of Puniſhment; 'Tis a part of Sovereignty, to transfer the Penalty due to the Crime of one upon another, and ſubſtitute a Sufferer with the Sufferers own Conſent, in the Place of a Criminal, whom he had a mind to deliver from a deſerv'd Puniſhment. God transferr'd the Sins of Men upon Chriſt, and inflicted on him a Puniſhment for them. He ſumm'd up the Debts of Man, charg'd them upon the ſcore of Chriſt, imputing to him the guilt, and inflicting upon him the Penalty. *Iſa.* 53. 6. *The Lord hath laid upon him the Iniquity of us all*; He made them all to meet upon his back. *He hath made him to be Sin for us*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 21. He was made ſo by the Soveraign Pleaſure of God. A Puniſhment for Sin, as moſt underſtand it, which could not be righteouſly inflicted, had not Sin been firſt righteouſly imputed by the Conſent of Chriſt, and the Order of the Judge of the World. This Imputation could be the immediate Act of none but God, becauſe he was the ſole Creditor. A Creditor is not bound to accept of another's Suretyſhip, but it is at his Liberty whether he will or no; and when he doth accept of him, he may challenge the Debt of him, as if he were the principal Debtor himſelf. Chriſt made himſelf Sin for us, by a voluntary Submiſſion, and God made him Sin for us, by a full Imputation, and treated him Penally, as he would have done thoſe Sinners in whoſe ſtead he ſuffer'd. Without this Act of Soveraignty in God, we had for ever periſhed: For if we could ſuppoſe Chriſt laying down his Life for us without the Pleaſure and Order of God, he could not have been ſaid to have born our Puniſhment; What could he have undergone in his Humanity, but a Temporal Death, but more than this was due to us, even the Wrath of God, which far exceeds the Calamity of a meer bodily Death? The Soul being principal in the Crime, was to be principal in the Puniſhment. The Wrath of God could not have dropt upon his Soul, and render it ſo full of Agonies, without the Hand of God. A Creature is not capable to reach the Soul, neither as to Comfort nor Terror; and the Juſtice of God could not have made him a Sufferer, if it had not firſt conſider'd him a Sinner by Imputation, or by inhærency and actual Commiſſion of a Crime in his own Perſon. The latter was far from Chriſt, who was holy, harmleſs and undefiled. He muſt be conſider'd then in the other State of Imputation, which could not be without a Soveraign Appointment, or at leaſt Conceſſion of God: For without it, he could have had no more Authority to lay down his Life for us, than *Abraham* could have had to have ſacrific'd his Son, or any Man to expoſe himſelf to Death without a Call; nor could any Plea have been entred in the Court of Heaven, either by Chriſt for us, or by us for our ſelves. And though the Death of ſo great a Perſon had been meritorious in it ſelf, it had not been meritorious for us, or accepted for us; Chriſt is *deliver'd up by him*, Rom. 8. 32. In every part

part of that Condition wherein he was, and ſuffer'd, and to that end; that *we might become the Righteouſneſs of God in him*, 2 Cor. 5. 21. That we might have the Righteouſneſs of him that was God, imputed to us, or that we might have a Righteouſneſs as great, and proportion'd to the Righteouſneſs of God, as God requir'd. It was an Act of Divine Soveraignty, to account him, that was Righteous, a Sinner in our ſtead, and to account us, who were Sinners, Righteous upon the Merit of his Death.

4. *This was done by the Command of God, by God as a Law-giver*, having the Supream Legiſlative and Præceptive Authority; in which reſpect, the whole work of Chriſt is ſaid to be an Anſwer to a Law, not one given to him, but put into his Heart, as the Law of Nature was in the Heart of Man at firſt, *Pſalm* 40. 7, 8. *Thy Law is within my Heart.* This Law was not the Law of Nature, or Moral Law, though that was alſo in the Heart of Chriſt, but the command of doing thoſe Things which were neceſſary for our Salvation, and not a command ſo much of doing, as of Dying. The Moral Law in the Heart of Chriſt would have done us no good without the Mediatory Law; we had been where we were by the ſole obſervance of the Precepts of the Moral Law, without his ſuffering the Penalty of it. The Law in the Heart of Chriſt was the Law of Suffering, or Dying, the doing that for us by his Death, which the Blood of Sacrifices was unable to effect. Legal. *Sacrifices thou wouldſt not, thy Law is within my Heart*, i. e. thy Law ordered me to be a Sacrifice; it was that Law, his Obedience to which was principally accepted and eſteem'd, and that was principally his *Paſſive*, his Obedience to Death, *Phil.* 2. 8. This was the ſpecial Command received from God, that he ſhould Dye, *John* 10. 18. 'Tis not ſo clearly manifeſted, when this Command was given, whether after the Incarnation of Chriſt, or at the point of his Conſtitution as Mediator, upon the Tranſaction between the Father and the Son, concerning the Affair of Redemption. *The Promiſe* was given *before the World began*, Tit. 1. 2. Might not the Precept be given before the World began, to Chriſt, as conſider'd in the quality of Mediator and Redeemer? Precepts and Promiſes uſually attend one another; every Covenant is made up of both. Chriſt conſider'd here as the Son of God in the Divine Nature, was not capable of a Command or Promiſe, but conſider'd in the Relation of Mediator between God and Man, he was capable of both; Promiſes of Aſſiſtance were made before his actual Incarnation, of which the Prophets are full: Why not Precepts for his Obedience, ſince long before his Incarnation this was his Speech in the Prophet, thy Law is within my Heart? However, a Command, a Law it was, which is a fruit of the Divine Soveraignty: That as the Soveraignty of God was impeached, and violated by the diſobedience of *Adam*, it might be own'd and vindicated by the Obedience of Chriſt; that as we fell by diſloyalty to it, we might riſe by the higheſt Submiſſion to it in another Head, infinitely Superior in his Perſon to *Adam*, by whom we fell.

5. This Soveraignty of God appears, *in exalting Chriſt to ſuch a Soveraign Dignity as our Redeemer.* * Some indeed ſay, that this Soveraignty of Chriſts Humane Nature was natural, and the right of it reſulted from its Union with the Divine, as a Lady of mean Condition, when eſpous'd and Married to a Prince, hath by virtue of that a natural right to ſome kind of Juriſdiction over the whole Kingdom: Becauſe ſhe is one with the King. But to wave this, the Scripture placeth wholly the conferring ſuch an Authority upon the Pleaſure and Will of God. As Chriſt was a Gift of God's Soveraign Will to us, ſo this was a Gift of God's Soveraign Will to Chriſt. *Mat.* 28. 28. *All Power is given me.* And he *gave him to be Head over all Things to the Church*, Eph. 1. 22. *God gave him a Name above every Name*, Phil. 2. 9. And therefore his Throne he ſits upon, is call'd, *The Throne of his Father*, Rev. 3. 21. And he *committed all Judgment to the Son*, i. e. All Government and Dominion; An Empire in Heaven and Earth, *John* 5. 22. and that becauſe he is *the Son of Man*, ver. 27. which may be underſtood, that the Father hath given him Authority to exerciſe that Judgement and Government, as the Son of Man, which he originally had as the Son of God; or rather becauſe he became a Servant, and humbled himſelf to Death, he gives him this Authority as the Reward of his Obedience and Humility, conformable to *Phil.* 2. 9. This is an Act of the high Soveraignty of God, to obſcure his own Authority in a Sence, and take into Aſſociation with him, or vicarious ſubordination to him, the Humane Nature of Chriſt as united to the Divine; not only lifting it above the Heads of all the Angels, but giving that Perſon in our Nature an Empire over them, whoſe Nature was more excellent than ours. Yea the Sovereignty of God appears in the whole management of this Kingly Office of Chriſt, for it is managed in every part of it, according to God's order. *Ezek.* 37. 24, 25. *David my ſervant ſhall be King over them*, and *my ſervant David ſhall be their Prince for ever.* He ſhall be a *Prince* over them, but *my Servant* in that Principality, in the exerciſe and duration of it. The Soveraignty of God is paramount, in all that Chriſt hath done as a Prieſt, or ſhall do as a King.

* *Leſſius de perfect. divin. lib. 10. p. 65.*

The USE.

I. For Inſtruction.

1. *How great is the contempt of the Soveraignty of God?* Man naturally would be free from Gods Empire, to be a ſlave under the Dominion of his own luſt. The Soveraignty of God as a Law-giver is moſt abhorr'd by Man, *Lev.* 26. 43. The *Iſraelites*, the beſt People in the world, were apt by nature not only to *deſpiſe*, but *abhor his Statutes.* There is not a Law of God, but the corrupt heart of Man hath an abhorency of. How often do Men wiſh, that God had not enacted this or that Law that goes againſt the grain, and in wiſhing ſo, wiſh that he were no Soveraign, or not ſuch a Soveraign as he is in his own nature, but one according to their corrupt model. This is a great quarrel between God and Man, whether he or they ſhall be the Soveraign Ruler. He ſhould not by the the will of Man rule in any one Village in the World; Gods vote ſhould not be predominant in any one Thing. There is not a Law of his, but is expos'd to contempt by the perverſeneſs of Man, *Prov.* 1. 21. *Ye have ſet at naught all my Counſel, and would have none of my Reproof.* Septuag. *Ye have made all my Counſels without Authority.* The Nature of Man cannot endure one Precept of God, nor one rebuke from him: And for this Cauſe God is at the expence of Judgments in the World, to aſſert his own Empire to the Teeth and Conſciences of Men, *Pſalm* 59. 13. *Lord conſume them in Wrath, and let them know that God Rules in Jacob, to the ends of the Earth.* The Dominion of God is not ſlighted by any Creature of this World but Man; all others obſerve it by obſerving his Order, whether in their natural Moti-

ons, or preternatural Irruptions; they punctually Act according to their Commiſſion. Man only ſpeaks a Dialect againſt the ſtrain of the whole Creation, and hath none to imitate him among all the Creatures in Heaven and Earth, but only among thoſe in Hell. Man is more impatient of the Yoke of God, than of the yoke of Man. There are not ſo many Rebellions committed by Inferiors againſt their Superiors and Fellow-Creatures, as are committed againſt God. A willing and eaſie ſinning, is an equalling the Authority of God to that of Man. *Hoſ.* 6. 7. *They like Men have tranſgreſſed my Covenant.* * They have made no more account of breaking my Covenant, than if they had broken ſome League or Compact made with a meer Man, ſo ſlightly do they eſteem the Authority of God. Such a diſ-eſteem of the Divine Authority is a vertual undeifying of him. To ſlight his Soveraignty, is to ſtab his Deity: Since the one cannot be preſerved without the ſupport of the other, his Life would expire with his Authority. How baſe and bruitiſh is it for vile Duſt and mouldring Clay, to lift up it ſelf againſt the Majeſty of God, whoſe Throne is in the Heavens, who ſways his Scepter over all parts of the World? A Majeſty before whom the Devils ſhake, and the higheſt Cherubims tremble. 'Tis as if the Thiſtle that can preſently be trod down by the Foot of a wild Beaſt, ſhould think it ſelf a match for the *Cedar* of *Lebanon*, as the Phraſe is, 2 *Kings* 14. 9.

Let us conſider this *in general*, and alſo *in the ordinary Practice of Men.*

First, *In General.*

1. *All ſin in its nature is a Contempt of the Divine Dominion.* As every act of Obedience is a Confirmation of the Law, and conſequently a ſubſcription to the Authority of the Law-giver, *Deut.* 27. 26. So every breach to it is a Conſpiracy againſt the Soveraignty of the Law-giver; ſetting up our Will againſt the Will of God, is an Articling againſt his Authority, as ſetting up our Reaſon againſt the Methods of God, is an Articling againſt his Wiſdom; the intendment of every act of Sin, is to wreſt the Scepter out of God's Hand. The Authority of God is the firſt Attribute in the Deity, which it directs its edge againſt; 'tis called therefore a *tranſgreſſion of the Law*, 1 *John* 3. 4. And therefore a ſlight or neglect of the Majeſty of God, and the not keeping his Commands, is call'd a *forgetting God*, *Deut.* 8. 11. *i. e.* a forgetting him to be our abſolute Lord. As the firſt Notion we have of God as a Creator, is that of his Sovereignty, ſo the firſt perfection that ſin ſtruck at in the violation of the Law, was his Soveraignty as a Law-giver, *Breaking the Law is a diſhonouring God*, *Rom.* 2. 23. a Snatching off his Crown; to obey our own Wills before the Will of God, is to prefer our ſelves as our own Soveraigns before him. Sin is a wrong and injury to God, not in his Eſſence, that is above the reach of a Creature, nor in any thing profitable to him, or pertaining to his own intrinſick advantage; not an injury to God in Himſelf, but in his Authority, in thoſe things which pertain to his Glory, a diſowning his due Right, and not uſing his Goods according to his Will. Thus the whole World may be called, as God calls *Chaldea*, *a Land of Rebels*, Jer. 50. 21. *Go up againſt the Land of Merathaim, or Rebels:* Rebels, not againſt the Jews, but againſt God. The mighty oppoſition in the heart of Man to the Supremacy of God, is diſcovered emphatically by the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 8. 7. in that expreſſion, *The carnal mind is enmity againſt God*, i. e. againſt the Authority of God: Becauſe *it is not ſubject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be.* It refuſeth not Subjection to this or that part, but to the whole; to every mark of Divine Authority in it, it will not lay down its Arms againſt it, nay it cannot but ſtand upon its Terms againſt it; the Law can no more be fulfill'd by a carnal Mind, than it can be diſowned by a Soveraign God. God is ſo Holy, that he cannot alter a righteous Law; and Man is ſo averſe, that he cares not for, nay cannot fulfil one Tittle; ſo much doth the Nature of Man ſwell againſt the Majeſty of God. Now an Enmity to the Law which is in every Sin, implies a Perverſity againſt the Authority of God that enacted it.

2. All Sin in its Nature is *the deſpoiling God of his ſole Soveraignty, which was probably the firſt thing the Devil aim'd at.* That Pride was the Sin of the Devil, the Scripture gives us ſome account of, when the Apoſtle adviſeth not *a novice*, or one that hath but lately embraced the Faith, to be choſen a Biſhop, 1 *Tim.* 3. 6. *Leſt being lifted up with Pride, he fall into the Condemnation of the Devil*; Leſt he fall into the ſame Sin, for which the Devil was Condemned. But in what particular thing this Pride was manifeſt, is not ſo eaſily diſcernable; the Ancients generally conceived it, to be an affecting the Throne of God, grounding it on *Iſa.* 14. 12. *How art thou fallen, O Lucifer, Son of the Morning! for thou haſt ſaid in thy Heart, I will aſcend into Heaven, I will exalt my Throne above the Stars of God.* 'Tis certain the Prophet ſpeaks there of the King of *Babylon*, and taxeth him for his Pride, and gives to him the Title of *Lucifer*, perhaps likening him in his Pride to the Devil, and then it notes plainly the particular Sin of the Devil, attempting a ſhare in the Soveraignty of God; and ſome ſtrengthen their Conjecture from the Name of the Arch-Angel who contended againſt Satan, *Jude* 9. which is *Michael*, which ſignifies, *who as God?* or, *who like God?* The Name of the Angel giving the Superiority to God, intimating the contrary Diſpoſition in the Devil, againſt whom he contended. 'Tis likely his Sin was an affecting an equality with God in Empire, or a freedom from the Soveraign Authority of God: Becauſe he imprinted ſuch a kind of Perſwaſion on Man at his firſt Temptation, *Ye ſhall be as Gods*, Gen. 3. 5. and though it be reſtrained to the matter of Knowledge, yet that being a fitneſs for Government, it may be extended to that alſo. But it is plainly a perſwading them, that they might be in ſome ſort equal with God, and independent on him as their Superior. What he had found ſo fatal to himſelf, he imagined would have the ſame ſucceſs in the Ruine of Man. And ſince the Devil hath in all Ages of the World uſurpt a Worſhip to himſelf, which is only due to God, and would be ſerved by Man, as if he were the God of the World. Since all his endeavour was to be Worſhip'd as the Supream God on Earth, 'tis not unreaſonable to think, that he invaded the Supremacy of God in Heaven, and endeavour'd to be like the moſt High before his Baniſhment, as he hath attempted to be like the moſt High ſince. And ſince the Devil and Anti-Chriſt are reputed by *John* in the *Revelation* to be ſo near of kin, and ſo like in Diſpoſition, why might not that which is the Sin of Anti-Chriſt, the Image of him, be alſo the Sin of Satan, *To exalt himſelf above all that is called God*, 2 Theſſ. 2. 4. and *ſit as God in his Temple*, affecting a Partnerſhip in his Throne and Worſhip? Whether it was this, or attempting an unaccountable Dominion over created Things, or becauſe he was the Prime Angel, and the moſt illuſtrious

luſtrious of that magnificent Corporation, he might think himſelf fit to Reign with God, over all Things elſe; or if his Sin were Envy, as ſome think at the Felicity of Man in Paradiſe; it was ſtill a quarrelling with God's Dominion, and right of diſpoſing his own Goods and Favours; He is therefore call'd *Belial*; 2 Cor. 6. 14, 15. *What Concord hath Chriſt with Belial*, i. e. with the Devil, one *without yoke*, as the Word *Belial* ſignifies.

3. 'Tis more plain, *That this was the ſin of Adam.* The firſt act of *Adam* was to exerciſe a Lordſhip over the lower Creatures, in giving Names to them, a token of Dominion, *Gen.* 2. 19. The next was, to affect a Lordſhip over God, in rebelling againſt him; After he had writ the firſt Mark of his own delegated Dominion in the names he had given the Creatures, and own'd their dependance on him as their Governor, he would not acknowledge his own dependance on God. As ſoon as the Lord of the World had put him into poſſeſſion of the Power he had allotted him, he attempted to ſtrip his Lord of that which he had reſerv'd to himſelf; He was not content to lay a yoke upon the other Creatures, but deſirous to ſhake off the Divine Yoke from himſelf, and be ſubject to none but his own will; Hence *Adam*'s Sin is more particularly call'd *Diſobedience*, *Rom.* 5. 19. For in the eating the Apple there was no moral Evil in it ſelf, but a contradiction to the poſitive Command and Order of God; whereby he did diſown God's right of Commanding him, or reſerving any thing from him to his own uſe. The Language all his Poſterity ſpeaks, *Let us break his bands, and caſt away his cords from us*, Pſal. 2. 3. was learn'd from *Adam* in that act of his. The next act we read of, was that of *Cain*'s murdering *Abel*, which was an invading God's Right, in aſſuming an Authority to diſpoſe the Life of his Brother, a Life which God had given him, and reſerved the period of it in his own hands. And he perſiſts in the ſame Uſurpation, when God came to examine him, and ask him where his Brother was, how ſcornful was his Anſwer, Gen. 4. 9. *Am I my Brothers keeper?* as much as if he had ſaid, What have you to do to examine me? Or, What Obligation is there upon me to render an account of him? Or, as one ſaith, * 'Tis as much as if he had ſaid, *Go look him your ſelf.* The Sovereignty of God did not remain undiſturb'd, as ſoon as ever it appear'd in Creation, the Devils rebell'd againſt it in Heaven, and Man would have baniſh'd it from the Earth.

Trap. in loc.

4. The Soveraignty of God *hath not been leſs invaded by the uſurpation of Men.* One ſingle Order of the *Roman* Epiſcopacy, hath endeavoured to Uſurp the Prerogatives of God: The Pope will prohibit what God hath allow'd; the Marriage of Prieſts; the receiving of the Cup, as well as of the Bread in the Sacrament; the eating of this or that ſort of Meat at ſpecial Times, Meats which God hath Sanctified, and forbid them too, upon pain of Damnation, 'Tis an Invaſion of God's Right, to forbid the uſe of what God hath granted; as though the Earth, and the fulneſs thereof, were no longer the *Lords*, but the *Popes*: Much more to forbid what God hath commanded; as if Chriſt over-reach'd his own Authority, when he enjoyn'd all to drink of the Sacramental Wine, as well as eat of the Sacramental Bread. No Lord but will think his Right uſurp'd by that Steward, who ſhall permit to others what his Lord forbids, and forbid that which his Maſter allows, and act the Lord inſtead of the Servant. Add to this the Pardon of many Sins, as if he had the ſole Key to the Treaſures of Divine Mercy, the diſpoſing of Crowns and Dominions at his pleaſure; as if God had deveſted himſelf of the Title of King of Kings, and transferr'd it upon the See of *Rome*. The allowing Publick Stews, diſpenſing with inceſtuous Marriages, as if God had acted more the part of a Tyrant, than of a righteous Soveraign in forbiding them; Depriving the *Jews* of the Propriety in their Eſtates, upon their Converſion to Chriſtianity; as if the pilfering Mens goods were the way to teach them Self-denial, the firſt Doctrine of Chriſtian Religion; and God ſhall have no Honour from the *Jew* without a breach of his Law by Theft from the Chriſtian. Granting many Years Indulgences upon ſlight Performances, the repeating ſo many *Ave-Maries* and *Pater-Noſters* in a Day; Canonizing Saints; claiming the Keys of Heaven, and diſpoſing of the Honours and Glory of it: And propoſing Creatures as Objects of Religious Worſhip, wherein he anſwers the Character of the Apoſtle, 2 *Theſſ.* 2. 4. *Shewing himſelf that he is God*, in challenging that Power which is only the right of Divine Soveraignty; exalting himſelf above God, in indulging thoſe Things which the Law of God never allow'd, but hath ſeverely prohibited.

This controuling the Soveraignty of God, not allowing him the rights of his Crown, is the Soul and Spirit of many Errors. Why are the Decrees of Election and Preterition denied? Becauſe Men will not acknowledge God the Soveraign diſpoſer of his Creature. Why is Effectual Calling and efficacious Grace denied? Becauſe they will not allow God the Proprietor and Diſtributer of his own Goods. Why is the Satisfaction of Chriſt denied? Becauſe they will not allow God a Power to vindicate his own Law, in what way he pleaſeth. Moſt of the Errors of Men may be reſolv'd into a denial of Gods Soveraignty; all have a Tincture of the firſt evil Sentiment of *Adam*.

2. The Soveraignty of God *is contemned in the Practices of Men.*

1. *As he is a Law-giver.*

1. *When Laws are made, and urg'd in any State contrary to the Law of God.* 'Tis part of Gods Soveraignty to be a Law-giver; not to obey his Law is a breach made upon his right of Government; but it is Treaſon in any againſt the Crown of God, to Mint Laws with a ſtamp contrary to that of Heaven, whereby they renounce their due Subjection, and vie with God for Dominion; ſnatch the Supremacy from him, and account themſelves more Lords than the Soveraign Monarch of the World. When Men will not let God be the Judge of Good and Evil, but put in their own Vote, controuling his to eſtabliſh their own; ſuch are not content to be as Gods, ſubordinate to the Supream God, to ſit at his Feet; nor Co-ordinate with him, to ſit equal upon his Throne; but Paramount to him, to over-top and ſhadow his Crown. A boldneſs that leaves the Serpent in the firſt Temptation, under the Character of a more commendable Modeſty; who adviſed our firſt Parents to attempt to be *as Gods*, but not above him, and would enervate a Law of God, but not enact a contrary one to be obſerv'd by them. Such was the Uſurpation of *Nebuchadnezzar*, *to ſet up a golden Image* to be ador'd, *Dan.* 3. as if he had Power to Mint Gods, as well as to Conquer Men; to ſet the ſtamp of a Deity upon a Piece of Gold, as well as own Effigies upon his currant Coyn. Much of the ſame Nature was that of *Darius* by the Motion of his Flatterers, to prohibite any Petition to be made to God for the ſpace of *thirty Days*, as though God was not to have a Worſhip without a Licenſe from a doting piece of Clay, *Dan.* 6. 7. * *So* Henry *the Third of*

* *Trap.* in loc.

of France, by his Edict ſilenced Maſters of Families from Praying with their Houſholds. And it is a farther Contempt of Gods Authority when good Men are oppreſt by the ſole weight of Power for not obſerving ſuch Laws, * as if they had a real Soveraignty over the Conſciences of Men more than God himſelf. When the *Apoſtles* were commanded by an *Angel* from God, to *Preach in the Temple* the Doctrine of Chriſt, *Acts* 5. 19, 20. They were fetch'd from thence with a *Guard* before the *Councel*, ver. 26. And what is the Language of thoſe States-men to them? As abſolute as God himſelf could ſpeak to any Tranſgreſſors of his Law; *Ver.* 28. *Did not we ſtraitly command you, that you ſhould not teach in this Name?* 'Tis ſufficient that we gave you a Command to be ſilent, and publiſh no more this Doctrine of *Jeſus*; 'Tis not for you to examine our Decrees, but reſt in our Order *as Loyal Subjects*, and comply with your Rulers; they might have added, though it be with the Damnation of your Souls. How would thoſe over-rule the *Apoſtles* by no other Reaſon but their abſolute Pleaſure? And though God had eſpous'd their Cauſe, by delivering them out of the Priſon wherein they had lock'd them the Day before; yet not one of all this Councel had the Wit or Honeſty to entitle it a fighting againſt God, but *Gamaliel*, ver. 39. So fooliſhly fond are Men to put themſelves in the Place of God, and uſurp a Juriſdiction over Mens Conſciences; and to preſume, that Laws made againſt the Intereſt and Command of God, muſt be of more force than the Laws of God's enacting.

* *Faucheur* vol. 2. p. 663, 664.

2. The Soveraignty of God is contemn'd *in making Additions to the Laws of God.* The Authority of a Soveraign Law-giver is invaded and villified, when an Inferiour preſumes to make Orders equivalent to his *Edicts*. 'Tis a *Præmunire* againſt Heaven, to ſet up an Authority diſtinct from that of God, or to enjoyn any thing as neceſſary in Matter of Worſhip, for which a Divine Commiſſion cannot be ſhewn. God was always ſo tender of this part of his Prerogative, that he would not have any thing wrought in the Tabernacle, not a Veſſel, not an Inſtrument but what himſelf preſcrib'd, *Exod.* 25. 9. *According to all that I ſhew thee, after the Pattern of the Tabernacle, and the Pattern of all the Inſtruments thereof, even ſo ſhall ye make it*; which is ſtrictly urg'd again, *Ver.* 40. *Look that thou make them after their Pattern*; look to it, beware of doing any thing of thine own Head, and juſtling with my Authority. It was ſo afterwards in the Matter of the Temple which ſucceeded the Tabernacle; God gave the Model of it to *David*, and *made him underſtand in writing by his Hand upon him, even all the Works of this Pattern*, 1 Chron. 28. 19. Neither the Royal Authority in *Moſes*, who was King in *Jeſurun*; nor in *David*, who was a Man after Gods own Heart, and called to the Crown by a ſpecial and extraordinary Providence; nor *Aaron*, and the High Prieſts his Succeſſors, inveſted in the Sacerdotal Office, had any Authority from God to do any Thing in the framing the Tabernacle or Temple of their own Heads. God barr'd them from any thing of that Nature, by giving them an exact Pattern, ſo dear to him was always this Flower of his Crown: And afterwards, the Power of appointing Officers and Ordinances in the Church was delegated to Chriſt, and was among the reſt of thoſe Royalties given to him, which he fully compleated for the *Edifying of the Body*, Epheſ. 4. 11, 12. And he hath the Elogy by the Spirit of God, to be *faithful, as Moſes was, in all his Houſe, to him that appointed him*, Heb. 3. 2. Faithfulneſs in a Truſt, implies a punctual obſerving Directions; God was ſtill ſo tender of this, that even Chriſt the Son ſhould no more do any thing in this concern, without appointment and pattern, than *Moſes a Servant*, ver. 5, 6. It ſeems to be a Vote of Nature, to refer the Original of the modes of all Worſhip to God: And therefore in all thoſe varieties of Ceremonies among the *Heathens*, there was ſcarce any but were imagin'd by them to be the Dictates and Orders of ſome of their pretended Deities, and not the reſolves of meer Humane Authority. What Intruſion upon Gods right hath the Papacy made in regard of Officers, *Cardinals*, *Patriarchs*, &c. not known in any Divine Order? In regard of Ceremonies in Worſhip, preſt as neceſſary to obtain the favour of God, *Holy-water*, *Crucifixes*, *Altars*, *Images*, *Cringings*, reviving many of the *Jewiſh* and *Pagan* Ceremonies, and adopting them into the Family of Chriſtian Ordinances; as if God had been too Abſolute and Arbitrary in repealing the one, and daſhing in pieces the other. When God had by his Soveraign Order fram'd a Religion for the Heart, Men are ready to uſurp an Authority to frame one for the Sence, to dreſs the Ordinances of God in new and gaudy Habits, to take the Eye by a vain Pomp; thus affecting a Divine Royalty, and acting a ſilly childiſhneſs, and after this, to impoſe the Obſervation of thoſe upon the Conſciences of Men, is a bold aſcent into the Throne of God; to impoſe Laws upon the Conſcience, which Chriſt hath not impoſed, hath deſervedly been thought the very Spirit of *Antichriſt*; it may be call'd alſo the Spirit of *Anti-God*. God hath reſerv'd to himſelf the ſole Soveraignty over the Conſcience, and never indulg'd Men any part of it; he hath not given Man a Power over his own Conſcience, much leſs one Man a Power over anothers Conſcience. Men have a Power over outward Things, to do this or that where it is not determined by the Law of God, but not the leaſt Authority to controul any Dictate or Determination of Conſcience: The ſole Empire of that is appropriate to God, as one of the great Marks of his Royalty. What an Uſurpation is it of God's Right, to make Conſcience a ſlave to Man, which God hath ſolely, as the Father of Spirits, ſubjected to himſelf? An Uſurpation, which, though the Apoſtles, thoſe extraordinary Officers might better have claim'd, yet they utterly diſown'd any imperious *Dominion* over the Faith of others, 2 *Cor.* 1. 24. Though in this they do not ſeem to climb up above God, yet they ſet themſelves in the Throne of God, envy him an abſolute Monarchy, would be ſharers with him in his Legiſlative Power, and graſp one end of his Scepter in their own Hands. They do not pretend to take the Crown from Gods Head, but diſcover a bold Ambition to ſhuffle their hairy Scalps under it, and wear part of it upon their own, that they may Rule with him, not under him; and would be joint *Lords of his Manor* with him, who hath by the *Apoſtle* forbidden any to be *Lords of his Heritage*, 1 Pet. 5. 3. And therefore they cannot aſſume ſuch an Authority to themſelves, till they can ſhew where God hath reſign'd this part of his Authority to them. If their *Expoſition* of that Place, *Matth.* 16. 18. *Upon this Rock I will build my Church*, be granted to be true, and that the Perſons and Succeſſors of *Peter* are meant by that Rock, it could be no Apology for their Uſurpations; 'tis not *Peter* and his Succeſſors ſhall build, but *I will Build*: Others are Inſtruments in Building, but they are to obſerve the Directions of the Grand Architect.

3. The Soveraignty of God is contemned, *when Men prefer Obedience to Mens Laws, before Obedi-*

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ence to God. As God hath an undoubted right as the Law-giver and Ruler of the World, to enact Laws, without conſulting the Pleaſure of Men, or requiring their Conſent to the verifying and eſtabliſhing his Edicts, ſo are Men oblig'd by their Allegiance, as Subjects, to obſerve the Laws of their Creator, without conſulting whether they be agreeable to the Laws of his revolted Creatures. To conſult with Fleſh and Blood whether we ſhould obey, is to Authorize Fleſh and Blood above the pureſt and moſt Soveraign Spirit. When Men will obey their Superiors, without taking in the Condition the *Apoſtle* preſcribes to Servants, *Col.* 3. 22. *In ſingleneſs of Heart, fearing God*; and poſt-pone the fear of God to the fear of Man, 'tis to render God of leſs Power with them than the drop of a Bucket, or duſt of the Ballance. When we out of fear of Puniſhment will obſerve the Laws of Men againſt the Laws of God, 'tis like the *Egyptians*, to worſhip a ravenous *Crocodile* inſtead of a Deity; when we ſubmit to humane Laws, and ſtagger at Divine, 'tis to ſet Man upon the Throne of God, and God at the foot-ſtool of Man; to ſet Man *above*, and God *beneath*; to make him the *Tail*, and not the *Head*, as God ſpeaks in another Caſe of *Iſrael*, Deut. 28. 13. When we pay an outward Obſervation to Divine Laws, becauſe they are back'd by the Laws of Man, and humane Authority is the motive of our obſervance, we ſubject Gods Soveraignty to Mans Authority; what he hath from us is more owing to the Pleaſure of Men, than any value we have for the Empire of God. When Men ſhall commit Murders, and imbrue their Hands in Blood by the Order of a Grandee; when the worſt Sins ſhall be Committed by the Order of Papal Diſpenſations; When the uſe of his Creatures, which God hath granted and ſanctified, ſhall be abſtain'd from for ſo many days in the Week, and ſo many Weeks in the Year, becauſe of a *Roman* Edict; the Authority of Man is acknowledg'd not only equal, but Superior to that of God: The Dominion of Duſt and Clay is preferr'd before the undoubted right of the Soveraign of the World: The Commands of God are made leſs than humane, and the Orders of Men more authoritative than Divine, and a grand Rebels Uſurpation of Gods right is countenanced. When Men are more devout in obſervance of uncertain Traditions, or meer humane Inventions, than at the hearing of the unqueſtionable Oracles of God. When Men ſhall ſqueez their Countenances into a more ſerious Figure, and demean themſelves in a more Religious Poſture, at the appearance of ſome mock Ceremony clothed in a Jewiſh or Pagan garb, which hath unhappily made a Rent in the Coat of Chriſt; and pay a more exact Reverence to that, which hath no Divine, but only a humane ſtamp upon it, than to the clear and plain Word of God, which is perhaps neglected with ſleepy Nods, or which is worſe, entertain'd with prophane Scoffs; this is to prefer the Authority of Man employ'd in trifles, before the Authority of the wiſe Law-giver of the World. Beſides, the ridiculouſneſs of it is as great, as to adore a Glo-worm, and laugh at the Sun; or for a Courtier to be more exact in his Cringes and Starcht poſtures before a Puppet, than before his Soveraign Prince. In all this we make not the Will and Authority of God our Rule, but the Will of Man; diſclaim our dependance on God, to hang upon the uncertain breath of a Creature; in all this God is made leſs than Man, and Man more than God. God is depos'd, and Man enthron'd, God made a ſlave, and Man a Soveraign above him. To this we may refer the ſolemn *Addreſſes* of ſome for the maintenance *of the Proteſtant Religion according to Law*, the Law of Man; not ſo much minding the Law of God; reſolving to make the Law, the Church, the State, the Rule of their Religion, and change that, if the Laws be chang'd, ſteering their Opinions by the compaſs of the Magiſtrates Judgment and Intereſt.

2. *The Dominion of God as a Proprietor, is practically contemned.*

1. *By Envy.* When we are not as flush and gay, as well ſpread and ſparkling as others, this Paſſion gnaws our Souls; and we become the Executioners to wrack our ſelves becauſe God is the Executor of his own Pleaſure. The Foundation of this Paſſion is a quarrel with God; to envy others the Enjoyment of their Propriety, is to envy God his right of diſpoſal, and conſequently the Propriety of his own Goods. 'Tis a mental Theft committed againſt God, we rob him of his right in our Will and Wiſh; 'tis a Robbery to make our ſelves equal with God when it is not our due, which is implied, *Phil.* 2. 6. when Chriſt is ſaid, *to think it no Robbery to be equal with God.* We would wreſt the Scepter out of his Hand, wiſh he were not the Conductor of the World, and that he would reſign his Soveraignty, and the right of the Diſtribution of his own Goods to the *Capricios* of our Humor, and ask our leave to what Subjects he ſhould diſpenſe his Favors. All *Envy*, is either a tacit Accuſation of God as an *Uſurper*, and aſſuming a right to diſpoſe of that which doth not belong to him, and ſo it is a denial of his Propriety; or elſe charges him with a *blind* or *unjuſt Diſtribution*, and ſo it is a beſpattering his Wiſdom and Righteouſneſs. When God doth puniſh Envy, he vindicates his own Soveraignty, as tho' this Paſſion chiefly endeavoured to blaſt this Perfection, *Ezek.* 25. 11, 12. *As I live, ſaith the Lord, I will do according to thy anger, and according to thy Envy, and thou ſhalt know that I am the Lord.* The Sin of Envy in the Devils was immediately againſt the Crown of God, and ſo was the Sin of Envy in the firſt Man, envying God the ſole Prerogative in Knowledge above himſelf. This baſe humour in *Cain* at the preference of *Abels* Sacrifice before his, was the Cauſe that he deprived him of his Life. Denying God firſt his right of Choice, and what he ſhould accept, and then invading God's right of Propriety, in uſurping a Power over the Life and Being of his Brother, which ſolely belong'd to God.

2. The Dominion of God as a Proprietor, is practically contemned *by a violent or ſurreptitious taking away from any, what God hath given him the Poſſeſſion of.* Since God is the Lord of all, and may give the Poſſeſſion and Dominion of things to whom he pleaſeth, all Theft and Purloining, all Cheating and Conſening another of his right, is not only a Crime againſt the true Poſſeſſor, depriving him of what he is intruſted with, but againſt God as the abſolute and univerſal Proprietor, having a right thereby to confer his own goods upon whom he pleaſeth; as well as againſt God as a Law-giver forbidding ſuch a Violence. The ſnatching away what is an others, denies Man the right of Poſſeſſion, and God the right of Donation. The *Iſraelites* taking the *Egyptians* Jewels had been Theft, had it not been by a Divine Licenſe and Order; but cannot be ſlandered with ſuch a Term, after the Proprietor of the whole World had alter'd the Title, and alienated them by his poſitive Grant from the *Egyptians*, to confer them upon the *Iſraelites*.

3. The

3. The Dominion of God as a Proprietor is practically contemned, *by not using what God hath given us, for those ends for which he gave them to us.* God passeth things over to us with a Condition, to use that for his Glory which he hath bestowed upon us by his Bounty. He is Lord of the end for which he gives, as well as Lord of what he gives; the Donors right of Propriety is infringed, when the Lands and Legacies he leaves to a particular use, are not employ'd to those Ends to which he bequeathed them. The right of the Lord of a Manor is violated, when the Copy-hold is not us'd according to the Condition of the Conveyance. So it is an Invasion of Gods Soveraignty, not to use the Creatures for those ends, for which we are intrusted with them; when we deny our selves a due and lawful support from them; hence Covetousness is an Invasion of his right; or when we unnecessarily waste them, hence Prodigality disowns his Propriety. Or when we bestow not any Thing upon the relief of others; hence uncharitableness comes under the same Title, appropriating that to our selves, as if we were the Lords, when we are but the usufructuaries for our selves, and Stewards for others; this is to be *Rich to our selves, not to God*, Luke 12. 21. For so are they who employ not their Wealth for the service and according to the intent of the Donor. Thus the *Israelites* did not own God the true Proprietor of their Corn, Wine, and Oyl, which God had given them for his Worship, when they prepared Offerings for *Baal* out of his Stock, *Hos.* 2. 8. *For she did not know that I gave her Corn, and Wine, and Oyl, and multiplied her Gold and Silver, which they prepared for* Baal; as if they had been sole Proprietors, and not Factors by Commission, to improve the Goods for the true Owner. 'Tis the same Invasion of Gods right, to use the parts and gifts that God hath given us, either as Fuel for our Pride, or advancing self, or a witty scoffing at God and Religion. When we use not Religion for the Honour of our Soveraign, but a stool to rise by, and observe his Precepts outwardly, not out of regard to his Authority, but as a stale to our Interest, and furnishing self with a little Concern and Trifle. When Men will wrest his Word for the favour of their Lusts, which God intended for the checking of them, and make Interpretations of it according to their Humours, and not according to his Will discovered in the Scripture, this is to pervert the use of the best goods and *depositum* he hath put into our Hands, even Divine Revelations. Thus Hypocrisie makes the Soveraignty of God a nullity.

3. The Dominion of God *as a Governour* is practically contemned.

1. *In Idolatry.* Since Worship is an acknowledgment of Gods Soveraignty, to adore any Creature instead of God, or to pay to any thing that Homage of Trust and Confidence which is due to God, though it be the highest Creature in Heaven or Earth, is to acknowledge that Soveraignty to pertain to a Creature, which is challeng'd by God; as to set up the greatest Lord in a Kingdom in the Government instead of the lawful Prince, is Rebellion and Usurpation. And that Woman incurs the Crime of Adultery, who commits it with a Person of great Port and Honour, as well as with one of a mean Condition. While Men create any thing a God, they own themselves Supream above the true God, yea and above that, which they account a God: For by the right of Creation, they have a Superiority, as it is a Deity blown up by the breath of their own Imagination. The Authority of God is in this Sin, acknowledged to belong to an *Idol*, 'tis call'd *loathing* of God as a Husband; *Ezek.* 16. 45. all the Authority of God as a Husband and Lord over them. So when we make any thing, or any Person in the World, the chief Object and Prop of our Trust and Confidence, we act the same part. Trust in an *Idol* is the formal part of Idolatry. *Psalm* 115. 8. *So is every one that trusts in them*, i. e. in *Idols*. Whatsoever thing we make the object of our Trust, we rear as an *Idol*; 'tis not unlawful to have the Image of a Creature, but to bestow Divine Adoration upon it; it was not unlawful for the *Egyptians* to possess and use Oxen, but to dubb them Gods to be ador'd, it was. 'Tis not unlawful to have Wealth and Honour, nor to have Gifts and Parts, they are the Presents of God; but to love them above God, to fix our Relyance upon them more than upon God, is to rob God of his due, who being our Creator, ought to be our Confidence. What we want, we are to desire of him, and expect from him. When we confide in any thing else, we deny God the Glory of his Creation, we disown him to be Lord of the World, imply that our welfare is in the Hands of, and depends upon that thing wherein we confide; 'tis not only to equal *it to God* in Soveraign Power, which is his own Phrase, *Isaiah* 40. 25. but to prefer it before him in a reproach of him. When the *Hosts of Heaven* shall be serv'd instead of the Lord of those Hosts; when we shall lacquy after the *Stars*, depend barely upon their Influences, without looking up to the great Director of the Sun, 'tis to pay an Adoration unto a Captain in a Regiment, which is due to the General. When we shall *make Gold our Hope, and say to the fine Gold, Thou art my Confidence*, 'tis to deny the Supremacy of that *God that is above*, as well as if we *kiss our Hands* in a way of Adoration *to the Sun* in its splendor, or *the Moon walking in its brightness*; for *Job* couples them together, *Job* 31. 25, to 28. 'Tis to prefer the Authority of Earth before that of Heaven, and Honour Clay above the Soveraign of the World; as if a Souldier should confide more in the Rag of an Ensign, or the Fragment of a Drum for his Safety, than in the Orders and Conduct of his General; it were as much as is in his Power to uncommission him, and snatch from him his Commanders Staff. When we advance the Creature in our Love above God, and the Altar of our Soul smoaks with more Thought and Affections to a petty Interest than to God, we lift up that which was given us as a Servant in the place of the Soveraign, and bestow that Throne upon it, which is to be kept undefil'd for the rightful Lord, and subject the Interest of God to the demands of the Creature. So much respect is due to God, that none should be plac'd in the Throne of our Affections equal with him, much less any Thing to perk above him.

2. *Impatience is a Contempt of God as a Governour.* When we meet with Rubs in the way of any Design, when our Expectations are crossed, we will break through all Obstacles to accomplish our Projects, whether God will or no. When we are too much dejected at some unexpected Providence, and murmur at the Instruments of it, as if God devested himself of his Prerogative of conducting Humane Affairs. When a little cross blows us into a Mutiny, and swells us into a fawciness to implead God, or make us *fret* against him (as the Expression is, *Isa.* 8. 21.) wishing him out of his Throne; no Sin is so Devilish as this, there is not any strikes more at all the Attributes of God than this, against his Goodness, Righteousness, Holiness,

Holineſs, Wiſdom, and doth as little ſpare his Soveraignty as any of the reſt; what can it be elſe but an impious Invaſion of his Dominion, to quarrel with him for what he doth, and to ſay, what Reaſon haſt thou to deal thus with me? This Language is in the Nature of all Impatience, whereby we queſtion his Soveraignty, and parallel our Dominion with his. When Men have not that confluence of Wealth or Honour they greedily deſir'd, they bark at God, and revile his Government; they are angry God doth not more reſpectfully obſerve them, as though he had nothing to do in their Matters, and were wanting in that becoming Reverence which they think him bound to pay to ſuch great ones as they are. They would have God obedient to their Minds, and Act nothing but what he receives a Commiſſion for from their Wills. When we murmur, 'tis as if we would command his Will and wear his Crown, a wreſting the Scepter out of his Hands to ſway it our ſelves, we deny him the right of Government, diſown his Power over us, and would be our own Soveraigns; you may find the Character of it in the Language of *Jehoram* (as many underſtand it.) 2 *Kings* 6. 33. *Behold, this evil is of the Lord; what ſhould I wait for the Lord any longer?* This is an Evil of ſuch a Nature, that it could come from none but the Hand of God, why ſhould I attend upon him as my Soveraign, that delights to do me ſo much miſchief, that throws Curſes upon me when I expected Bleſſings? I'll no more obſerve his Directions, but follow my own Sentiments, and regard not his Authority in the Lips of his doting Prophet. The ſame you find in the *Jews*, when they were under Gods laſh, *Jer.* 18. 12. *And they ſaid, there is no hope, but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil Heart*; we can expect no good from him, and therefore we will be our own Soveraigns, and prefer the Authority of our own Imaginations before that of his Precepts. Men would be their own Carvers, and not ſuffer God to uſe his right; as if a Stone ſhould order the Maſon in what manner to hew it, and in what part of the Building to place it; we are not ordinarily concern'd ſo much at the Calamities of our Neighbours, but ſwell againſt Heaven at a light drop upon our ſelves. We are Content God ſhould be the Soveraign of others, ſo that he will be a Servant to us; let him deal as he will himſelf with others, ſo he will treat us, and what relates to us, as we will our ſelves. We would have God reſign his Authority to our Humours, and our Humours ſhould be in the place of a God to him, to direct him what was fit to do in our own Cauſe. When things go not according to our vote, our impatience, is a wiſh, that God were depos'd from his Throne, that he would ſurrender his Seat to ſome that would deal more favourably, and be more punctual Obſervers of our Directions. Let us look to our ſelves in regard of this Sin which is too common, and the root of much Miſchief. This ſeems to be the firſt bubbling of *Adam*'s Will, he was not Content with the Condition wherein God had placed him, but affected another, which ended in the Ruine of himſelf, and of Mankind.

3. *Limiting God in his way of working to our Methods*, is another part of the Contempt of his Dominion. When we will preſcribe him Methods of acting, that he ſhould deliver us in this or that way, we would not ſuffer him to be the Lord of his own Favours, and have the Priviledge to be his own Director. When we will limit him to ſuch a Time wherein to Work our Deliverance, we would rob him of the Power of Times and Seaſons, which are ſolely in his Hand. We would regulate his Conduct according to our Imaginations, and aſſume a Power to give Laws to our Soveraign. Thus the *Iſraelites limitted the Holy One of Iſrael*, Pſalm 78. 41. They would controul his abſolute Dominion, and of a Soveraign make him their ſlave. Man, that is God's Vaſſal, would ſet bounds to his Lord, and ceaſe to be a Servant and commence Maſter, when he would give, not take Directions from him. When God had given them *Manna*, and their Fancies were weary of that delicious Food, they would preſcribe Heaven to Rain down ſome other ſort of Food for them. When they wanted no ſufficient Proviſion in the Wilderneſs, they quarrell'd with God for bringing them out of *Egypt*, and not preſently giving them a place of *Seed*, of *Figs*, *Vines*, and *Pomegranates*, *Numb.* 20. 5. which is call'd a *ſtriving with the Lord*, ver. 13. a contending with him for his Lordſhip. When we tempt God, and require a Sign of him as a Mark of his Favour, we circumſcribe his Dominion; when we will not uſe the Means he hath appointed, but father our lazineſs upon a truſt in his Providence, as if we expected he ſhould work a Miracle for our Relief; when we cenſure him for what he hath done in the Courſe of his Providence; when we capitulate with him, and Promiſe ſuch a Service, if he will do us ſuch a good turn according to our Platform, we would bring down his Soveraign Pleaſure to our Will, we invade his Throne, and expect a ſubmiſſive Obedience from him. Man that hath not wit enough to govern himſelf, would be governing God, and thoſe that cannot be their own Soveraigns, affect a Soveraignty over Heaven.

4. *Pride and Preſumption*, is another Invaſion of his Dominion. When Men will reſolve to go to Morrow to ſuch a City, to ſuch a Fair and Market, to Traffick and get gain, without thinking of the Neceſſity of a Divine Licenſe, as if our ſelves were the Lords of our Time, and of our Lives, and God were to Lacquy after us, *James* 4. 13, 15. *Ye that ſay, to Day we will go into ſuch a City, and buy and ſell, whereas ye ought to ſay, if the Lord will we ſhall live*; as if they had a Free-hold, and were not Tenants at Will to the Lord of the Manor. When we preſume upon our own ſtrength or wit to get the better of our Adverſaries; as the *Germans* (as *Tacitus* relates) aſſur'd themſelves by the numerouſneſs of their Army, of a Victory againſt the *Romans*, and prepar'd Chains to fetter the Captives before the Conqueſt, which were found in their Camp after their defeat; when we are peremptory in Expectations of Succeſs according to our Will; as *Pharaoh*, Exod. 15. 9. *I will purſue, I will overtake, I will divide the ſpoil, my Luſt ſhall be ſatisfied upon them, I will draw my Sword, my Hand ſhall deſtroy them.* He ſpeaks more like a God than a Man, as if he were the Soveraign Power, and God only his Vicar and Lieutenant; how he ſtruts, without thinking of a Superiour Power to curb him! When Men aſcribe to themſelves what is the ſole Fruit of Gods Soveraign Pleaſure. As the King of *Aſſyria* ſpeaks a Language, fit only to be ſpoken by God, *Iſa.* 10. 13, 14, &c. *I have removed the bounds of the People, my Hand hath found as a Neſt, the Riches of the People, I have gathered all the Earth*; which God declares to be a wrong to his Soveraignty, by the Title wherewith he Prefaceth his Threatning againſt him, *ver.* 16. *Therefore ſhall the Lord, the Lord of Hoſts, ſend among his Fat ones Leanneſs*, &c. 'Tis indeed a rifling, if not of his Crown, yet of the moſt glittering Jewel of it, his Glory. *He that mocks the Poor, reproacheth his Maker*, Prov. 17. 5.

He never thinks that God made them Poor, and himſelf Rich; he owns not his Riches to be drop'd upon him by the Divine Hand. Self is the great Invader of Gods Soveraignty, doth not only ſpurn at it, but uſurp it, and aſſume Divine Honours, payable only to the Univerſal Soveraign. The *Aſſyrian* was not ſo modeſt as the *Chaldean*, who would impute his Power and Victories *to his Idol*, Hab. 1. 11. whom he thought to be God, though yet robbing the true God of his Authority; and ſo much was ſignified by their Names; *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Evil-Merodach*, *Belſhazzar*, *Nebo*, *Merodach*, *Bel*, being the *Chaldean Idols*, and the Names ſignifying Lord of Wealth, giver of Riches, and the like. When we behave our ſelves proudly towards others, and imagine our ſelves greater than our Maker ever meant us; when we would give Laws to others, and expect the moſt ſubmiſſive obſervances from them, as if God had reſign'd his Authority to us, and made us in his ſtead the rightful Monarchs of the World. To diſdain that any Creature ſhould be above us, is to diſdain Gods Soveraign Diſpoſition of Men, and conſequently his own Superiority over us. A proud Man would govern all, and would not have God his Soveraign, but his Subject; to over-value our ſelves, is to under-value God.

5. *Slight and Careleſs Worſhip of God*, is another Contempt of his Soveraignty. A Prince is contemn'd, not only by a neglect of thoſe Reverential Poſtures which are due to him, but in a reproachful and ſcornful way of paying them. To behave our ſelves uncomely or immodeſtly before a Prince, is a diſ-eſteem of Majeſty. Soveraignty requires awe in every Addreſs; where this is wanting, there is a diſ-reſpect of Authority. We contemn Gods Dominion when we give him the Service of the Lip, the Hand, the Knee, and deny him that of the Heart; as they in *Ezekiel*, *Ezek.* 33. 31. As though he were the Soveraign only of the Body, and not of the Soul. To have devout Figures of the Face, and uncomely poſtures of the Soul, is to exclude his Dominion from our Spirits, while we own it only over our outward Man; we render him an inſignificant Lord, not worthy of any higher Adorations from us, than a ſenſleſs Statue; we demean not our ſelves according to his Majeſtical Authority over us, when we preſent him not with the Cream and Quinteſſence of our Souls. The greatneſs of God, requir'd a great Houſe, and a coſtly Palace; 1 *Chron.* 29. 11, 16. *David* ſpeaks it in order to the Building God a *Houſe* and Temple; God being a *great King*, expects a *Male*, the beſt of our Flock, *Mal.* 1. 14. a Maſculine and Vigorous Service. When we preſent him with a ſleepy, ſickly, rheumatick Service, we betray our Conceptions of him to be as mean as if he were ſome petty Lord, whoſe Dominion were of no larger extent than a Mole-hill, or ſome inconſiderable Village.

6. *Omiſſion of the Service he hath appointed*, is another Contempt of his Soveraignty. This is a Contempt of his Dominion, whereby he hath a right to appoint what Means and Conditions he pleaſeth, for the enjoyment of his proffered and promiſed Benefits. 'Tis an Enmity to his Scepter not to accept of his Terms after a long ſeries of Precepts and Invitations, made for the reſtoring us to that Happineſs we had loſt, and providing all means neceſſary thereunto, nothing being wanting but our own Concurrence with it, and acceptance of it, by rendring that eaſie Homage he requires. By with-holding from him the Service he enjoyns, we deny that we hold any thing of him; as he that pays not the Quit-rent, though it be never ſo ſmall, diſowns the Soveraignty of the Lord of the Manor; it implies that he is a miſerable poor Lord, having no right, or deſtitute of any Power, to diſpoſe of any thing in the World to our Advantage. *Job* 22. 17. *They ſay unto God, depart from us, what can the Almighty do for them?* They will have no commerce with him in a way of Duty, becauſe they imagine him to have no Soveraign Power to do any thing for them in a way of Benefit, as if his Dominion were an empty Title and as much deſtitute of any Authority to command a favour for them, as any Idol. They think themſelves to have as abſolute a diſpoſal of things, as God himſelf; what can he do for us? What can he confer upon us, that we cannot inveſt our ſelves in? As though they were Soveraigns in an equality with God; thus Men live *without God in the World*, Eph. 2. 12. as if there were no Supream Being to pay a reſpect to, or none fit to receive any Homage at their Hands; with-holding from God the right of his time, and the right of his Service, which is the juſt claim of his Soveraignty.

7. *Cenſuring others* is a contempt of his Soveraignty. When we cenſure Mens Perſons or Actions by a raſh Judgment; when we will be Judges of the good and evil of Mens Actions, where the Law of God is utterly ſilent, we uſurp Gods Place, and invade his Right, we claim a ſuperiority over the Law, and judge God defective as the Rector of the World, in his Preſcriptions of good and evil; *James* 4. 11, 12. *He that ſpeaks evil of his Brother, and judges his Brother, ſpeaks evil of the Law, and judgeth the Law; there is one Law-giver who is able to ſave and to deſtroy; who art thou that judgeſt another?* Do you know what you do in judging another? You take upon you the garb of a Soveraign, as if he were more your Servant than Gods, and more under your Authority than the Authority of God; 'tis a ſetting thy ſelf in Gods Tribunal, and aſſuming his rightful Power of judging; thy Brother is not to be govern'd by thy fancy, but by Gods Law and his own Conſcience.

2. Information. Hence it follows, *that God doth actually govern the World.* He hath not only a right to rule, but *he rules over all*, ſo ſaith the Text. He is *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*; what, to let them do what they pleaſe, and all that their Luſts prompt them to? Hath God an abſolute Dominion? Is it good, and is it wiſe? Is it then a uſeleſs Prerogative of the Divine Nature? Shall ſo excellent a Power lye idle, as if God were a lifeleſs Image? Shall we fancy God like ſome lazy Monarch, that ſolaceth himſelf in the Gardens of his Palace, or ſteeps himſelf in ſome charming Pleaſures, and leaves his Lieutenants to govern the ſeveral Provinces, which are all Members of his Empire, according to their own Humour? Not to exerciſe this Dominion, is all one as not to have it; to what purpoſe is he inveſted with this Soveraignty, if he were careleſs of what were done in the World, and regarded not the Oppreſſions of Men? God keeps no uſeleſs excellency by him; He actually reigns over the *Heathen*, *Pſalm* 47. 8. and thoſe as bad or worſe than *Heathens*. It had been a Vanity in *David* to call upon the Heavens to be glad, and the Earth to rejoyce under the Rule of a *ſleepy Deity*, 1 Chron. 16. 31. No, his Scepter is full of Eyes, as it was painted by the *Egyptians*; he is always waking, and always more than *Ahaſuerus*, reading over the Records of Humane Actions. Not to exerciſe his Authority, is all one, as not to regard whether he keeps the Crown upon his Head, or continue the Scepter in his Hand. If his Soveraignty were exempt from Care, it would be deſtitute of Juſtice;

ſtice; God is more Righteous, than to reſign the Enſigns of his Authority to blind and oppreſſive Man; to think that God hath a Power, and doth not uſe it for juſt and righteous Ends, is to imagine him an unrighteous, as well as a careleſs Soveraign, ſuch a thing in a Man renders him a baſe Man, and a worſe Governour; 'Tis a Vice that diſturbs the World, and overthrows the ends of Authority, as to have a Power, and uſe it well, is the greateſt virtue of an Earthly Soveraign. What an unworthy Conception is it of God, to acknowledge him to be poſſeſſed of a greater Authority than the greateſt Monarch, and yet to think that he uſeth it leſs than a petty Lord, that his Crown is of no more value with him than a Feather? This repreſents God impotent, that he cannot, or unrighteous and baſe, that he will not adminiſter the Authority he hath for the nobleſt and juſteſt end. But can we ſay, that he neglects the Government of the World? How come things then to remain in their due Order? How comes the Law of Nature yet to be preſerved in every Mans Soul? How comes Conſcience to check, and cite, and judge? If God did not exerciſe his Authority, what Authority could Conſcience have to diſturb Man in unlawful Practices, and to make his Sports and Sweetneſs ſo unpleaſant and ſour to him? Hath he not given frequent notices and memorials, that he holds a curb over corrupt Inclinations, puts rubs in the way of malicious Attempters, and often overſets the Diſturbers of the Peace of the Word?

3. Information. *God can do no wrong*, ſince he is Abſolute Soveraign. Man may do wrong, Princes may oppreſs and rifle, but it is a Crime in them ſo to do: Becauſe their Power is a Power of Government, and not of Propriety in the Goods or Lives of their Subjects; but God cannot do any wrong, whatſoever the clamours of Creatures are: Becauſe he can do nothing but what he hath a Soveraign Right to do. If he takes away our Goods, he takes not away any thing that is yours more than his own, ſince though he intruſted you with them, he deveſted not himſelf of the Propriety. When he takes away our Lives, he takes what he gave us by a temporary Donation, to be ſurrendred at his Call. We can claim no right in any thing but by his Will. He is no Debtor to us, and ſince he owes us nothing, he can wrong us in nothing that he takes away. His own Soveraignty excuſeth him in all thoſe Acts which are moſt diſtaſtful to the Creature. If we crop a Medicinal Plant for our uſe, or a Flower for our Pleaſure, or kill a Lamb for our Food, we do neither of them any wrong: Becauſe the Original of them was for our uſe, and they had their Life and Nouriſhment, and pleaſing Qualities for our delight and ſupport; and are not we much more made for the pleaſure and uſe of God, than any of thoſe can be for us? *Of him, and to him are all things*, Rom. 11. 36. Hath not God as much right over any one of us, as over the meaneſt Worm? Tho' there be a vaſt difference in Nature between the Angels in Heaven, and the Worms on Earth, yet they are all one in regard of Subjection to God; he is as much the Lord of the one as the other; as much the Proprietor of the one as the other; as much the Governour of the one as the other. Not a cranny in the World is exempt from his Juriſdiction. Not a mite or grain of a Creature exempt from his Propriety.

He is not our Lord by Election; he was a Lord, before we were in being; he had no Terms put upon him; who capitulated with him, and ſet him in his Throne by Covenant? What Oath did he take to any Subject at his firſt Inveſtiture in his Authority? His right is as natural, as Eternal as himſelf. As natural as his Exiſtence, and as neceſſary as his Deity. Hath he any Law but his own Will? What wrong can he do that breaks no Law, that fulfils his Law in every thing he doth, by fulfilling his own Will, which as it is abſolutely Soveraign, ſo it is infinitely Righteous. In whatſoever he takes from us then, he cannot injure us; 'tis no Crime in any Man to ſeize upon his own Goods, to vindicate his own Honour; and ſhall it be thought a wrong in God to do ſuch Things? Beſides the occaſion he hath from every Man, and that every Day provoking him to do it. He ſeems rather to wrong himſelf by forbearing ſuch a Seizure, than wrong us by executing it

4. If God have a Soveraignty over the whole World, *then Merit is totally excluded.* His right is ſo abſolute over all Creatures, that he neither is, nor can be a Debtor to any; not to the undefiled Holineſs of the bleſſed Angels, much leſs to poor Earthly Worms; thoſe bleſſed Spirits enjoy their Glory by the Title of his Soveraign Pleaſure, not by vertue of any Obligation devolving from them upon God. Are not the Faculties whereby they and we perform any act of Obedience, his grant to us? Is not the Strength, whereby they and we are enabled to do any Thing pleaſing to him, a gift from him? Can a Vaſſal merit of his Lord, or a Slave of his Maſter by uſing his Tools, and employing his Strength in his Service, though it was a Strength he had Naturally, not by Donation from the Man in whoſe ſervice it is employed? God is Lord of all, all is due to him; how can we oblige him, by giving him what is his own, more his to whom it is preſented, than ours by whom it is offered? * He becomes not a Debtor by receiving any thing from us, but by promiſing ſomething to us. * *Auſtin.*

5. If God hath a Soveraign Dominion over the World, then hence it follows, That *all Magiſtrates are but Soveraigns under God.* He is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords; all the Potentates in the World are no other than his Lieutenants, moveable at his Pleaſure, and more at his diſpoſal than their Subjects are at theirs. Though they are dignified with the Title of *Gods*, yet ſtill they are at an infinite diſtance from the Supream Lord. Gods under God, not to be above him, not to be againſt him. The want of the due ſence of their Subordination to God, hath made many in the World act as Soveraigns above him, more than Soveraigns under him. Had they all bore a deep Conviction of this upon their Spirits, ſuch audacious Language had never dropt from the Mouth of *Pharaoh*: *Who is the Lord, that I ſhould obey his voice, to let Iſrael go?* Exod. 5. 2. Preſuming that there was no Superiour to controul him, nor any in Heaven able to be a match for him. *Darius* had never publiſh'd ſuch a doting Edict, as to prohibit any Petition to God. *Nero* had never fir'd *Rome*, and ſung at the ſight of the devouring Flames; nor ever had he ript up his Mothers Belly, to ſee the Womb where he firſt lodg'd and receiv'd a Life ſo hateful to his Country. Nor would *Abner* and *Joab*, the two Generals, have accounted the Death of Men but a ſport and interlude, 2 *Sam.* 2. 14. *Let the young Men ariſe, and play before us*; what play it was, the next Verſe acquaints you with, thruſting their Swords into one anothers ſides. They were no more troubled at the Death of thouſands, than a Man is to kill a fly or a flea. Had a ſence of this but hover'd over their Souls, People in many Countries had not been made their Foot-balls, and uſed worſe than their Dogs?

Dogs? Nor had the Lives of Millions, worth more than a World, been expos'd to Fire and Sword, to Support ſome Sordid Luſt, or Breach of Faith upon an Idle Quarrel, and for the Depredation of their Neighbours Eſtates; the Flames of Cities had not been ſo bright, nor the Streams of Blood ſo deep, nor the Cries of Innocents ſo loud.

In Particular.

1. If God be Sovereign, *All Under-Sovereigns are not to rule againſt Him, but to be Obedient to his Orders.* If they *Rule by his Authority*, Prov. 8. 15. they are not to Rule againſt his Intereſt, they are not to imagine themſelves as Abſolute as God, and that their Laws muſt be of as Sovereign Authority againſt his Honour, as the Divine are for it. If they are his Lieutenants on Earth, they ought to Act according to his Orders. No Man but will account a *Governour* of a *Province* a Rebel, if he diſobeys the Orders ſent him by the Sovereign *Prince* that Commiſſion'd him. Rebellion againſt God is a Crime of Princes, as well as Rebellion againſt Princes a Crime of Subjects. *Saul* is Charg'd with it by *Samuel* in a high manner, for an Act of ſimple Diſobedience, though intended for the Service of God, and the Inriching his Country with the Spoils of the *Amalekites*. 1 *Sam.* 15. 23. *Rebellion is as the Sin of Witchcraft*, like Witchcraft or Covenanting with the Devil, acting as if he had received his Commiſſion not from God, but from *Satan*. Magiſtrates, as Commiſſion'd by God, ought to act for Him. Doth Humane Authority ever give a Commiſſion to any to Rebel againſt it ſelf? Did God ever depute any Earthly Sovereignty againſt his Glory, and give them leave to Out-Law his Laws, to introduce their own? No, when he gave the Vicarious Dominion to Chriſt, He calls upon the *Kings* of the Earth to be *Inſtructed*, and be *wiſe*, and *kiſs the Son*, Pſal. 2. 10, 12. *i. e.* To obſerve his Orders, and pay him Homage as their Governour. What a ſilly doltiſh thing is it, to reſiſt that Supream Authority, to which the Arch-Angels ſubmit themſelves, and regulate their Employments punctually by their Inſtructions? Thoſe excellent Creatures exactly obey Him in all the Acts of their Subordinate Government in the World; thoſe in whoſe Hand the greateſt Monarch is no more than a ſilly Fly between the Fingers of a Giant. A Contradiction to the Intereſt of God hath been Fatal to Kings. The *Four Monarchies* have had their Wings clipt, and moſt of them have been buried in their own Aſhes; they have all, like the Imitators of *Lucifer's* Pride, fallen from the Heaven of their Glory, to the depth of their Shame and Miſery. All Governors are bound to be as much Obedient to God, as their Subjects are bound to be Submiſſive to them. Their Authority over Men is limited, God's Authority over them is Abſolute and Unbounded. Though *every Soul* ought to be *ſubject to the higher Powers*, yet there is a Higher Power of all, to which thoſe higher Powers are to Subject themſelves; They are to be Keepers of both the Tables of the Law of God, and are then moſt Sovereigns, when they ſet in their own Practice an Example of Obedience to God, for their Subjects to write after.

2. *They ought to imitate God in the Exerciſe of their Sovereignty in ways of Juſtice and Righteouſneſs.* Tho God be an Abſolute Soveraign, yet his Government is not Tyrannical, but managed according to the Rules of Righteouſneſs, Wiſdom, and Goodneſs. If God that Created them as well as their Subjects, doth ſo exerciſe his Government, 'tis a Duty incumbent upon them to do the ſame; ſince they are not the Creators of their People, but the conductors. As God's Government tends to the good of the World, ſo ought theirs to the good of their Countries. God committed not the Government of the World to the Mediator in an unlimited way, but for the good of the Church, in order to the Eternal Salvation of his People, *Eph.* 1. 12. *He gave him to be Head over all things to the Church.* He had Power over the Devils, to reſtrain them in their Temptation and Malice; Power over the Angels, to order their Miniſtry for the Heirs of Salvation. So Power is given to Magiſtrates for the Civil Preſervation of the World, and of Humane Society: They ought therefore to conſider, for what ends they are placed over the reſt of Mankind, and not exerciſe their Authority in a licentious way, but conformable to that Juſtice and Righteouſneſs wherein God doth adminiſter his Government, and for the Preſervation of thoſe that are committed to them.

3. *Magiſtrates muſt then be obey'd, when they Act according to Gods Order, and within the Bounds of the Divine Commiſſion.* They are no Friends to the Soveraignty of God, that are Enemies to Magiſtracy, his Ordinance. *Saul* was a good Governour, though none of the beſt Men, and the Deſpiſers of his Government after God's choice, were the Sons of *Belial*, 1 *Sam.* 10. 27. *Chriſt* was no Enemy to *Cæſar*. To pull down a Faithful Magiſtrate, ſuch an one as *Zerubbabel*, is to pluck a *Signet* from the Hand of God; for in that Capacity he accounts him, *Hag.* 2. 23. God's Servants ſtand or fall to their own Maſter. How doth He check *Aaron* and *Miriam* for ſpeaking againſt *Moſes* his Servant. *Numb.* 12. 8. *Were you not afraid to ſpeak againſt my ſervant Moſes*; againſt *Moſes*, as related to you in the Capacity of a Governor; againſt *Moſes*, as related to Me in the Capacity of my Servant. To ſpeak any thing againſt them, as they Act by God's order, is an Invaſion of God's *Soveraign* Right, who gave them their Commiſſion. To act againſt Juſt Power, or the Juſtice of an Earthly Power, is to act againſt God's Ordinance, who ordained them in the World, but not any abuſe or ill uſe of their power.

2. USE. *How dreadful is the conſideration of this Doctrine to all Rebels againſt God.* Can any Man that hath Brains in his Head, imagine it an inconſiderable thing to deſpiſe the *Soveraign* of the World? It was the ſole Crime of Diſobedience to that poſitive Law, whereby God would have a viſible Memorial of his *Soveraignty* preſerved in the Eye of Man, that ſhowered down that deluge of Miſery, under which the World groans to this Day. God had given *Adam* a Soul, whereby he might live as a Rational Creature; and then gives him a Law, whereby he might live as a dutiful Subject: For God forbidding him to eat of the Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, declared his own Supremacy over *Adam*, and his Propriety in the pleaſant World He had given him by his Bounty; He let him know hereby, that Man was not his own Lord, nor was to live after his own Sentiments, but the Directions of a Superiour. * As when a great Lord builds a Magnificent Palace, and brings in another to Inhabit it, he reſerves a ſmall Duty to himſelf, not of an equal Value with the Houſe, but for an acknowledgment of his own Right, that the Tenant may know he is not the Lord of it, but hath his grant by the Liberality of another. God hereby gave *Adam* matter for a pure Obedience, that had no Foundation in his own Nature, by any Implanted Law; he was only in it, to reſpect the Will of his *Soveraign*, and to underſtand that he was to live under the

* *Chryſoſt.* in Gen. Hom. 16.

Power

Power of a higher than himself. There was no more Moral Evil in the eating of this Fruit, as considered distinct from the Command, than in eating of any other Fruit in the Garden. Had there been no Prohibition, he might with as much safety have fed upon it as on any other. No Law of Nature was transgress'd in the Act of Eating of it, but the *Soveraignty* of God over him was denied by him; and for this, the Death threatned was inflicted on him and his Posterity: For though Divines take notice of other Sins in the Fall of *Adam*, yet God in his Tryal chargeth him with none but this, and doth put upon his Question an *Emphasis* of his own Authority, *Gen.* 3. 11. *Hast thou eaten of the Tree whereof I commanded ye, that thou shouldst not eat?* This I am displeased with, that thou shouldest disown my Dominion over thy self and this Garden. This was the in-let to all other Sins; as the acknowledgement of Gods *Soveraignty* is the first step to the Practice of all the Duties of a Creature, so the disowning his *Soveraignty*, is the first Spring of all the extravagancies of a Creature. Every Sin against the Soveraign-Law-giver is worthy of Death. The Transgression of this positive Command deserved Death, and procured it to spread it self over the Face of the World. Gods Dominion cannot be despis'd, without meriting the greatest Punishment.

1. *Punishment necessarily follows upon the Doctrine of Soveraignty.* 'Tis a faint and feeble Soveraignty that cannot preserve it self, and vindicate its own wrongs against rebellious Subjects; the height of Gods Dominion infers a Vengeance on the Contemners of it. If God be an Eternal King, he is an Eternal Judge. Since Sin unlinks the dependance between God the Soveraign, and Man the Subject, if God did not vindicate the Rights of his Soveraignty, and the Authority of his Law, he would seem to despise his own Dominion, be weary of it, and not act the part of a good Governour. But God is tender of his Prerogative, and doth most bestir himself when Men exalt themselves proudly against him, *Exod*, 18. 11. *In the thing wherein they dealt proudly*, he will be *above them.* When *Pharaoh* thought himself a Mate for God, and proudly rejected his Commands, as if they had been the Messages of some petty *Arabian* Lord, God rights his own Authority upon the Life of his Enemy by the ministry of the *Red Sea*. He turned a great King into a Beast, to make him know, *That the most High ruled in the Kingdoms of Men*, Dan. 4. 16, 17. *The demand is by the Word of the Holy Ones, to the intent that the living may know, that the most High ruleth in the Kingdoms of Men*; and that by the Petitions of the Angels, who cannot endure that the Empire of God should be obscur'd and diminish'd by the pride of Man. Besides the tender respect he hath to his own Glory, he is constantly presented with the Sollicitations of the Angels, to punish the proud ones of the Earth, that darken the Glory of his Majesty. 'Tis necessary for the rescue of his Honour, and necessary for the satisfaction of his Illustrious Attendants, who would think it a shame to them, to serve a Lord that were always unconcern'd in the Rebellions of his Creatures, and tamely suffer their spurns at his Throne: And therefore there is a Day wherein the *haughtiness* of Man shall be bowed down, the Cedars of *Lebanon* over-thrown, and high Mountains levell'd, that *God may be exalted in that Day*, Isa. 2. 11, 12, &c. Pride is a Sin that immediately swells against Gods Authority, this shall be brought down that God may be exalted; not that he should have a real Exaltation, as if he were actually depos'd from his Government, but that he shall be manifested to be the Soveraign of the whole World. 'Tis necessary there should be a Day to chase away those Clouds that are upon his Throne, that the Lustre of his Majesty may break forth to the Confusion of all the Children of Pride that vaunt against him. God hath a Dominion over us as a Law-giver, as we are his Creatures, and a Dominion over us in a way of Justice, as we are his Criminals.

2. This Punishment is *unavoidable.*

1. None can escape him. He hath the sole Authority over Hell and Death, the Keys of both are in his Hand; the greatest *Cæsar* can no more escape him than the meanest Peasant; *Who art thou, O great Mountain, before Zerubbabel?* Zac. 4. 7. The height of Angels is no match for him, much less that of the Mortal Grandees of the World; they can no more resist him than the meanest Person; but are rather as the highest Steeples, the fittest Marks for his crushing Thunder. If he speaks the Word, *the Principalities* of Men *come down*, and *the Crown of their Glory*, Jer. 23. 18. He can *take the Mighty away in a moment* and that *without Hands*, i. e. without Instruments. *Job* 34. 20. The strongest are like the Feet of *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Image, Iron and Clay; Iron to Man, but Clay to God, to be crumbled to nothing.

2. *What Comfort can be reapt from a Creature, when the Soveraign of the World Arms himself with Terrors, and begins his Visitation?* Isa. 10. 3. *What will you do in the Day of Visitation, to whom will you fly for help, and where will you leave your Glory?* The Torments from a Subject may be relieved by the Prince, but where can there be an Appeal from the Soveraign of the World? Where is there any above him to controul him, if he will overthrow us; who is there to call him to account, and say to him, What dost thou? He works by an uncontroulable Authority, he needs not ask leave of any. *Isa.* 43. 13. *He works, and none can lett it*; as when he will relieve, none can afflict; so when he will wound, none can relieve. If a King appoint the Punishment of a Rebel, the greatest Favourite in the Court cannot speak a comfortable Word to him. The most beloved Angel in Heaven cannot sweeten and ease the Spirit of a Man, that the Soveraign Power is set against to make the Butt of his Wrath. The Devils lye under his Sentence, and wear their Chains as Marks of their Condemnation, without hope of ever having them filed off, since they are laid upon them by the Authority of an unaccountable Soveraign.

3. *By his Soveraign Authority, God can make any Creature the Instrument of his Vengeance*; he hath all the Creatures at his beck, and can Commission any of them to be a dreadful scourge. *Strong winds* and tempests *fulfil his Word*, Psalm 148. 8. The *Lightnings* answer him at his Call, and cry aloud *here are we*, Job 38. 35. By his Soveraign Authority he can render *Locusts* as mischievous as *Lions*, forge the meanest Creatures into Swords and Arrows, and Commission the most despicable to be his Executioners; he can cut off Joy from our Spirits, and make our own Hearts be our Tormentors, our most confident Friends our Persecutors, our neareſt Relations to be his Avengers; they are more his, who is their Soveraign, than ours, who place a vain Confidence in them. Rather than *Abraham* shall want Children, he can raise up Stones, and adopt them into his Family; and rather than not execute his Vengeance, he can array the Stones in the Streets, and make them his

armed

armed Subjects againſt us. If He ſpeak the word, a Hair ſhall drop from our Heads to choak us, or a Vapour congeal'd into Rheum in our Heads, ſhall drop down, and putrifie our Vitals. He can never want Weapons, who is Soveraign over the Thunders of Heaven, and Stones of the Earth, over every Creature, and can by a Soveraign Word turn our greateſt Comforts into Curſes.

4. *This Puniſhment muſt be terrible.* How doth *David*, a great King, ſound in his Body, proſperous in his Crown, and ſucceſsful in his Conqueſts, ſettled in all his Royal Conveniencies, groan under the wrathful Touch of a greater King than himſelf, *Pſal.* 6. *Pſal.* 38. and his other Penitential Pſalms; Not being able to give himſelf a Writ of Eaſe, by all the Delights of his Palace and Kingdom. *If the Wrath of a King be as the roaring of a Lion* to a poor Subject, *Prov.* 19. 10. how great is the wrath of the King of Kings, that cannot be ſet forth by the terror of all the amazing Vollies of Thunder, that have been ſince the Creation, if the noiſe of all were gather'd into one ſingle crack? As there is an unconceivable ground of Joy in the ſpecial Favour of ſo mighty a King, ſo is there of Terror in his ſevere Diſpleaſure. *Pſal.* 76. 12. He is *terrible to the Kings of the Earth, with God is terrible Majeſty.* What a folly is it then to rebel againſt ſo mighty a Soveraign?

III. USE of *Comfort.* The Throne of God drops Honey and Sweetneſs, as well as Dread and Terror; All his other Attributes afford little Relief, without this of his Dominion, and Univerſal Command; when therefore He ſpeaks of his being the God of his People, He doth often Preface it, with *the Lord thy God*; His Soveraignty as a Lord being the ground of all the Comfort we can take in his Federal Relation as our God; Thy God, but Superiour to thee; thy God, not as thy Cattle and Goods are thine, in a way of ſole Propriety, but a Lord too in a way of Soveraignty, not only over thee, but over all things elſe for thee. As the end of God's ſettling Earthly Governments, was for the good of the Communities over which the Governours preſide; ſo God exerciſeth his Government for the good of the World, and more particularly for the good of the Church, over which He is a peculiar Governour.

1. *His Love to his People is as great as his Soveraignty over them.* He ſtands not upon his Dominion with his People ſo much, as upon his Affection to them; He would not be call'd *Baali, my Lord*, i. e. He would not be known only by the Name of *Soveraingty*, but *Iſhi, my Husband*, a name of Authority and *Sweetneſs* together, *Hoſ.* 2. 16, 19, *&c.* He ſignifies, that He is not only the Lord of our Spirits and Bodies, but a Husband by a Marriage-knot, admitting us to a nearneſs to Him, and communion of goods with Him. Though He Majeſtically ſits upon a high Throne, yet it is a Throne *encircled with a Rainbow*, *Ezek.* 1. 28. To ſhew that his Government of his People, is not only in a way of Abſolute Dominion, but alſo in a way of Federal Relation. He ſeems to own himſelf their Subject, rather than their Soveraign, when He gives them a Charter to Command Him in the Affairs of his Church. *Iſaiah* 45. 11. *Ask of things to come concerning my Sons, and concerning the work of my hands command you me.* Some read it by way of queſtion, as a Corrective of a Sawcineſs; Do you ask of me things to come, and ſeem to command Me concerning the works of my hands, as if you were more careful of my Intereſt among my People, than I am, who have form'd them? But if this were the Senſe, it would ſeem to diſcourage an Importunity of Prayer for publick Deliverance; and therefore to take it according to our Tranſlation, 'tis an Exhortation to Prayer, and a mighty encouragement in the management and exerciſe of it. Urge me with my Promiſe, in a way of humble Importunity, and you ſhall find me as willing to perform my Word, and gratifie your Deſires, as if I were rather under your Authority, than you under mine; As much as to ſay, if I be not as good as my Word, to ſatisfie thoſe Deſires that are according to my Promiſe, implead me at my own Throne, and if I be failing in it, I will give Judgment againſt my ſelf. Almoſt like Princes Charters, and gracious Grants, *We grant ſuch a thing againſt us, and our Heirs*, giving the Subject power to implead them, if they be not punctually obſerv'd by them. How is the love of God ſeen in his Condeſcenſion below the Majeſty of Earthly Governours! He that might command by the abſoluteneſs of his Authority, doth not only do that, but intreats in the quality of a Subject, as if he had not a fulneſs to ſupply us, but needed ſomething from us for a ſupply of Himſelf, 2 *Cor.* 5. 20. *As though God did beſeech you by us.* And when he may challenge as a due by the Right of his Propriety, what we beſtow upon his Poor, which are his Subjects as well as ours, He reckons it as a *loan to Him*, as if what we had were more our own than his, *Prov.* 19. 17. He ſtands not upon his Dominion ſo much with us, when he finds us Conſcientious in paying the Duty we owe to Him. He rules as a Father by Love, as well as by Authority; He enters into a peculiar Communion with poor Earthly Worms; plants his gracious Tabernacle among the Troops of Sinners, inſtructs us by his Word, invites us by his Benefits, admits us into his Preſence, is more deſirous to beſtow his Smiles, than we to receive them; and acts in ſuch a manner, as if He were willing to reſign his Scepter into the Hands of any that were poſſeſſed with more Love and Kindneſs to us than Himſelf. This is the Comfort of Believers.

2. *In his being Soveraign, his Pardons carry in them a full Security.* He that hath the Keys of Hell and Death, Pardons the Crime, and wipes off the Guilt. Who can Repeal the Act of the chief Governour? What Tribunal can null the Decrees of an Abſolute Throne? *Iſa.* 43. 25. *I, even I am He, that blots out thy Tranſgreſſions for my names ſake.* His *Soveraign* Dominion renders his Mercy comfortable. The Clemency of a Subject, though never ſo great, cannot Pardon; People may pity a Criminal, while the Executioner Tortures him, and ſtrips him of his Life; but the Clemency of the Supream Prince eſtabliſheth a Pardon. Since we are under the Dominion of God, if He Pardons, who can reverſe it? If He doth not, what will the Pardons of Men profit us in regard of an Eternal State? If God be a King for ever, then he whom God forgives, he in whom God reigns, ſhall live for ever. Elſe He would want Subjects on Earth, and have none of his lower Creatures, which He form'd upon the Earth, to reign after the Diſſolution of the World; if his Pardons did not ſtand ſecure, He would after this Life have no voluntary Subjects that had formerly a Being upon the Earth; He would be a King only over the damned Creatures.

3. *Corruptions will certainly be Subdued in his voluntary Subjects.* The Covenant, *I will be your God*, implies Protection, Government, and Relief, which are all grounded upon Soveraignty: That therefore which is our greateſt burden, will be remov'd by his Soveraign Power. *Micah* 7. 19. *He will Subdue our Iniquities.* If the outward Enemies

mies of the Church ſhall not bear up againſt his Dominion, and perpetuate their Rebellions unpuniſht, thoſe within his People ſhall as little bear up againſt his Throne, without being deſtroy'd by him. The billows of our own Hearts, and the raging Waves within us, are as much at his beck as thoſe without us. And his Soveraignty is more eminent in quelling the Corruptions of the Heart, than the Commotions of the World; in reigning over Mens Spirits, by changing them, or curbing them, more than over Mens Bodies, by pinching and puniſhing them. The remainders of *Satans* Empire will moulder away before him, ſince he that is *in us*, is a greater Soveraign, *than he that is in the World*, 1 John 4. 4. His Enemies will be laid at his Feet, and ſo never ſhall prevail againſt him, when his Kingdom ſhall come. He could not be Lord of any Man as a happy Creature, if he did not by his Power make them Happy; and he could not make them Happy, unleſs by his Grace he made them Holy. He could not be praiſed as a Lord of Glory, if he did not make ſome Creatures glorious, to praiſe him; and an Earthly Creature could not praiſe him perfectly; unleſs he had every grain of Enmity to his Glory taken out of his Heart. Since God is the only Soveraign, he only can ſtill the Commotions in our Spirits, and pull down all the Enſigns of the Devil's Royalty; he can waſt him by the powerful word of his Lips.

4. Hence is a *ſtrong Encouragement for Prayer. My King* was the ſtrong Compellation *David* us'd in Prayer, as an Argument of Comfort and Confidence, as well as that of *My God.* Pſalm 5. 2. *Hearken to the voice of my cry, my King, and my God.* To be a *King*, is to have an Office of Government and Protection. He gives us Liberty to approach to him as the *Judge of all*, Heb. 12. 23. *i. e.* As the Governour of the World; we pray to one that hath the whole Globe of Heaven and Earth in his Hand, and can do whatſoever he will. Though he be higher than the *Cherubims*, and tranſcendently above all in Majeſty, yet we may ſoar up to him with the wings of our Soul, Faith, and Love, and lay open our Cauſe, and find him as gracious, as if he were the meaneſt ſubject on Earth, rather than the moſt *Soveraign* God in Heaven.

He hath as much of tenderneſs, as he hath of Authority, and is pleaſed with Prayer, which is an acknowledgment of his Dominion, an honouring of that which he delights to Honour: For Prayer, in the notion of it, imports thus much, that God is the Rector of the World, that he takes notice of Humane Affairs, that he is a careful, juſt, wiſe Governour, a ſtore-houſe of Bleſſing, a fountain of Goodneſs to the Indigent, and a relief to the Oppreſſed. What have we reaſon to fear, when the *Soveraign* of the World gives us Liberty to approach to him, and lay open our Caſe? That God who is King of the whole Earth, not only of a few Villages, or Cities in the Earth, but the whole Earth; and not only King of this dreggy place of our droſs, but of Heaven, having prepar'd, or eſtabliſhed his Throne in the moſt glorious place of the Creation.

5. Here is *Comfort in Afflictions.* As a *Soveraign*, he is the Author of Afflictions, as a *Soveraign* he can be the remover of them; he can command the Waters of Affliction to go ſo far and no farther. If he ſpeaks the Word, a Diſeaſe ſhall depart, as ſoon as a Servant ſhall from your preſence, with a Nod. If we are baniſht from one Place, he can command a Shelter for us in another. If he orders *Moab*, a Nation that had no great Kindneſs for his People, to let *his outcaſts dwell with them*, they ſhall entertain them, and afford them Sanctuary, *Iſaiah* 16. 4. Again God chaſteneth as a *Soveraign*, but teacheth as a *Father*, *Pſalm* 99. 12. The exerciſe of his Authority is not without an exerciſe of his Goodneſs. He doth not Correct for his own Pleaſure, or the Creature's Torment, but for the Creature's Inſtruction; though the Rod be in the Hand of a *Soveraign*, yet it is tinctur'd with the kindneſs of Divine Bowels. He can order them as a *Soveraign* to mortifie our Fleſh, and try our Faith. In the ſevereſt tempeſt, the Lord that rais'd the wind againſt us, which ſhatter'd the Ship, and tore its Rigging, can change that contrary Wind for a more Happy one, to drive us into the Port.

6. 'Tis a *Comfort againſt the Projects of the Churches Adverſaries in Times of publick Commotions.* The Conſideration of the Divine *Soveraignty* may arm us againſt the Threatnings of mighty Ones, and the menaces of Perſecutors. God hath Authority above the Crowns of Men, and a Wiſdom ſuperior to the Cabals of Men. None can move a ſtep without him, he hath a Negative Voice upon their Counſels, a Negative Hand upon their Motions; their Politick Reſolves muſt ſtop at the Point he hath preſcrib'd them. Their formidable ſtrength cannot exceed the Limits he hath ſet them, their over-reaching Wiſdom expires at the breath of God, *There is no Wiſdom, nor Underſtanding, nor Counſel againſt the Lord*, Prov. 21. 30. Not a Bullet can be diſcharg'd, nor a Sword drawn, a Wall battered, nor a Perſon diſpatcht out of the World without the leave of God, by the mightieſt in the World. The Inſtruments of *Satan* are no more free from his *Soveraign* reſtraint than their Inſpirer; they cannot pull the hook out of their Noſtrils, nor caſt the Bridle out of their Mouths. This *Soveraign* can ſhake the Earth, rend the Heavens, overthrow Mountains, the moſt Mountainous Oppoſer of his Intereſt. Though the Nations ruſh in againſt his People like the ruſhing of many Waters, *God ſhall rebuke them, they ſhall be chaſed as the Chaff of the Mountains before the Wind, and like a rolling Thing before the Whirlwind*, Iſa. 17. 13. So doth he often burſt in pieces the moſt miſchievous Deſigns, and Conducts the oppreſſed to a Happy Port. He often turns the ſevereſt Tempeſts into a Calm, as well as the moſt peaceful Calm into a horrible Storm. How often hath a well-rigg'd Ship, that ſeemed to ſpurn the Sea under her Feet, and beat the Waves before her to a Foam, been ſwallowed up into the Bowels of that Element, over whoſe back ſhe rode a little before? God never comes to deliver his Church as a Governour, but in a wrathful poſture, *Ezek.* 20. 33. *Surely ſaith the Lord with a mighty Hand, and with an out-ſtretched arm, and with fury pour'd out will I rule over you*; not with fury poured out upon the Church, but fury pour'd out upon her Enemies, as the words following Evidence. The Church he would bring out from the Countries where ſhe was ſcattered, and bring the People into the bond of the Covenant. He ſometimes *cuts off the Spirits of Princes*, Pſalm 76. 12. *i. e.* cuts off their Deſigns, as Men do the Pipes of a Water-courſe. The Hearts of all are as open to him, as the Riches of Heaven where he reſides. He can ſlip an Inclination into the Heart of the mighty, which they dream'd not of before; and if he doth not change their Projects, he can make them abortive, and waylay them in their attempts. *Laban* marched with fury, but God put a padlock upon his Paſſion againſt *Jacob*, *Gen.* 31. 24, 29. The *Devils* which ravage Mens Minds, muſt be ſtill, when he gives out his *Soveraign* Orders. This *Soveraign* can make his People *find favour* in the Eyes of the cruel *Egyptians*, which had ſo long oppreſt them. *Exod.* 11. 3.

And

And ſpeak a good Word in the Heart of *Nebuchadnezzar* for the Prophet *Jeremy*, that he ſhould order his Captain to take him into his ſpecial Protection; when he took *Zedekiah* away Priſoner *in chains*, and *put out his eyes*, *Jerem.* 39. 11. His People cannot want deliverance from Him, who who hath all the World at his Command, when He is pleaſed to beſtow it: He hath as many Inſtruments of Deliverance, as He hath Creatures at his Beck in Heaven or Earth, from the meaneſt to the higheſt. As He is the Lord of Hoſts, the Church hath not only an Intereſt in the Strength He himſelf is poſſeſſed with, but in the Strength of all the Creatures that are under his Command, in the Elements below, and Angels above; in thoſe Armies of Heaven, and in the Inhabitants of the Earth, He doth *what He will*, *Dan.* 4. 35. They are all in order, and array at his Command. There are Angels to employ in a fatal ſtroke, Lice and Frogs to quell the ſtubborn Hearts of his Enemies. He can range his Thunders and Lightnings, the Cannon and Granadoes of Heaven, and the Worms of the Earth in his ſervice. He can muzzle Lions, calm the Fury of the Fire, turn his Enemies Swords into their own Bowels, and their Artillery on their own Breaſts; ſet the Wind in their Teeth, and make their Chariot-wheels languiſh, make the Sea enter a quarrel with them, and wrap them in its Waves, till it hath ſtifled them in its Lap. The Angels have *Storms*, *and Tempeſts*, *and Wars* in their Hands, but at the Diſpoſal of God; when they ſhall caſt them out againſt the Empire of Antichriſt, *Rev.* 7. 1, 2. Then ſhall *Satan* be diſcharg'd from his Throne, and no more Seduce the Nations; the Everlaſting Goſpel ſhall be Preached, and God ſhall Reign Gloriouſly in *Sion*. Let us therefore ſhelter our ſelves in the Divine *Soveraignty*, regard God as the *Moſt High*, in our Dangers, and in our Petitions. This was *David*'s Reſolution, *Pſal.* 57. 1, 2. *I will cry unto God moſt high.* This *Dominion of God* is the true *Tower of David*, *wherein there are a thouſand Shields*, for defence and encouragement, *Cant.* 4. 4.

IV. USE. If God hath an extenſive Dominion over the whole World, *this ought to be often meditated on*, *and acknowledged by us.* This is the univerſal Duty of Mankind; if He be the *Soveraign* of all, we ſhould frequently think of our Great Prince, and acknowledge our ſelves his Subjects, and Him our Lord. God will be acknowledg'd the Lord of the whole Earth, the neglect of this is the cauſe of the Judgments which are ſent upon the World. All the *Prodigies* were to this end, that they might know, or acknowledge, That *God was the Lord*, Exod. 10. 2. As God was Proprietor, He demanded the *Firſt-born* of every *Jew*, and the Firſt-born of every *Beaſt*; the one was to be Redeemed, and the other Sacrificed; this was the Quit-Rent they were to pay Him for their Fruitful Land. The Firſt Fruits of the Earth were ordered to be Paid to Him, as a Homage due to the Land-Lord, and an Acknowledgement they held all in chief of Him. The Practice of Offering Firſt-Fruits for an acknowledgment of God's Soveraignty, was among many of the *Heathens*, and very Ancient; hence they Dedicated ſome of the chief of their Spoils, owning thereby the Dominion and Goodneſs of God, whereby they had gained the Victory. *Cain* own'd this in Offering the Fruits of the Earth, and it was his Sin he own'd no more, *viz.* His being a Sinner, and meriting the Juſtice of God, as his Brother *Abel* did in his Bloody Sacrifice. God was a Soveraign Proprietor and Governour, while Man was in a State of Innocence, but when Man proved a Rebel, the Soveraignty of God bore another Relation towards him, that of a Judge, added to the other. The Firſt-Fruits might have been offered to God in a State of Innocence, as a Homage to Him as Lord of the Mannor of the World; the deſign of them was to own God's Propriety in all things, and Mens dependance on Him for the Influences of Heaven, in producing the Fruits of the Earth, which He had ordered for their uſe. The Deſign of Sacrifices, and placing Beaſts inſtead of the Criminal, was to acknowledge their own guilt, and God as a Soveraign Judge; *Cain* own'd the *Firſt*, but not the *Second*, he acknowledged his Dependance on God as a Proprietor, but not his obnoxiouſneſs to God as a Judge, which may be probably gathered from his own Speech, when God came to examine him, and ask him for his Brother, *Gen.* 4. 9. *Am I my Brothers Keeper?* 'Why do you ask me? though I own thee as the Lord of my Land and Goods, yet I do not think my ſelf accountable to thee for all my Actions. This Soveraignty of God ought to be acknowledged in all the parts of it, in all the manifeſtations of it to the Creature. We ſhould bear a Senſe of this always upon our Spirits, and be often in the thoughts of it in our Retirements. We ſhould fancy that we ſaw God upon his Throne, in his Royal Garb, and great Attendants about Him, and take a view of it, to imprint an awe upon our Spirits.

The Meditation on this would,

1. *Fix us on Him as an Object of Truſt.* 'Tis upon his Soveraign Dominion, as much as upon any thing, that ſafe and ſecure Confidence is built; for if He had any Superiour above Him, to controul Him in his Deſigns and Promiſes, his Veracity and Power would be of little Efficacy, to form our Souls to a cloſe adherency to Him. It were not fit to make Him the Object of our Truſt, that can be gain-ſaid by a higher than Himſelf, and had not a full Authority to anſwer our Expectations; if we were poſſeſſed with this Notion fully and believingly, That *God* were *high above all*, that *his Kingdom rules over all*, we ſhould not catch at every broken Reed, and ſtand gaping for Comforts from a Pebble Stone. He that underſtands the Authority of a King, would not wave a Reliance on his Promiſe, to depend upon the Breath of a changeling Favourite. None but an ignorant Man would change the ſecurity he may have upon the height of a Rock, to expect it from the dwarfiſhneſs of a Mole-hill. To put Confidence in any Inferior Lord, more than in the Prince, is a folly in Civil Converſe, but a Rebellion in Divine; God only being above all, can only Rule all, can Command things to help us, and check other things which we depend on, and make them fall ſhort of our Expectations. The due conſideration of this Doctrine would make us pierce through *ſecond* Cauſes to the *firſt*, and look further than to the ſmaller ſort of Sailers, that climb the Ropes, and dreſs the Sails, to the Pilot that ſits at the Helm, the Maſter, that by an indiſputable Authority orders all their motions. We ſhould not depend upon *ſecond Cauſes* for our ſupport, but look beyond them to the Authority of the Deity, and the Dominion He hath over all the works of his hands. *Zach.* 10. 10. 1. *Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain*; When the Seaſons of the Year conſpire for the producing ſuch an effect, when the uſual time of Rain is wheel'd about in the Year, ſtop not your thoughts at the point of the Heavens, whence you expect it, but pierce the Heavens, and ſollicite God,

God, who must give Order for it, before it comes. The due Meditation of all things depending on the Divine Dominion, would strike off our Hands from all other holds, so that no Creature would engross the dependance and trust which is due to the first Cause; as we do not thank the Heavens when they pour out Rain, so we are not to depend upon them when we want it; God is to be sought to when the Womb of Second Causes is open'd to relieve us, as well as when the Womb of Second Causes is barren, and brings not forth its wonted Progeny.

2. It would make us *diligent in Worship.* The Consideration of God as the Supream Lord, is the Foundation of all Religion; *Our Father which art in Heave*, Prefaceth the Lord's Prayer; *Father* is a Name of *Authority*; in *Heaven*, the Place where he hath fixed his Throne, notes his *Government*; not *my* Father, but *our* Father, notes the *extent* of this Authority. In all Worship we acknowledge the *Object* of our Worship, *our Lord*, and our selves his Vassals; if we bear a Sense that he is our Soveraign King, it would draw us to him in every exigence, and keep us with him in a reverential Posture, in every address; when we come we should be careful not to violate his Right, but render him the homage due to his Royalty. We should not appear before him with empty Souls, but fill'd with Holy Thoughts. We should bring him the best of our Flock, and present him with the prime of our Strength; were we sensible we hold all of him, we should not with-hold any thing from him, which is more worthy than another. Our Hearts would be fram'd into an awful regard of him, when we consider that glorious and *fearful Name*, *the Lord our God*, Deut. 28. 58. We should *look to our Feet*, when we enter into his House, if we considered him in *Heaven* upon his Throne, and our selves on *Earth* at his Footstool, *Eccles.* 5. 2. lower before him than a Worm before an Angel; it would hinder garishness and lightness. The *Jews*, saith *Capel*, on the 1 *Tim.* 1. 17. repeat this Expression, מלך העולם *King of Worlds*, or Eternal King; probable the first Original of it might be, to stake them down from wandring. When we consider the Majesty of God cloathed with a Robe of Light, sitting upon his high Throne, adorn'd with his Royal Ensigns, we should not enter into the presence of so great a Majesty with the Sacrifice of Fools, with light motions and foolish Thoughts, as if he were one of our Companions to be droll'd with. We should not hear his Word, as if it were the Voice of some ordinary Peasant. The Consideration of Majesty, would engender Reverence in our Service; it would also make us speak of God with Honour and Respect, as of a great and glorious King, and not use defaming Expressions of him, as if he were an infamous Being. And were he consider'd as a terrible Majesty, he would not be frequently solicited by some, to pronounce a Damnation upon them, upon every occasion.

3. It would make us *charitable to others.* Since he is our Lord, the great Proprietor of the World, 'tis fit he should have a part of our Goods, as well as our Time: He being the Lord both of our Goods and Time. The Lord is to be honour'd with our *Substance*, *Prov.* 3. 9. Kings were not to be approached to without a Present; Tribute is due to Kings: But because he hath no need of any from us to bear up his State, maintain the charge of his Wars, or pay his Military Officers and Host, 'tis a debt due to him, to acknowledge him in his poor, to sustain those that are a part of his substance; though he stands in no need of it himself, yet the Poor, that we have always *with us*, do; as a *seventh part* of our weekly Time, so some part of our weekly gains are due to him. There was to be a weekly laying by in Store *somewhat* of what God had *prosper'd them*, for the relief of others, 1 *Cor.* 16. 1, 2. The quantity is not determin'd, that is left to every Man's Conscience, *according as God hath prosper'd him* that Week. If we did consider God as the Donor and Proprietor, we should dispose of his Gifts according to the Design of the true owner, and act in our Places as Stewards intrusted by him, and not purse up his part as well as our own in our Coffers. We should not deny him a small quit Rent, as an acknowledgment that we have a greater income from him; we should be ready to give the inconsiderable pittance he doth require of us, as an acknowledgment of his Propriety, as well as Liberality.

4. It would *make us watchful, and arm us against all Temptations.* Had *Eve* stuck to her first Argument against the Serpent, she had not been instrumental to that Destruction, which Mankind yet feel the smart of, *Gen.* 3. 3. *God hath said, ye shall not eat of it*; the great Governour of the World hath laid his Soveraign Command upon us in this Point. The Temptation gain'd no ground, till her Heart let go the Sense of this for the Pleasure of her Eye and Palate. The Repetition of this, the great Lord of the World hath said, or order'd, had both unargumented and disarm'd the Tempter. A Sense of God's Dominion over us would discourage a Temptation, and put it out of Countenance; it would bring us with a vigorous Strength to beat it back to a retreat; if this were as strongly urg'd as Temptation, it would make the Heart of the Tempted strong, and the motion of the Tempter feeble.

5. It would *make us entertain Afflictions, as they ought to be entertain'd*, viz. *with a respect to God.* When Men make light of any Affliction from God, 'tis a Contempt of his Soveraignty, as to contemn the frown, displeasure and check of a Prince, is an affront to Majesty: 'Tis, as if they did not care a straw what God did with them, but dare him to do his worst. There is a *despising the chastning of the Almighty*, Job 5. 17. To be unhumbled under his Hand, is as much or more affront to him, than to be impatient under it. Afflictions must be entertain'd as a check from Heaven, as a frown from the great Monarch of the World; under the feeling of every stroke, we are to acknowledge his Soveraignty and Bounty; to despise it, is to make light of his Authority over us; as to despise his favours, is to make light of his kindness to us. A Sense of God's Dominion would make us observe every check from him, and not diminish his Authority, by casting off a due Sense of his Correction.

6. This Dominion of God would make us *resign up our selves to God in every Thing.* He that considers himself a thing made by God, a Vassal under his Authority, would not expostulate with him, and call him to an account why he hath dealt so, or so with him. It would stab the Vitals of all Pleas against him. We should not then contest with him, but humbly lay our Cause at his Feet, and say with *Eli*, 1 *Sam.* 3. 18. *'Tis the Lord, let him do what seems good.* We should not commence a suit against God, when he doth not answer our Prayers presently, and send the Mercy we want upon the Wings of the Wind; he is the Lord, the Soveraign: The Consideration of this would put an end to our quarrels with God; should I expect that the Monarch of the World should wait upon me, or I a poor Worm wait upon him? Must I take State upon me before the Throne of

Heaven, and expect the King of Kings ſhould lay by his Scepter, to gratifie my Humour? Surely *Jonah* thought God no more than his Fellow, or his Vaſſal at that Time when he told him to his Face, he did well to be angry, as though God might not do what he pleaſed with ſo ſmall a thing as a Gourd; He ſpeaks as if he would have ſealed a Leaſe of Ejectment, to exclude him from any Propriety in any thing in the World.

7. This Dominion of God would *ſtop our vain curioſity*. When *Peter* was deſirous to know the fate of *John* the Beloved Diſciple, Chriſt anſwereth no more than this, *John* 21. 22. *If I will, that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me.* Conſider your Duty, and lay aſide your Curioſity, ſince it is my Pleaſure not to reveal it. The ſenſe of God's abſolute Dominion would ſilence many vain Diſputes in the World; what if God will not reveal this or that? The Manner and Method of his Reſolves ſhould humble the Creature under intruding Enquiries.

V. USE of *Exhortation*.

1. The Doctrine of the Dominion of God, *may teach us Humility*. We are never truly abas'd, but by the Conſideration of the Eminence and Excellency of the Deity. *Job* never thought himſelf ſo *pitiful* a thing, ſo deſpicable a Creature, as after God's magnificent Declamation upon the Theme of his own Soveraignty, *Job* 42. 5, 6. When God's Name is regarded as the moſt Excellent and Soveraign Name in all the Earth, then is the Soul in the fitteſt Temper to lye low, and cry out, What is Man, that ſo great a Majeſty ſhould be mindful of him? When *Abraham* conſiders God as the Supream Judge of all the Earth, he then owns *himſelf but Duſt and Aſhes*, Gen. 18. 25, 27. Indeed, how can vile and duſty Man vaunt before God when the Angels, far more excellent Creatures, cannot ſtand before him, but with a vail on their Faces? How little a Thing is Man in regard of all the Earth? How mean a thing is the Earth in regard of the vaſter Heavens? How poor a thing is the whole World in Compariſon of God? How pitiful a thing is Man, if compar'd with ſo excellent a Majeſty? There is as great a diſtance between God and Man, as between Being and not Being, and the more Man conſiders the Divine Royalty, the more diſ-eſteem he will have of himſelf, it would make him ſtoop and diſrobe himſelf, and fall low before the Throne of the King of Kings, throwing down before his Throne, *any Crown* he glories in, *Rev*, 4. 10.

1. *In regard of Authority*. How unreaſonable is Pride in the preſence of Majeſty? How fooliſh is it for a Countrey Juſtice of Peace, to think himſelf as great as his Prince that Commiſſion'd him? How unreaſonable is Pride in the preſence of the greateſt Soveraignty? What is Humane Greatneſs before Divine? The Stars diſcover no Light when the Sun appears, but in an humble Poſture withdraw in their leſſer Beams, to give the ſole Glory of enlightning the World to the Sun, who is as it were the Soveraign of thoſe Stars, and imparts a Light unto them. The greateſt Prince is infinitely leſs, if compar'd with God, than the meaneſt Scullion in his Kitchin can be before him. As the Wiſdom, Goodneſs, and Holineſs of Man is a meer Mote, compared to the Goodneſs and Holineſs of God, ſo is the Authority of Man a meer Trifle in regard of the Soveraignty of God. And who but a ſimple Child would be proud of a Mote, or Trifle? Let Man be as great as he can, and command others, he is ſtill a ſubject to one greater than himſelf. Pride would then vaniſh like Smoak at the ſerious Conſideration of this Soveraignty.

One of the Kings of this Country did very handſomely ſhame the flattery of his Courtiers that cried him up as Lord of Sea and Land, by ordering his Chair to be ſet on the Sand of the Sea-ſhore, when the Tide was coming in, and commanding the Waters not to touch his Feet, which when they did without any regard to his Authority, he took occaſion thereby to put his Flatterers out of Countenance, and inſtruct himſelf in a leſſon of Humility; *See*, ſaith he, *how I rule all things, when ſo mean a Thing as the Water will not obey me.* 'Tis a ridiculous Pride that the *Turk* and *Perſian* diſcover in their ſwelling Titles. What poor Soveraigns are they, that cannot command a Cloud, give out an effectual Order for a drop of Rain, in a Time of drought, or cauſe the Bottles of Heaven, to turn their Mouth another way in a time of too much moiſture. Yet their own Prerogatives are ſo much in their Minds, that they juſtle out all Thoughts of the Supream Prerogative of God, and give thereby occaſion to frequent Rebellions againſt him.

2. *In regard of Propriety*. And this Doctrine is no leſs an abatement of Pride in the higheſt, as well as in the meaneſt, it lowers Pride in Point of *Propriety*, as well as in Point of *Authority*. * Is any proud of his Poſſeſſions, how many Lords of thoſe Poſſeſſions have gone before you? How many are to follow you? Your Dominion laſts but for a ſhort time, too ſhort, to be a cauſe of any Pride and Glory in it. God by a Soveraign Power can take you from them, or them from you, when he pleaſeth. The Traveller refreſheth himſelf in the heat of Summer under a ſhady Tree; how many have done ſo before him the ſame Day, he knows not, and how many will have the Benefit after, before Night comes, he is as much ignorant of; he and the other that went before him, and follow after him, uſe it for their Refreſhment, but none of them can ſay, they are the Lords of it. The Property is inveſted in ſome other Perſon, whom perhaps they know not; the Propriety of all you have, is in God, not truly in your ſelves. Doth not that Man deſerve ſcorn from you, who will Play the proud Fool in Gay Cloaths and Attire, which are known to be none of his own, but borrowed. Is it not the ſame Caſe with every proud Man, though he hath a Property in his Goods by the Law of the Land? Is any Thing you have your own truly? Is it not Lent you by the great Lord? Is it not the ſame Vanity in any of you, to be Proud of what you have as Gods Loan to you, as for ſuch a one to be Proud of what he hath borrowed of Man. And do you not make your ſelves as ridiculous to Angels, and good Men, who know, that though it is yours in Oppoſition to Man, yet it is *not yours* in Oppoſition to God, they are granted you only for your Uſe, as the *Collar of Eſſes and Sword*, and other Enſigns of the chief Magiſtrate in the City, paſs through many Hands in regard of the uſe of them, but the Propriety remains in the Community and Body of the City. Or as the Silver-plate of a Perſon that invites you to a Feaſt, is for your Uſe during the time of the Invitation. What ground is there, to be proud of thoſe Things, you are not the abſolute Lords and Proprietors of, but only have the uſe of them granted to you, during the Pleaſure of the Soveraign of the World?

* *Reynard de Deo*, p. 766.

2. *Praiſe and Thankfulneſs reſults from this Doctrine of the Soveraignty of God.*

1. *He is to be praiſed for his Royalty*, Pſalm 145. 1. *I will extol thee my God, Oh King.* The *Pſalmiſt* calls upon Men five *Times*, to ſing Praiſe to him as the King of all the Earth. *Pſalm* 47. 6, 7. *Sing Praiſes to God, ſing Praiſes, ſing Praiſes to our King,*

King, ſing Praiſes: For God is the King of all the Earth, ſing ye Praiſes with underſtanding. All Creatures even the inanimate ones are called upon to Praiſe him, becauſe of the Excellency of his Name and the Supremacy of his Glory in the 148*th Pſalm* throughout, and *ver.* 13. That *Soveraign* Power that gave us Hearts and Tongues, deſerves to have them employ'd in his Praiſes, eſpecially ſince he hath by the ſame Hand, given us ſo great Matter for it. As he is a *Soveraign* we owe him thankfulneſs, he doth not deal with us in a way of abſolute Dominion, he might then have annihilated us: Since he hath as full a Dominion to reduce us to nothing, as to bring us out of nothing. Conſider the abſoluteneſs of his *Soveraignty* in it ſelf, and you muſt needs acknowledge, that he might have multiply'd Precepts, enjoyned us the obſervance of more than he hath done, he might have made our tedder much ſhorter, he might exact Obedience, and promiſe no Reward for it; he might daſh us againſt the Walls, as a Potter doth his Veſſel, and no Man have any juſt Reaſon to ſay, What doſt thou? Or why doſt thou uſe me ſo? A greater Right is in him to uſe us in ſuch a Manner, as we do ſenſible, as well as inſenſible Things. And if you conſider his Dominion, as it is capable to be exerciſed in a way of unqueſtionable Juſtice, and ſubmitted to the Reaſon and Judgments of Creatures, he might have dealt with us in a ſmarter way, than he hath hitherto done; inſtead of *one* Affliction we might have had a *thouſand.* He might have ſhut his own Hands from pouring out any good upon us, and ordered innumerable ſcourges to be prepared for us; but he deals not with us according to the rights of his Dominion. He doth not oppreſs us by the greatneſs of his Majeſty; he enters into Covenant with us, and allures us by the Cords of a Man, and ſhews himſelf as much a merciful as an abſolute *Soveraign.*

2. *As he is a Proprietor we owe him thankfulneſs.* He is at his own Choice, whether he will beſtow upon us any Bleſſings or no, the more value therefore his Benefits deſerve from us, and the Donor the more ſincere returns. If we have any Thing from the Creature to ſerve our turn, 'tis by the Order of the chief Proprietor. He is the Spring of Honour, and the Fountain of Supplies; all Creatures are but as the Conduit-pipes in a great City, which ſerve ſeveral Houſes with Water, but from the great Spring. All Things are conveyed originally from his own Hand, and are diſpenſed from his Exchequer. If this great *Soveraign* did not order them, you would have no more ſupplies from a Creature, than you could have nouriſhment from a Chip. 'Tis the Divine Will in every thing that doth us good; every favour from Creatures is but a ſmile from God, an evidence of his Royalty to move us to pay a reſpect to him as the great Lord. Some *Heathens* had ſo much reſpect for God, as to conclude that his Will and not their own Prudence, was the chief Conductor of their Affairs. His Goodneſs to us calls for our thankfulneſs, but his Soveraignty calls for a higher Elevation of it; a ſmile from a Prince is more valued, and thought worthy of more gratitude, than a preſent from a Peaſant. A ſmall gift from a great Perſon is more gratefully to be received, than a larger from an Inferiour Perſon. The Condeſcenſion of Royalty magnifies the Gift. What is *Man*, that *thou* ſo great a Majeſty, *art mindful of him*, to beſtow this or that favour upon him, is but a due Reflection upon every Bleſſing we receive? Upon every freſh Bleſſing we ſhould acknowledge the Donor, and true Proprietor, and give him the Honour of his Dominion. His Property ought to be thankfully own'd in every thing we are capable of Conſecrating to him. As *David* after the Liberal Collection he had made for the Building of the Temple, owns in his Dedication of it to that uſe the Propriety of God, 1 *Chron.* 29. 14. *Who am I? And what is my People, that we ſhould be able to offer ſo willingly after this ſort? For all Things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.* It was but a return of God's own to him, as the Waters of the River are no other than the return to the Sea, of what was taken from it.

Praiſe and Thankfulneſs is a Rent due from all Mankind, and from every Creature to the great Landlord, ſince all are Tenants, and hold by him at his Will. *Every Creature in Heaven and Earth, under the Earth, and in the Sea,* were heard by *John* to aſcribe *Bleſſing, Honour, Glory, and Power to him that ſits on the Throne,* Rev. 5. 13. We are as much bound to the Soveraignty of God for his Preſervation of us; as for his Creation of us. We are no leſs oblig'd to him, that preſerves our Beings; when expoſed to dangers, than we are for beſtowing a Being upon us, when we were not capable of danger. Thankfulneſs is due to this Soveraign for publick Concerns; hath he not preſerved the *Ship* of his Church in the midſt of whiſtling Winds, and roaring Waves, in the midſt of the Combats of Men and Devils, and reſcued it often, when it hath been near Ship-wrackt?

3. How ſhould we be induc'd from hence *to promote the Honour of this Soveraign?* We ſhould advance him as a Supream, and all our Actions ſhould concur in his Honour. We ſhould return to his Glory, what we have receiv'd from his Soveraignty, and enjoy by his Mercy: He that is the Superiour of all, ought to be the end of all. This is the Harmony of the Creation, that which is of an Inferiour Nature, is order'd to the Service of that which is of a more excellent Nature; thus Water and Earth, that have a lower Being, are employ'd for the Honour and Beauty of the Plants of the Earth, who are more excellent in having a Principle of a growing Life; theſe Plants are again ſubſervient to the Beaſts and Birds, which exceed them in a Principle of Senſe, which the others want; thoſe Beaſts and Birds are order'd for the good of Man, who is ſuperiour to them in a Principle of Reaſon, and is inveſted with a Dominion over them; Man having God for his Superiour, ought as much to ſerve the Glory of God, as other things are deſign'd to be uſeful to Man. Other Governments are intended for the good of the Community, the chief End is not the good of the Governours themſelves; but God being every way Soveraign, the Soveraign Being, giving Being to all things, the Soveraign Ruler, giving Order and Preſervation to all Things, is alſo the End of all Things, to whoſe Glory and Honour all Things, all Creatures are to be ſubſervient, *Rom.* 11. 36. *For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, to whom be Glory for ever. Of* him as the efficient Cauſe, *through* him as the preſerving Cauſe, *to* him as the final Cauſe; all our Actions and Thoughts ought to be addreſt to his Glory, our whole Beings ought to be conſecrated to his Honour, though we ſhould have no Reward, but the Honour of having been ſubſervient to the end of our Creation; ſo much doth the Excellency and Majeſty of God, infinitely elevated above us, challenge of us. Subjects uſe to value the Safety, Honour, and Satisfaction of a good Prince above their own; *David* is accounted worth 10000 of the People, and ſome of his Courtiers thought themſelves oblig'd to venture their Lives for his Satisfaction in ſo mean a Thing, as a little Water from the Well of *Bethlehem.*

Doth not ſo great, ſo good a Soveraign as God, deſerve the ſame Affection from us? *Do we ſwear,* ſaith a *Heathen,* * *to prefer none before Cæſar, and have we not greater reaſon to prefer none before God?* 'Tis a Juſtice due from us to God, to maintain his Glory, as it is a Juſtice to preſerve the Right and Property of another. As God would lay aſide his Deity, if He did deny Himſelf, ſo a Creature acts irregularly, and out of the Rank of a Creature, if it doth not deny it ſelf for God. He that makes himſelf his own end, makes himſelf his own Soveraign. To Napkin up a Gift He hath beſtow'd upon us, or to employ what we poſſeſs, ſolely to our own glory, to uſe any thing barely for our ſelves, without reſpect to God, is to apply it to a wrong uſe, and to injure God in his Propriety, and the end of his Donation. What we have, ought to be us'd for the Honour of God; He retains the Dominion and Lordſhip, though He grants us the uſe; We are but Stewards, not Proprietors, in regard of God who expects an account from us, how we have employ'd his Goods to his Honour. The Kingdom of God is to be advanced by us, we are to pray that his *Kingdom may come*, we are to endeavour that his Kingdom may come, that is, that God may be known to be the chief Soveraign, that his Dominion, which was obſcur'd by *Adam*'s fall, may be more manifeſted, that his Subjects which are ſuppreſt in the World, may be ſupported, his Laws which are violated by the Rebellions of Men, may be more obeyed, and his Enemies may be fully ſubdued by his Final Judgment, the laſt Evidence of his Dominion in this State of the World, that the Empire of Sin and the Devil may be aboliſh'd, and the Kingdom of God be perfected, that none may Rule but the great and rightful Soveraign. Thus while we endeavour to advance the Honour of his Throne, we ſhall not want an Honour to our ſelves. He is too gracious a Soveraign to neglect them that are mindful of his glory; *Thoſe that honour Him, He will honour*, 1 Sam. 2. 30.

* *Arrian in Epictet.*

4. *Fear and reverence of God in Himſelf, and in his Actions*, is a Duty incumbent on us from this Doctrine. *Jer.* 10. 7. *Who would not fear thee, O King of Nations!* The Ingratitude of the World is taxt in not reverencing God as a great King, who had given ſo many Marks of his Royal Government among them. The Prophet wonders there was no fear of ſo great a King in the World; ſince *among all the wiſe Men of the Nations, and among all their Kings, there is none like unto this*; No more Reverence of Him, ſince none Ruled ſo wiſely, nor any Ruled ſo Graciouſly. The Dominion of God is one of the firſt Sparks that gives fire to Religion and Worſhip, conſider'd with the Goodneſs of this Soveraign. *Pſal.* 22. 27, 28. *All the Nations ſhall worſhip before Thee, for the Kingdom is the Lords, and He is Governour among the Nations. Epicurus*, who thought God careleſs of Humane Affairs, leaving them at hap-hazard to the Conduct of Men's Wiſdom, and Mutability of Fortune, yet acknowledged, That God ought to be Worſhipped by Man for the Excellency of his Nature, and Greatneſs of his Majeſty. How ſhould we Reverence that God, that hath a Throne encompaſs'd with ſuch Glorious Creatures as Angels, whoſe Faces we are not able to behold, though ſhadow'd in aſſum'd Bodies! How ſhould we fear the Lord of Hoſts, that hath ſo many Armies at his Command in the Heavens above, and in the Earth below, whom He can diſpoſe to the exact Obedience of his Will! How ſhould Men be afraid to cenſure any of his Actions, to ſit Judge of their Judge, and call Him to an account to their Bar! How ſhould ſuch an Earth-worm, a mean Animal as Man, be afraid to ſpeak Irreverently of ſo great a King among his Pots and Strumpets! Not to Fear Him, not to Reverence Him, is to pull his Throne from under Him, and make Him of a lower Authority than our ſelves, or any Creature that we can Reverence more.

5. *Prayer to God, and Truſt in him*, is inferr'd from his Soveraignty. If He be the Supream Soveraign, holding Heaven and Earth in his Hand, diſpoſing all things here below, not committing every thing to the Influence of the Stars, or the Humours of Men: we ought then to apply our ſelves to him in every Caſe, implore the Exerciſe of his Authority, we hereby own his peculiar Right over all things and perſons. He only is the Supream Head in all Cauſes, and over all Perſons; *Thine is the Kingdom* concludes the Lord's Prayer, both as a Motive to Pray, *Mat.* 6. 13. and a ground to expect what we want. He that Believes not God's Government, will think it needleſs to call upon Him, will expect no Refuge under him in a Strait, but make ſome Creature-Reed his Support. If we do not ſeek to Him, but rely upon the Dominion we have over our own Poſſeſſions, or upon the Authority of any thing elſe, we diſown his Supremacy and Dominion over all things, we have as good an Opinion of our ſelves, or of ſome Creature, as we ought to have of God. We think our ſelves, or ſome natural Cauſe we ſeek to, or depend upon, as much Soveraigns as He, and that all things which concern us, are as much at the diſpoſe of an Inferior, as of the Great Lord. 'Tis indeed to make a God of our ſelves, or of the Creature: When we ſeek to Him upon all occaſions, we own his Divine Eminency, we acknowledge that it is by Him Men's Hearts are order'd, the World govern'd, all things diſpos'd; And God that is jealous of his Glory, is beſt pleaſed with any Duty in the Creature, that doth acknowledge and deſire the Glorification of it, which Prayer and Dependance on him doth in a ſpecial manner; Deſiring the exerciſe of his Authority, and the Preſervation of it in ordering the Affairs of the World.

6. *Obedience* naturally reſults from this Doctrine. As his Juſtice requires Fear, his Goodneſs Thankfulneſs, his Faithfulneſs Truſt, his Truth Belief, ſo his Soveraignty in the nature of it demands Obedience. As it is moſt fit He ſhould Rule in regard of his Excellency; ſo it is moſt fit we ſhould obey Him in regard of his Authority. He is our Lord, and we his Subjects, He is our Maſter, and we his Servants; 'tis righteous we ſhould obſerve Him, and conform to his Will. He is every thing that ſpeaks an Authority to command us, and that can Challenge an Humility in us to Obey. And that is the trueſt Doctrine, that ſubjects us moſt to God, ſo he is the trueſt Chriſtian, that doth in his practice moſt acknowledge this Subjection. And as Soveraignty is the firſt Notion a Creature can have of God, ſo Obedience is the firſt and chief thing Conſcience reflects upon the Creature. Man holds all of God; and therefore owes all the Operations capable to be produced by thoſe Faculties, to that Soveraign Power that endowed him with them. Man had no Being but from Him, he hath no Motion without Him; he ſhould therefore have no Being but for Him, and no Motion but according to Him. To call him Lord, and not to act in Subjection to Him, is to mock, and put a ſcorn upon Him. *Luke* 6. 46. *Why call you me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I ſay?* 'Tis like the Crucifying Chriſt under the Title of a King. 'Tis not by Profeſſions, but by obſervance of the Laws of a Prince, that we manifeſt a due reſpect to Him. By

that

that we reverence that Authority, that enacted them, and the Prudence that fram'd them.

This Doctrine affords us *Motives* to Obey, and directs us to the *Manner* of Obedience.

1. *Motives to Obey,*

1. *'Tis Comely and Orderly.* Is it not a more becoming thing to be ruled by the Will of our Soveraign, than by that of our Lusts? To observe a wise and gracious Authority, than to set up inordinate Appetites in the room of his Law? Would not all Men account it a disorder to be abominated, to see a Slave or Vassal controul the just orders of his Lord, and endeavour to subject his Masters Will to his own? Much more to expect, God should serve our Humour, rather than we be regulated by his Will? 'Tis more orderly that Subjects should obey their Governours, than Governours their Subjects; that Passion should obey Reason, than Reason obey Passion. When good Governours are to conform to Subjects, and Reason vail to Passion, 'tis monstrous; the one disturbs the order of a Community, and the other defaceth the beauty of the Soul. Is it a comely thing for God to stoop to our meanness, or for us to stoop to his greatness?

2. In regard of the Divine Soveraignty, *'tis both honourable and advantagious to obey God.* 'Tis indeed the glory of a Superiour, to be obey'd by his Inferiour; but where the Soveraign is of transcendent Excellency and Dignity, 'tis an Honour to a mean Person, to be under his immediate Commands, and enroll'ed in his Service. 'Tis more Honour to be God's Subject, than to be the greatest worldly Monarch; his *very Service is an Empire,* and disobedience to him is a slavery. * 'Tis a part of his Soveraignty to Reward any service done to him. Other Lords may be willing to recompence the Service of their Subjects, but are often rendred unable; but nothing can stand in the way of God to hinder your Reward, if nothing stand in your way to hinder your Obedience, *Lev.* 18. 5. *If you keep my Statutes, you shall live in them, I am the Lord.* Is there any thing in the World can recompence you for Rebellion against God, and Obedience to a Lust? *Saul* cools the Hearts of his Servants from running after *David*, by *David*'s inability to give them Fields and Vineyards, 1 *Sam.* 22. 7. *Will the Son of Jesse give every one of you Fields, and Vineyards, and make you Captains of thousands, and Captains of hundreds, that you have conspired against me?* But God hath a Dominion to requite, as well as an Authority to command your Obedience. He is a great *Soveraign*, to bear you out in your Observance of his Precepts against all Reproaches and Violences of Men, and at last to Crown you with Eternal Honour. If he should neglect vindicating one time or other your Loyalty to him, he will neglect the maintaining and vindicating his own Soveraignty and Greatness.

* *Servire Devegnaveſt.*

3. *God in all his Dispensation to Man was careful to preserve the rights of his Soveraignty, in exacting Obedience of his Creature.* The *second* thing he manifested his Soveraignty in, was that of a Lawgiver to *Adam*, after that of a *Proprietor* in giving him the Possession of the Garden; one follow'd immediately the other. *Gen.* 2. 15, 16. *The Lord God took the Man, and put him into the Garden of* Eden, *to dress it, and the Lord God Commanded the Man, saying, of every Tree of the Garden thou mayst freely eat, but of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil thou shalt not eat of it*, &c. Nothing was to be enjoyed by Man but upon the Condition of Obedience to his Lord; and it is observ'd that in the Description of the Creation, God is not call'd *Lord* till the finishing of the Creation, and particularly in the forming of Man, *Gen.* 2. 7. *And the Lord God form'd Man.* Though he was Lord of all Creatures, yet it was in Man he would have his Soveraignty particularly manifested, and by Man have his Authority specially acknowledged. The Law is prefac'd with this Title, *I am the Lord thy God*, Exod. 20. 2. Authority in *Lord*, sweetness in God, the one to enjoyn, the other to allure Obedience; and God enforceth several of the Commands with the same Title. And as he begins many Precepts with it, so he concludes them with the same Title, *I am the Lord*, Lev. 19. 37. and in other Places.

In all his Communications of his Goodness to Man in ways of Blessing them, he stands upon the Preservation of the Rights of his Soveraignty, and manifests his Graciousness in favour of his Authority. *I am the Lord your God*, your God in all my Perfections for your Advantage, but yet your Soveraign for your Obedience. In all his Condescensions he will have the Rights of this untoucht and unviolated by us. When Christ would give the most pregnant instance of his condescending, and humble kindness, he urgeth his Authority, to ballast their Spirits from any presumptuous Eruptions because of his Humility. *John* 13. 13. *You call me Master and Lord, and you say well, for so I am.* He asserts his Authority, and presseth them to their Duty, when he had seem'd to lay it for the demeanour of a Servant, and had below the Dignity of a Master put on the Humility of a mean underling, to wash the *Disciples* Feet; all which was to oblige them to perform the command he then gave them. *Ver.* 14. in Obedience to his Authority, and Imitation of his *Example.*

4. *All Creatures obey him.* All Creatures punctually observe the Law he hath imprinted on their Nature, and in their several Capacities acknowledge him their Soveraign, they move according to the Inclinations he imprinted on them. The Sea contains its self in its bounds, and the Sun steps not out of his Sphear, the Stars march in their Order, *They continue this Day according to thy Ordinance, for all are thy Servants*, Psal. 119. 91. If he orders things contrary to their Primitive Nature, they obey him. When he speaks the Word, the devouring Fire becomes gentle, and toucheth not a Hair of the Children, he will preserve. The hunger-starv'd Lions suspend their ravenous Nature, when so good a Morsel as *Daniel* is set before them. And the Sun which had been in perpetual motion since its Creation, obeys the Writ of ease God sent it in *Joshua*'s time, and stand still. Shall insensible and sensible Creatures be punctual to his Orders, passively acknowledge his Authority? Shall Lions and Serpents obey God in their Places, and shall not Man, who can by Reason argue out the Soveraignty of God, and understand the Sence and Goodness of his Laws, and actively obey God with that Will he hath enricht him with above other Creatures? Yet the Truth is, every sensitive, yea every sensless Creature obeys God more than his rational, more than his Gracious Creatures in this World. The rational Creatures since the fall have a prevailing Principle of Corruption. Let the Obedience of other Creatures incite us more to imitate them, and shame our remissness in not acknowledging the Dominion of God, in the just way he prescribes us to walk in.

Well then, Let us not pretend to own God as our Lord, and yet act the part of Rebels. Let us give him the Reverence, and pay him that Obedience,

ence, which of Right belongs to ſo great a King. Whatſoever Hé ſpeaks as a true God, ought to be Believ'd; whatſoever he orders as a Soveraign God, ought to be obey'd. Let not God have leſs than Man, nor Man have more than God. 'Tis a common Principle writ upon the Reaſon of all Men, that Reſpect and Obſervance is a due to the Majeſty of a Man, much more to the Majeſty of God as a Law-giver.

2. As this Doctrine preſents us motives, ſo it *directs us to the manner and kind of our Obedience to God.*

1. *It muſt be with a reſpect to his Authority.* As the Veracity of God is the formal Object of Faith, and the Reaſon why we believe the things he hath reveal'd; ſo the Authority of God is the formal object of our obedience, or the reaſon why we obſerve the things he hath commanded. There muſt be a reſpect to his Will as the Rule, as well as to his Glory as the end. 'Tis not formally obedience that is not done with a regard to the Order of God, though it may be materially obedience, as it anſwers the matter of the Precept. As when Men will abſtain from exceſs and rioting, becauſe it is ruinous to their health, not becauſe it is forbidden by the great Law-giver; This is to pay a reſpect to our own conveniency and intereſt, not a conſcientious obſervance to God; a regard to our health, not to our Soveraign, a kindneſs to our ſelves, not a juſtice due to the Rights of God. There muſt not only be a conſideration of the matter of the Precept as convenient, but a conſideration of the Authority of the Law-giver as Obligatory. *Thus ſaith the Lord*, Uſhers in every Order of his, directing our eye to the Authority enacting it. *Jeroboam* did God's Will of Propheſie in taking the Kingdom of *Iſrael*; and the Devils may be ſubſervient in God's Will of Providence; but neither of them are put upon the account of obedience, becauſe not done intentionally with any Conſcience of the Soveraignty of God. God will have this owned by a regular reſpect to it; So much he inſiſts upon the honour of it, that the Sacrifice of Chriſt, God-man was moſt agreeable to him, not only as it was great and admirable in it ſelf, but alſo for that raviſhing obedience to his Will: which was the Life and Glory of his Sacrifice, whereby the Juſtice of God was not only owned in the Offering, but the Soveraignty of God owned in the Obedience. *Phil.* 2. 8. *He became obedient unto death, wherefore God highly exalted him.*

2. *It muſt be the beſt and moſt exact Obedience.* The moſt Soveraign Authority calls for the exacteſt and loweſt obſervance; the higheſt Lord for the deepeſt Homage: being he is a *great King*, he muſt have the *beſt in our flock*, *Mal.* 1. Obedience is due to God as King, and the choiceſt Obedience is due to him, as he is the moſt excellent King. The more Majeſtick and Noble any Man is, the more careful we are in our manner of Service to him. We are bound to obey God, not only under the Title of a Lord in regard of Juriſdiction and Political Subjection, but under the Title of a true Lord and Maſter in regard of Propriety: ſince we are not only his ſubjects but ſervants, the exacteſt obedience is due to God, *Jure ſervitutis*, Luke 17. 10. *When you have done all, ſay you are unprofitable ſervants*, becauſe we can do nothing which we owe not to God.

3. *Sincere and inward Obedience.* As it is a part of his Soveraignty to preſcribe Laws not only to Man in his outward State, but to his Conſcience; ſo it is a part of our ſubjection to receive his Laws into our Will and Heart. The Authority of his Laws exceeds Human Laws in the extent and riches of them, and our acknowledgment of his Soveraignty cannot be right, but by ſubjecting the faculties of our Soul to the Law-giver of our Souls; We elſe acknowledge his Authority to be as limited as the Empire of Man. When his Will not only ſways the outward action, but the inward motion; 'tis a giving him the honour of his high Throne above the Throne of Mortals. The Right of God ought to be preſerved undamaged in affection, as well as action.

4. It muſt be *ſole Obedience.* We are order'd to ſerve him only, *Mat.* 4. 10. *Him only ſhalt thou ſerve*; as the only Supream Lord, as being the higheſt Soveraign, it is fit he ſhould have the higheſt Obedience before all Earthly Soveraigns, and as being unparallell'd by any among all the Nations, ſo none muſt have an Obedience equal to him. When God commands, if the higheſt Power on Earth countermands it, the Precept of God muſt be preferred before the Countermand of the Creature. *Acts* 4. 18, 19. *Whether it be right in the ſight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.* We muſt never give place to the Authority of all the Monarchs in the World, to the prejudice of that Obedience we owe to the Supream Monarch of Heaven and Earth: This would be, to place the Throne of God at the foot-ſtool of Man, and debaſe him below the rank of a Creature. Loyalty to Man can never recompence for the miſchief accruing from diſloyalty to God. All the Obedience we are to give to Man, is to be paid in Obedience to God, and with an Eye to his Precept: Therefore what Servants do for their Maſters, they muſt do *as to the Lord*, Col. 3. 23. and Children are to obey their Parents *in the Lord*, Eph. 6. 1. The Authority of God is to be eyed in all the Services payable to Man; proper and true Obedience hath God ſolely for its principal and primary Object; all Obedience to Man that interferes with that, and would juſtle out Obedience to God, is to be refus'd. What Obedience is due to Man, is but render'd as a part of Obedience to God, and a ſtooping of his Authority.

5. It muſt be *Univerſal Obedience.* The Laws of Man are not to be Univerſally obey'd; ſome may be oppreſſing and unjuſt; no Man hath Authority to make an unjuſt Law, and no ſubject is bound to obey an unrighteous Law; but God being a Righteous Soveraign, there is not one of his Laws but doth neceſſarily oblige us to Obedience. Whatſoever this Supream Power declares to be his Will, it muſt be our Care to obſerve; Man being his Creature, is bound to be ſubject to whatſoever Laws he doth impoſe, to the meaneſt as well as to the greateſt: They having equally a ſtamp of Divine Authority upon them. We are not to pick and chooſe among his Precepts: This is to pare away part of his Authority, and render him a half-Soveraign.

It muſt be Univerſal in all Places. An *Engliſhman* in *Spain* is bound to obey the Laws of that Countrey, wherein he reſides; and ſo not reſponſible there for the Breach of the Laws of his Native Country. In the ſame Condition is a *Spaniard* in *England*. But the Laws of God are to be obeyed in every Part of the World: Whereſoever Divine Providence doth caſt us, it caſts us not out of the Places where he commands, nor out of the Compaſs of his own Empire. He is Lord of the World, and his Laws oblige in every part of the World, they were order'd for a World, and not for a particular Climate and Territory.

6. It

It must be *Indisputable Obedience.* All Authority requires readiness in the Subject; the *Centurion* had it from his *Soldiers*, they *went* when he order'd them, and *came* when he beckned to them, *Mat.* 8. 9. 'Tis more fit God should have the same promptness from his Subjects. We are to obey his Orders, though our purblind Understanding may not apprehend the reason of every one of them. 'Tis without dispute that He is Soveraign, and therefore 'tis without dispute, that we are bound to Obey Him, without controuling his Conduct. A Master will not bear it from his Slave, why should God from his Creature? Though God admits his Creatures sometimes to treat with Him about the Equality of his Justice, and also about the Reason of some Commands, yet sometimes He gives no other Reason but his own Soveraignty, *Thus saith the Lord*, to correct the malepertness of Men, and exact from them an entire Obedience to this unlimitted and absolute Authority. When *Abraham* was commanded *to offer Isaac*, God acquaints him not with the reason of his demand till after, *Gen.* 22. 2. 12. nor did *Abraham* enter any demurr to the order, or expostulate with God, either from his own natural affection to *Isaac*, the hardness of the Command, it being as it were a ripping up his own Bowels, nor the quickness of it after he had been a Child of the Promise, and a Divine Donation above the course of Nature. Nor did *Paul* conferr with Flesh and Blood, and study Arguments from Nature and Interest, to oppose the Divine Command, when he was sent upon his *Apostolical* Employment, *Gal.* 1. 16. The more indisputable his Right is to Command, the stronger is our obligation to obey, without questioning the reason of his Orders.

7. It must be *joyful Obedience.* Men are commonly more cheerful in their Obedience to a great Prince, than to a mean Peasant; because the quality of the Master renders the Service more honourable. 'Tis a discredit to a Prince's Government, when his Subjects obey him with discontent and dejectedness, as though he were a hard Master, and his Laws Tyrannical and Unrighteous. When we pay Obedience but with a dull and feeble pace, and a sour and sad Temper, we blemish our great Soveraign, imply his Commands to be grievous, void of that peace and pleasure He proclaims to be in them: That He deserves no respect from us, if we obey Him because we must, and not because we will. Involuntary Obedience deserves not the Title; 'tis rather Submission than Obedience, an act of the Body, not of the Mind; a Mite of Obedience with chearfulness, is better than a Talent without it. In the little *Paul* did, he comforts himself in this, that with the *mind he serv'd the law of God*, Rom. 7. 25. *The Testimonies of God were David's delight*, Psal. 119. 24. Our Understandings must take pleasure in knowing Him, our Wills delightfully embrace Him, and our Actions be chearfully squar'd to Him. This credits the Soveraignty of God in the World, makes others believe Him to be a gracious Lord, and move them to have some Veneration for his Authority.

8. It must be *perpetual Obedience.* As Man is a Subject as soon as he is a Creature, so he is a Subject as long as he is a Creature. God's Soveraignty is of perpetual Duration, as long as He is God; Man's Obedience must be perpetual, while he is a Man. God cannot part with his Soveraignty, and a Creature cannot be exempted from Subjection; we must not only *serve* Him, but *cleave to Him*, Deut. 13. 4. Obedience is continued in Heaven, his Throne is Established in Heaven, it must be bow'd to in Heaven, as well as in Earth. The Angels continually fulfil his pleasure.

9. Exhortation; *Patience is a duty flowing from this Doctrine.* In all strokes upon our selves, or thick showers upon the Church, *The Lord reigns*, is a consideration to prevent muttering against Him, and make us quietly wait to see what the Issue of his Divine Pleasure will be. 'Tis too great an Insolence against the Divine Majesty, to censure what He acts, or quarrel with Him for what He inflicts. Proud Clay doth very unbecomingly swell against an Infinite Superior. If God be our Soveraign, we ought to Subscribe to his Afflicting Will without Debates, as well as to his Liberal Will with affectionate Applauses. We should be as full of Patience under his sharper, as of Praise under his more grateful Dispensations, and be without reluctancy against his Penal, as well as his Preceptive Pleasure. 'Tis God's part to inflict, and the Creatures part to submit.

This Doctrine affords us *Motives*, and shews us the *Nature of Patience.*

1. *Motives to it.*

1. *God being Soveraign, hath an absolute right to dispose of all things.* His Title to our Persons and Possessions is upon this account stronger than our own can be; we have as much reason to be angry with our selves, when we assert our worldly right against others, as to be angry with God for asserting the right of his Dominion over us. Why should we enter a charge against Him, because He hath not temper'd us so strong in our Bodies, drawn us with as fair Colours, embellish'd our Spirits with as rich Gifts as others? Is He not the Soveraign of his own Goods, to impart what, and in what measure He pleaseth? Would you be content your Servant should check your pleasure, in dispensing your own Favours? 'Tis an unreasonable thing, not to leave God to the exercise of his own Dominion. Though *Job* were a Pattern of Patience, yet he had deep Tinctures of Impatience, he often complains of God's usage of him, as too hard, and stands much upon his own Integrity; but when God comes in the latter *Chapters* of that Book, to justifie his carriage towards him, He chargeth him not as a Criminal, but considers him only as his Vassal. He might have found flaws enough in *Job*'s carriage, and corruption enough in *Job*'s nature, to clear the equity of his proceeding as a Judge, but He useth no other *medium* to convince him, but the greatness of his Majesty, the unlimitedness of his Soveraignty, which so appales the good Man, that he puts his finger on his mouth, and stands mute with a *self-abhorrency* before him as a Soveraign, rather than as a Judge. When He doth pinch us, and deprive us of what we most affect, his right to do it should silence our Lips, and calm our Hearts from any boisterous uproars against Him.

2. *The Property of all still remains in God, since He is Soveraign.* He did not devest Himself of the Property, when He granted us the Use. The Earth is His, not ours, *the fulness of the Earth is* His, 'tis not ours, the fulness any of us have, as well as the fulness others have. After He had given the *Israelites* Corn, Wine and Oil, He calls them all *His*, and emphatically adds *My* to every one of them, *Hos.* 2. 9. His Right is universal over every Mite we have, and perpetual too. He may therefore take from us what He please. He did but deposite in our hands for a while the benefits we enjoy, either Children, Friends, Estate or Lives; He did not make a total conveyance of them, and alienate

alienate his own property, when He put them into our Hands; we can ſhew no Patent for them, wherein the full right is paſt over to us, to hold them againſt his will and pleaſure, and implead Him if He offer to reaſſume them. He reſerved a Power to diſpoſſeſs us upon a Forfeiture, as He is the Lord and Governour. Did any of us yet anſwer the condition of his grant? It was his Indulgence to allow them ſo long. There is reaſon to ſubmit to Him, when He reaſſumes what He lent us, and rather to thank Him, that He lent it ſo long, and did not ſeize upon it ſooner.

3. *Other things have more reaſon to complain of our Soveraignty over them, than we of God's exerciſe of his Soveraignty over us.* Do we not exerciſe an Authority over our Beaſts, as to ſtrike them when we pleaſe, and meerly for our pleaſure; and think we merit no reproof for it, becauſe they are our own, and of a nature inferiour to ours? And ſhall not God, who is Abſolute, do as much with us, who are more below Him, than the meaneſt Creatures are below us? They are Creatures as well as we, and we no more Creatures than they, they were fram'd by Omnipotence as well as we; there is no more difference between them and us in the notion of Creatures.

As there is no difference between the greateſt Monarch on Earth, and the meaneſt Beggar on the Dung-hill in the notion of a Man; the Beggar is a Man as well as the Monarch, and as much a Man; the difference conſiſts in the ſpecial Endowments we have above them, by the Bounty of their and our common Creator. We are leſs, if compared with God, than the worſt, meaneſt, moſt ſordid Creature can be, if compared with us. Hath not a Bird or a Hare (if they had a Capacity) more reaſon to complain of Mens Perſecuting them by their Hawks and their Dogs? but would their complaints appear reaſonable, ſince both were made for the uſe of Man, and Man doth but uſe the nature of the one, to attain a benefit by the other? Have we any reaſon to complain of God, if He lets looſe other Creatures, the devouring Hounds of the World, to bite and afflict us? We muſt not open our Lips againſt Him, nor let our Heart ſwell againſt his Scourge, ſince both they and we were made for his uſe, as well as other Creatures for ours. This is a reaſon to ſtifle all Complaints againſt God, but not to make us careleſs of preventing Afflictions, or emerging out of them by all juſt ways. The Hare hath a nature to ſhift for it ſelf by its winding and turning, and the Bird by its flight, and neither of them could be blam'd, if they were able, ſhould the one ſcratch out the Eyes of the Hounds, and the other ſacrifice the Hawk to its own fury.

4. *'Tis a folly not to ſubmit to Him.* Why ſhould we *ſtrive againſt Him*, ſince He is an unaccountable *Soveraign*, and *gives no account of any of his matters*, Job 33. 13. Who can diſanul the Judgment God gives? There is no appeal from the Supream Court; a higher Court can repeal, or null the ſentence of an Inferiour Court, but the Sentence of the Higheſt ſtands *irreverſible*, but by it ſelf, and its own Authority. 'Tis better to lower our Sails, than to grapple with one that can ſhoot us under Water. To ſubmit to that Soveraign whom we cannot ſubdue.

2. *It ſhews us the true nature of Patience in regard of God.* 'Tis a Submiſſion to God's Soveraignty. As the formal Object of Obedience is the Authority of God enacting the Law, ſo the formal Object of Patience is the Authority of God inflicting the Puniſhment. As his right of Commanding is to be eyed in the one, ſo his right of Puniſhing is to be conſidered in the other. This was *Eli*'s condition when he had receiv'd a Meſſage that might put Fleſh and Blood into a mutiny, the rending the *Prieſt-hood* from his Family, and the ruine of his Houſe, yet this conſideration, *'Tis the Lord*, calms him into ſubmiſſion, and a willing compliance with the Divine pleaſure, 1 Sam. 3. 18. *'Tis the Lord, let him do what ſeems good in his ſight.* *Job* was of the ſame ſtrain, *Job* 1. 21. *The Lord gives, and the Lord hath taken away, Bleſſed be the Name of the Lord.* He conſiders God as a Soveraign, who was not to be reproached, or have any thing uncomely uttered of Him for what He had done. To be Patient, becauſe we cannot avoid it, or reſiſt it, is a violent, not a *Loyal Patience*, but to ſubmit becauſe it is the Will of God to inflict: To be ſilent, becauſe the Soveraignty of God doth order it, is a Patience of a true Complexion. The other kind of Patience is no other than that of an Enemy, that will free himſelf as ſoon as he can, and by any way, though never ſo violent that offers it ſelf. This ſort of Patience is that of a Subject acknowledging the Supream Authority over him, and that he ought to be ordered by the Will, and to the Glory of God, more than by his own Will, and for his own eaſe. *I was dumb, I opened not my mouth*, Pſal. 39. 10. Not becauſe I could not help it; but *becauſe thou didſt it*, Thou who art my Soveraign Lord. The greatneſs of God claims an awful and inviolable reſpect from his Creatures, in what way ſoever He doth diſpoſe of them; this is due to Him, ſince his Kingdom ruleth over all, his Kingdom ſhould be acknowledged by all, and his Royal Authority ſubmitted to in all that He doth.

A DISCOURSE UPON GOD'S Patience.

NAHUM I. Verſe 3.

The Lord is ſlow to Anger, and great in Power, and will not at all acquit the Wicked: The Lord hath his way in the Whirlwind, and in the Storm, and the Clouds are the duſt of his Feet.

THE Subject of this Propheſie, is God's Sentence againſt *Nineveh*, the Head and Metropolis of the *Aſſyrian* Empire. A City famous for its ſtrength and thickneſs of its Walls, and the Multitude of its Towers for Defence againſt an Enemy. The Forces of this Empire did God uſe as a ſcourge againſt the *Iſraelites*, and by their Hands ruin'd *Samaria* the chief City of the Ten Tribes, and Tranſplanted them as Captives into another Country, 2 *Kings* 17. 5, 6. about ſix Years after *Hezekiah* came to the Crown of *Judah*, 2 *Kings* 18. *compared with the* 17 *Chap.* v. 6. In whoſe Time, or (as ſome think) later, *Nahum* utter'd this Propheſie. The Name *Nahum*, ſignifies Comforter, though the Matter of his Propheſie be dreadful to *Nineveh*, it was comfortable to the People of God: For a Promiſe is made, *Ver.* 7. *The Lord is good, a ſtrong hold in the Day of Trouble; and he knoweth them that truſt in him.* And an Encouragement to *Judah* to keep their ſolemn Feaſts, *ver.* 15. And alſo in *Chap.* 2. 3. with a Declaration of the Miſery of *Nineveh*, and the Deſtruction of it.

Obſerve,

I. *In all the Fears of Gods People, God will have a Comforter for them.* *Judah* might well be dejected with the Calamity of their Brethren, not knowing but it might be their own turn ſhortly after. They knew not where the Ambition of the *Aſſyrian* would ſtop, but God by his Prophets calms their Fears of their furious Neighbour, by predicting to them the Ruine of their fear'd Adverſary.

II. *The Deſtruction of the Churches Enemies is the Comfort of the Church.* By that God is glorified in his Juſtice, and the Church ſecur'd in its Worſhip.

III. *The Victories of Perſecutors, ſecure them not from being the Triumphs of others.* The *Aſſyrians*, that conquered and captiv'd *Iſrael*, were themſelves to be conquered and captiv'd by the *Medes*. The whole oppreſſing Empire is threatned with Deſtruction in the Ruine of their chief City; accordingly it was accompliſh'd, and the Empire extinguiſh'd by a greater Power. God burns the Rod when it hath done the Work he appointed it for; and the wiſp of Straw wherewith the Veſſels are ſcour'd is flung into the Fire, or upon the Dunghil.

Nahum begins his Propheſie Majeſtically, with a Deſcription of the Wrath and Fury of God, *Ver.* 2. *God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth, the Lord revengeth, and is furious, the Lord will take Vengeance on his Adverſaries, and reſerveth Wrath for his Enemies:* And therefore the whole of it is called, *Ver.* 1. *The burden of Nineveh*, as thoſe Propheſies are which are compoſed of Threatnings of Judgments, which lie as a mighty weight upon the Heads and Backs of Sinners.

God is Jealous.] Jealous of his Glory and Worſhip, and Jealous for his People and their Security. He cannot long bear the Oppreſſions of his People, and the Boaſts of his Enemies. He is jealous for himſelf, and is Jealous for you of *Judah*, who retain his Worſhip. He is not forgetful of thoſe that remember him, nor of the danger of thoſe that are deſirous to maintain his Honour in the World. In this firſt Expreſſion, the Prophet uſes the Covenant Name, *God*; the Covenant runs, *I am your God*, or *The Lord your God*, moſtly God without Lord, never *Lord* without God: And therefore his Jealouſie here is meant of the Care of his People, and the Relation that his Actions againſt his Enemies have to his Servants. He is a Lover of his own, and a Revenger on his Enemies.

The Lord revengeth, and is furious.] He now deſcribes God by a Name of *Soveraignty* and *Power*, when he deſcribes him in his Wrath and Fury, *and is Furious.* Heb. בַּעַל חֲמָה *Lord of hot Anger*; God will vindicate his own Glory, and have his right on his Enemies in a way of puniſhment, if they will not give it him in a way of Obedience. * 'Tis *three* Times repeated, to ſhew the certainty of the Judgment. And the Name of *Lord* added to every one, to intimate the Power wherewith the Judgment ſhould be executed. 'Tis not a Fatherly Correction of Children in a way of Mercy, but an offended Soveraigns Deſtruction of his Enemies in a way of Vengeance. There is an Anger of God with his own People, which hath more of Mercy than Wrath; in this his Rod is guided by his Bowels.

* *Ribera in loc.*

There is a Fury of God againſt his Enemies, where there is ſole Wrath without any Tincture of Mercy, when his Sword is all Edge, without any Balſom-drops upon it. Such a fury as *David* deprecates, *Pſalm* 6. 1. *O Lord rebuke me not in thy Anger, nor chaſten me in thy ſore diſpleaſure*; with a fury untempered with Grace, and inſupportable Wrath.

He reſerves Wrath for his Enemies.] He lays it up in his Treaſury, to be brought out, and expended in a due Seaſon. *Wrath* is ſupplied by our Tranſlators, and is not in the *Hebrew*. He reſerves, what? that which is too ſharp to be expreſt, too great to be conceiv'd. A Vengeance it is. And וְנוֹטֵר הוּא *He reſerves it*. He that hath an infinite Wrath, he reſerves it, that hath a Strength and Power to execute it.

VERSE 3.

The Lord is ſlow to Anger.] *Heb.* אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם *of broad Noſtrils*. The Anger of God is expreſt by this Word, which ſignifies *Noſtrils*. As *Job* 9. 13. *If God will not with-draw his Anger*, Heb. *his Noſtril*. And the Anger whereby the Wicked are conſum'd, is called the breath of Noſtrils, *Job* 4. 9. And when he is Angry, Smoak and Fire are ſaid to go out of his Noſtrils, 2 *Sam.* 2. 9. and in the 74th. *Pſalm* 1. *Why doth thy Anger ſmoak*, Heb. *Why do thy Noſtrils ſmoak*. So the rage of a Horſe when he is provok'd in Battle, is call'd the Glory of his Noſtrils, *Job* 39. 20. He breaths quick Fumes, and neighs with Fury.

And ſlowneſs to Anger is here expreſt by the Phraſe of *long* or *wide Noſtrils*: Becauſe in a vehement Anger the Blood boyling about the Heart, exhales Mens Spirits, which fume up, and break out in dilated Noſtrils. But where the Paſſages are ſtraiter, the Spirits have not ſo quick a vent; and therefore raiſe more Motions within. Or becauſe the wider the Noſtrils are, the more cool Air is drawn in to temper the heat of the Heart, where the angry Spirits are gather'd. And ſo the Paſſion is allay'd and ſooner calm'd. God ſpeaks of himſelf in Scripture often after the rate of Men: *Jeremy* prays, *Jer.* 15. 15. That God would not take him away in his *long-ſuffering*, Heb. *in the length of his Noſtrils*, i. e. Be not ſlow and backward in thy Anger againſt my Perſecutors, as to give them Time and Opportunity to deſtroy me. The Noſtrils, as well as other Members of a Humane Body, are aſcribed to God. He is ſlow to Anger, he hath Anger in his Nature, but is not always in the Execution of it.

And great in Power.] This may refer to his *Patience* as the Cauſe of it, or as a Bar to the Abuſe of it.

1. *He is ſlow to Anger, and great in Power*, i. e. his Power moderates his Anger; he is not ſo impotent, as to be at the Command of his Paſſions, as Men are. He can reſtrain his Anger under juſt Provocations to Exerciſe it. His Power over himſelf is the Cauſe of his ſlowneſs to Wrath. As *Numb.* 14. 17. *Let the Power of my Lord be great*, ſaith *Moſes*, when he pleads for the *Iſraelites* Pardon. Men that are great in the World, are quick in Paſſions, and are not ſo ready to forgive an Injury, or bear with an Offender as one of a meaner Rank. 'Tis a want of a Power over a Mans ſelf, that makes him do unbecoming things upon a Provocation. A Prince that can bridle his Paſſion, is a King over himſelf, as well as over his Subjects. *God is ſlow to Anger*, becauſe *great in Power*. He hath no leſs Power over himſelf, than over his Creatures. He can ſuſtain great Injuries without an immediate and quick Revenge. He hath a Power of Patience, as well as a Power of Juſtice.

2. Or thus, he is *ſlow to Anger, and great in Power*. He is ſlow to Anger, but not for want of Power to revenge himſelf; his Power is as great to puniſh, as his Patience to ſpare. It ſeems thus, that ſlowneſs to Anger is brought in as an Objection againſt the Revenge proclaimed. What do you tell us of Vengeance, Vengeance, nothing but ſuch Repetitions of Vengeance? As though we were ignorant, that God is ſlow to Anger? 'Tis true, ſaith the Prophet, I acknowledge it as much as you, that *God is ſlow to Anger*; but withal *great in Power*. His Anger certainly ſucceeds his abus'd Patience; he will not always bridle in his Wrath, but one Time or other let it March out in Fury againſt his Adverſaries. The *Aſſyrians* who had Captiv'd the Ten Tribes, and been Victorious a little againſt the *Jews*, might think that the God of *Iſrael* had been Conquered by their Gods, as well as the People profeſſing him had been ſubdued by their Arms. That God had loſt all his Power, and the *Jews* might argue from Gods Patience to his Enemies, againſt the Credit of the Prophets denouncing Revenge. The Prophet anſwers to the Terrour of the one, and the Comfort of the other. That this Indulgence to his Enemies, and not accounting with them for their Crimes, proceeded from the greatneſs of his Patience, and not from any Debility in his Power. As it refers to the *Aſſyrian*, it may be rendered thus: You *Ninevites*, upon your Repentance after *Jonah*'s Thundring of Judgments, are Witneſſes of the ſlowneſs of God to Anger, and had your Puniſhments deferr'd. But falling to your old Sins, you ſhall find a real Puniſhment, and that he hath as much Power to execute his ancient Threatnings, as he had then Compaſſion to recal them. His Patience to you then, was not for want of Power to ruine you, but was the effect of his goodneſs toward you. As it refers to the *Jews*, it may be thus Paraphraſed: Do not deſpiſe this Threatning againſt your Enemies, becauſe of the greatneſs of their Might, the ſeeming ſtability of their Empire, and the Terrour they poſſeſs all the Nations with round about them. It may be long before it comes: But aſſure your ſelves, the Threatning I denounce ſhall certainly be executed, though he hath Patience to endure them a hundred thirty five Years, (for ſo long it was before *Nineveh* was deſtroy'd after this Threatning, as * *Ribera in loc.* computes from the Years of the Reign of the Kings of *Judah*) yet he hath alſo Power to verifie his Word, and accompliſh his Will: Aſſure your ſelves, he will not at all acquit the Wicked.

* *Ribera in loc.* P. 359. col. 1.

He will not acquit the Wicked.] He will not always account the Criminal an Innocent, as he ſeems to do by a preſent ſparing of them, and dealing with them as if they were deſtitute of any provoking Carriage towards him, and he void of any Reſentment of it. He will *not acquit the wicked*: How is this, who then can be ſaved? Is there no Place for Remiſſion? *He will not acquit the wicked, i. e.* He will not acquit obſtinate Sinners. As he hath *Patience* for the Wicked, ſo he hath *Mercy* for the Penitent. The Wicked are the ſubject of his long-ſuffering, but not of his acquitting Grace. He doth not preſently Puniſh their Sins, becauſe he is ſlow to Anger; but without their Repentance he will not blot out their Sins, becauſe he is Righteous in Judgement. If God ſhould acquit them without Repentance

pentance for their Crimes, he muſt himſelf Repent of his own Law, and Righteous Sanction of it.

He will not acquit, i. e. he will not go back from the Thing he hath ſpoken, and forbear, at long run, the Puniſhment he hath threatned.

The Lord hath his way in the Whirlwind.] The way of God ſignifies ſometimes the Law of God, ſometims the Providential Operations of God, *Ezek.* 18. 25. *Is not my way equal?* It ſeems there to take in both.

And in the Storm, and the Clouds are the Duſt of his Feet.] * The Prophet deſcribes here the fight of God with the *Aſſyrians*, as if he ruſht upon them with a mighty noiſe of an Army, raiſing the Duſt with the Feet of their Horſes, and motion of their Chariots. Symbollically, it ſignifies the Multitude of the *Chaldean* and *Median* Forces, invading, beſieging, and ſtorming the City.

* *Tirinus in loc.*

It ſignifies,

1. *The Rule of Providence*, The way of God is in every motion of the Creature; he rules all things, Whirl-wind, Storms, Clouds, his way is in all their walks, in the whirlings and bluſtrings of the one, in the raiſing and diſſolving the other. He blows up the Winds, and compacts the Clouds, to make them ſerviceable to his Deſigns.

2. *The Management of Wars by God. His way is in the Storm*; as he was the Captain of the *Aſſyrians* againſt *Samaria*, ſo he will be the Captain of the *Medes* againſt *Nineveh*. As *Iſrael* was not ſo much waſted by the *Aſſyrians*, as by the Lord, who levied and arm'd their Forces; ſo *Nineveh* ſhall be ſubverted, rather by God than by the Arms of the *Medes*. Their Force is deſcrib'd not to be ſo much from Humane Power as Divine; God is Preſident in all the Commotions of the World, his way is in every Whirl-wind.

3. *The Eaſineſs of executing the Judgment.* He is of ſo great Power, that he can excite Tempeſts in the Air, and overthrow them with the Clouds, which are the Duſt of his Feet. He can blind his Enemies, and avenge himſelf on them: He is Lord of Clouds, and can fill their Womb with Hail, Lightnings and Thunders, to burſt out upon thoſe he kindles his Anger againſt. He is of ſo great force, that he needs not uſe the ſtrength of his Arm, but the duſt of his Feet, to effect his deſtroying Purpoſe.

4. *The Suddenneſs of the Judgment.* Whirlwinds come ſuddenly without any Harbingers to give notice of their Approach; Clouds are ſwift in their Motion. *Iſa.* 60. 8. *Who are thoſe that fly as a Cloud*, i. e. with a mighty nimbleneſs; what God doth, he ſhall do on the ſudden, come upon them before they are aware, be too quick for them in his Motion to over-run and over-reach them. The Winds are deſcrib'd with Wings, in regard of the quickneſs of their Motion.

5. *The Terror of Judgments. The Lord hath his Way in the Whirlwind*, i. e. in great diſpleaſure. The Anger of the Lord is often compar'd to a Storm; he ſhall bring Clouds of Judgments upon them, many and thick, as terrible as when a Day is turn'd into Night, by the muſtering of the darkeſt Clouds that interpoſe between the Sun and the Earth. *Clouds and Darkneſs are round about him, and a Fire goes before him*, when he *burns up his Enemies*, Pſalm 97. 2, 3. The Judgments ſhall have Terrour without Mercy, as Clouds obſcure the Light, and are dark Masks before the Face and Glory of the Sun, and cut off its refreſhing Beams from the Earth. Clouds note Multitude and Obſcurity; God could cruſh them without a Whirlwind, beat them to Powder with one touch, but he will bring his Judgments in the moſt ſurprizing and amazing manner to Fleſh and Blood, ſo that all their Glory ſhall be changed into nothing but Terror, by the noiſe of the bellowing Winds, and the Clouds like Ink blacking the Heavens.

6. *The Confuſion of the Offenders upon God's proceeding.* A Whirl-wind is not only a boiſterous wind, that hurls and rouls every thing out of his Place, but by its Circular Motion, by its winding to all Points of the Compaſs, it confounds things, and jumbles them together. It keeps not one Point, but by a Circumgyration toucheth upon all. Clouds like Duſt ſhall be blown in their Face, and Gum up their Eyes. They ſhall be in a poſture of Confuſion, not know what Counſels to take, what Motions to reſolve upon; let them look to every Point of Heaven and Earth, they ſhall meet with a Whirl-wind to confound them, and cloudy Duſt to blind them.

7. *The Irreſiſtableneſs of the Judgment.* Winds have more than a Gyant-like force, a torrent of compacted Air, that with an invincible wilfulneſs bears all before it, diſplaceth the firmeſt Trees, and levels the talleſt Towers, and pulls up Bodies from their natural place. Clouds alſo are over our Heads, and above our reach; when God places them upon his People for defence, they are an invincible Security, *Iſa.* 4. 5. And when he moves them as his Chariot againſt a People, they end in an irreſiſtible Deſtruction; thus the ruine of the Wicked is deſcrib'd, *Prov.* 10. 25. *As the Whirlwind paſſes, ſo is the wicked no more.* It blows them down, ſweeps them away, they irrecoverably fall before the force of it. *What Heart can endure, and what Hands can be ſtrong, in the Days wherein God doth deal with them?* Ezek. 22. 14. Thus is the Judgment againſt *Nineveh* deſcrib'd; God hath his Way in the Whirl-wind to Thunder down their ſtrongeſt Walls, which were ſo thick, that Chariots could march a-breaſt upon, and batter down their mighty Towers, which that City had in Multitudes upon their Walls.

They are the firſt Words I intend to inſiſt upon, to treat of the Patience of God, deſcrib'd in thoſe Words; *The Lord is ſlow to Anger.*

Doct. *Slowneſs to Anger, or admirable Patience, is the Property of the Divine Nature.* As *Patience* ſignifies *Suffering*, ſo it is not in God. The Divine Nature is impaſſible, uncapable of any impair, it cannot be touched by the violences of Men, nor the eſſential Glory of it be diminiſh'd by the injuries of Men; but as it ſignifies *a willingneſs to defer*, and an *unwillingneſs to pour forth his Wrath* upon ſinful Creatures; he moderates his provoked Juſtice, and forbears to revenge the injuries he daily meets with in the World. He ſuffers no grief by Mens wronging him, but he reſtrains his Arm from puniſhing them according to their Merits; and thus there is *Patience* in every Croſs a Man meets with in the World: Becauſe though it be a Puniſhment, 'tis leſs than is merited by the unrighteous Rebel, and leſs than may be inflicted by a righteous and powerful God.

This *Patience* is ſeen in his providential Works in the World, *He ſuffered the Nations to walk in their own Way*, and the Witneſs of his Providence to them was his *giving them Rain, and fruitful Seaſons, filling their Heart with food and gladneſs*, Acts 16. 17. The *Heathens* took notice of it, and ſignified it, by feigning their God *Saturn*, to be Bound a whole Year in a ſoft Cord, a Cord of Wool, and expreſt it by this Proverb; *The Mills of the Gods grind ſlowly*; i. e. God doth not uſe Men with that Severity that they deſerve: The Mills being uſually

turn'd by criminals, condemn'd to that Work.

* *Rhodigi. l. 6. c. 14.* * This in Scripture is frequently expreſt by a *ſlowneſs* to anger, *Pſalm* 103. 8. ſometimes by *long-ſuffering*, which is a Patience with Duration; *Pſalm* 145. 8. and *Joel* 2. 13. He is ſlow to Anger, he takes not the firſt occaſions of a Provocation; he is long ſuffering, *Rom.* 9. 22. and *Pſalm* 86. 15. he forbears Puniſhment upon many occaſions offer'd him. 'Tis long before he Conſents to give Fire to his Wrath, and ſhoot out his Thunder-bolts; Sin hath a loud cry, but God ſeems to ſtop his Ears, not to hear the clamour it raiſes, and the charge it preſents. He keeps his Sword a long time in the Sheath; one calls the *Patience* of God, the Sheath of his Sword, upon thoſe Words, *Ezek.* 21. 3. *I will draw forth my Sword out of his Sheath.* † This is one remarkable Letter in the Name of God, he himſelf proclaims it; *Exod.* 34. 6. *The Lord, the Lord God, merciful, gracious and long ſuffering.* And *Moſes* pleads it in the behalf of the People, *Numb.* 14. 18. where he placeth it in the firſt Rank; the Lord is *long ſuffering, and of great Mercy:* 'Tis the firſt ſpark of Mercy, and uſhers it to its exerciſes in the World. In the Lord's Proclamation, 'tis put in the middle link, *Mercy and Truth* together; Mercy could have no room to act, if *Patience* did not prepare the way; and his Truth and Goodneſs in his Promiſe of the Redeemer would not have been manifeſt to the World, if he had ſhot his Arrows as ſoon as Men committed their Sins, and deſerved his Puniſhment. This Perfection is expreſt by other Phraſes, as keeping Silence; *Pſal.* 50. 21. *Theſe Things haſt thou done, and I kept ſilence,* אֶלֶה עָשִׂיתָ וְהֶחֱרַשְׁתִּי it ſignifies to behave ones ſelf as a Deaf or Dumb Man. I did not fly in thy Face, as ſome do with a great noiſe, upon a light Provocation, as if their Life, Honour, Eſtates, were at the Stake. I did not preſently call thee to the Bar, and pronounce judicial Sentence upon thee according to the Law, but demean'd my ſelf, as if I had been Ignorant of thy Crimes, and had not been inveſted with the Power of judging thee for them, *Chald. I waited for thy Converſion.* God's *Patience* is the ſilence of his Juſtice, and the firſt whiſper of his Mercy.

† Δῆλον δὲ ὅτι ἐγχειλιδιον την μακροθυμιαν παλαι κολεὸν δὲ τιθησι την θήκην τὸ ἐγχειρίδιον μακροθυμίαν ὀνομάζει. *Theodoret in loc.*

'Tis alſo expreſt by *not laying Folly* to Men, *Job* 24. 12. Men groan under the Oppreſſions of others, yet God *lays not Folly* to them, *i. e.* to the Oppreſſors, God ſuffers them to go on with Impunity. He doth not deliver his People becauſe he would try them, and takes not Revenge upon the unrighteous, becauſe in *Patience* he doth bear with them. *Patience* is the Life of his Providence in this World. He chargeth not Men with their Crimes here, but reſerves them upon Impenitency for another Tryal. This *Attribute* is ſo great a one, that it is ſignally called by the Name of Perfection, *Mat.* 5. 45, 48. He had been ſpeaking of Divine Goodneſs, and *Patience* to evil Men, and he concludes, *be you perfect*, &c. Implying it to be an amazing Perfection in the Divine Nature, and worthy of Imitation.

In the Proſecution of this,

1. Let us conſider the *Nature* of this *Patience.*
2. *Wherein* 'tis *manifeſted.*
3. *Why God doth exerciſe ſo much Patience.*
4. *The* USE.

1. *The Nature of this Patience.*

1. *'Tis part of the Divine Goodneſs and Mercy, yet differs from both.* God being the greateſt Goodneſs, hath the greateſt Mildneſs; Mildneſs is always the Companion of true Goodneſs, and the greater the Goodneſs, the greater the Mildneſs. Who ſo Holy as Chriſt, and who ſo Meek? God's ſlowneſs to anger is a Branch, or ſlip from his Mercy, *Pſalm* 145. 8. *The Lord is full of Compaſſion, ſlow to anger.* It differs from Mercy in the formal Conſideration of the Object; *Mercy* reſpects the Creature as miſerable, *Patience* reſpects the Creature as Criminal: Mercy pities him in his Miſery, and *Patience* bears with the Sin, which engender'd that Miſery, and is giving Birth to more.

Again, *Mercy* is one end of *Patience*, his long-ſuffering is partly to glorifie his Graee, ſo it was in *Paul*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 16. As ſlowneſs to anger ſprings from Goodneſs, ſo it makes Mercy the Butt, and Mark of its Operations; *Iſa.* 30. 18. *He waits that he may be gracious*; Goodneſs ſets God upon the exerciſe of *Patience*, and *Patience* ſets many a Sinner on running into the Arms of Mercy. That Mercy which makes God ready to embrace returning Sinners, makes him willing to bear with them in their Sins, and wait their return.

It differs alſo from Goodneſs, in regard of the *Object.* The Object of Goodneſs is every Creature, Angels, Men, all Inferiour Creatures, to the loweſt Worm that crawls upon the ground. The *Object of Patience* is primarily Man, and ſecondarily, thoſe Creatures that reſpect Mens ſupport, conveniency and delight: but they are not the *Objects of Patience*, as conſider'd in themſelves, but in Relation to Man, for whoſe uſe they were Created, and therefore *God's Patience* to them is properly his Patience with Man. The lower Creatures do not injure God, and therefore are not the *Objects of his Patience*, but as they are forfeited by Man, and Man deſerves to be depriv'd of them; as Man in this regard falls under the *Patience* of God, ſo doth thoſe Creatures which are deſign'd for Man's good. That *Patience* which ſpares Man, ſpares other Creatures for him, which were all forfeited by Man's Sin, as well as his own Life, and are rather the Teſtimonies of God's *Patience*, than the proper Objects of it. The Object of God's Goodneſs then is the whole Creation; not a Devil in Hell, but as a Creature is a Mark of his Goodneſs, but not of his Patience. There is a kind of ſparing exercis'd to the Devils, in deferring their compleat Puniſhment, and hitherto keeping off the Day, wherein their final Sentence is to be pronounced, yet the Scripture never mentions this by the Name of ſlowneſs to Anger, or Long-ſuffering. It can no more be call'd *Patience*, than a Princes keeping a Malefactor in Chains, and not pronouncing a condemning Sentence, or not executing a Sentence already pronounced, can be call'd a *Patience* with him, when it is not out of kindneſs to the Offender, but for ſome Reaſons of State. God's ſparing the Devils from their total Puniſhment, (which they have not yet, but are *reſerved in Chains, under darkneſs for it*, Jude 6.) is not in order to Repentance, or attended with any Invitations from God, or hopes in them: And therefore cannot come under the ſame Title as God's ſparing Man; where there is no propoſal of Mercy, there is no exerciſe of *Patience.* The fall'n Angels had no Mercy reſerv'd for them, nor any Sacrifice prepar'd for them, God *ſpared not the Angels*, 2 Pet. 2. 4. *But delivered them into Chains of darkneſs, to be reſerved unto Judgment*; i. e. he had no *Patience* for them: For *Patience* is properly a temporary ſparing a Perſon, with a waiting for his relenting, and a change of his injurious demeanour; the Object of Goodneſs is more extenſive than that of *Patience*: Nor do they both conſider the Object under the ſame Relation.

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Goodneſs reſpects things in a capacity, or in a ſtate of Creation, and brings them forth into Creation, and nurſeth, and ſupports them as Creatures. *Patience* conſiders them already Created, and fall'n ſhort of the Duty of Creatures; It conſiders them as Sinners, or in relation to Sinners. Had not Sin entred, *Patience* had never been exerciſed; but Goodneſs had been exerciſed, had the Creature ſtood firm in its created State without any Tranſgreſſion; nay, Creation could not have been without Goodneſs; becauſe it was Goodneſs to Create: But *Patience* had never been known without an Object, which could not have been without an Injury. Where there is no wrong, no ſuffering, nor like to be any, *Patience* hath no proſpect of any Operation. So then Goodneſs reſpects Perſons as Creatures, *Patience* as Tranſgreſſors; Mercy eyes Men as miſerable and obnoxious to Puniſhment; *Patience* conſiders Men as ſinful, and provoking to Puniſhment.

2. Since 'tis a part of Goodneſs and Mercy, *tis not an inſenſible Patience.* What is the fruit of pure Goodneſs, cannot be from a weakneſs of reſentment; He is *ſlow to anger:* The Prophet doth not ſay, He is uncapable of anger, or cannot diſcern what is a real object of anger; It implies, that He doth conſider every Provocation, but He is *not haſty* to diſcharge his Arrows upon the Offenders; He ſees all, while He bears with them: His Omniſcience excludes any Ignorance; He cannot but ſee every wrong; every aggravation in that wrong, every ſtep and motion from the beginning to the compleating it: For He knows all our thoughts; He ſees the Sin, and the Sinner at the ſame time; the Sin with an Eye of Abhorrency, and the Sinner with an Eye of Pity. His Eye is upon their Iniquities, and his Hatred edged againſt them; while He ſtands with Arms open, waiting a Penitent return. When He publiſheth his Patience in his keeping ſilence, He publiſheth alſo his Reſolution, to ſet Sin in order before their Eyes, Pſal. 50. 21. *I will reprove thee, and ſet them in order before thy Eyes.* Think me not ſuch a Piece of Flegm, and ſo dull, as not to reſent your Inſolencies; you ſhall ſee in my final charge, when I come to judge, that not a wry look eſcap'd my knowledge, that I had an Eye to behold, and a Heart to loath every one of your Tranſgreſſions. The Church was ready to think, that God's ſlowneſs to deliver her, and his bearing with her Oppreſſors, was not from any *Patience* in his Nature, but a drowſie careleſsneſs, a ſenſleſs Lethargy, *Pſal.* 44. 23. *Awake, why ſleepeſt thou, Oh Lord?* We muſt conclude Him an inapprehenſive God, before we can conclude Him an inſenſible God. As his delaying his Promiſe, is *not ſlackneſs* to his People, 2 *Pet.* 3. 9. So his deferring of Puniſhmet, is not from a Stupidity under the Affronts offered Him.

3. Since 'tis a part of his Mercy and Goodneſs, 'tis *not a conſtrained or faint-hearted Patience.* 'Tis not a ſlowneſs to anger, ariſing from a deſpondency of his own Power to Revenge. He hath as much power to puniſh, as He hath to forbear Puniſhment. He that Created a World in ſix Days, and that by a Word, wants not a Strength to cruſh all Mankind in one Minute; and with as much eaſe as a Word imports, can give ſatisfaction to his Juſtice in the Blood of the Offender. *Patience* in Man is many times interpreted, and truly too, a Cowardiſe, a feebleneſs of Spirit, and a want of Strength. But it is not from the ſhortneſs of the Divine Arm, that He cannot reach us, nor from the feebleneſs of his Hand, that He cannot ſtrike us. 'Tis not becauſe He cannot level us with the Duſt, daſh us in pieces, like a Potter's Veſſel, or conſume us as a Moth. He can make the mightieſt to fall before Him, and lay the ſtrongeſt at his Feet, the firſt moment of their Crime. He that did not want a powerful Word to Create a World, cannot want a powerful Word to diſſolve the whole Frame of it, and raze it out of Being. 'Tis not therefore out of a diſtruſt of his own Power, that He hath ſupported a ſinful World for ſo many Ages, and patiently born the Blaſphemies of ſome, the neglects of others, and the Ingratitude of all, without inflicting that ſevere Juſtice which righteouſly He might have done; He wants no Thunder to cruſh the whole Generation of Men, nor Waters to drown them, nor Earth to ſwallow them up. How eaſie is it for Him to ſingle out this or that particular Perſon, to be the Object of his *Wrath*, and not of his *Patience?* What He hath done to one, He may to another; any ſignal judgment He hath ſent upon one, is an evidence, that He wants not Power to inflict it upon all. Could He not make the Motes in the Air to choak us at every Breath, Rain Thunderbolts inſtead of Drops of Water, fill the Clouds with a Conſuming Lightning, take off the Reverence and Fear of Man, which He hath Imprinted upon the Creature, Spirit our Domeſtick Beaſts to be our Executioners, unlooſe the Tiles from the Houſe-top to brain us, or make the fall of a Houſe to cruſh us? 'Tis but taking out the Pins, and giving a Blaſt, and the work is done. And doth He want a power to do any of thoſe things? 'Tis not then a faint-hearted, or *feeble Patience*, that He exerciſeth towards Man.

4. Since 'tis not for want of power over the Creature, 'tis from *a fulneſs of power over Himſelf.* This is in the *Text*; *The Lord is ſlow to Anger, and great in Power*; 'tis a part of his Dominion over Himſelf, whereby He can moderate, and rule his own Affections, according to the Holineſs of his own Will. As it is the effect of his Power, ſo it is an argument of his Power; the greatneſs of the Effect demonſtrates the fulneſs and ſufficiency of the Cauſe. The more feeble any Man is in reaſon, the leſs command he hath over his Paſſions; and he is the more heady to revenge. Revenge is a ſign of a childiſh Mind; the ſtronger any Man is in Reaſon, the more command he hath over himſelf, Prov. 16. 32. *He that is ſlow to anger, is better than the mighty: and he that rules his own Spirit, than he that takes a city.* He that can reſtrain his Anger, is ſtronger than the *Cæſars* and *Alexanders* of the World, that have fill'd the Earth with ſlain Carcaſſes, and ruin'd Cities. By the ſame reaſon, God's ſlowneſs to Anger, is a greater argument of his Power than the Creating a World, or the power of diſſolving it by a word. In this He hath a Dominion over Creatures, in the other over Himſelf. This is the reaſon He will not return to deſtroy; becauſe *I am God, and not Man, Hoſea* 11. 9. I am not ſo weak and impotent as Man, that cannot reſtrain his Anger. This is a Strength poſſeſſed only by a God, wherein a Creature is no more able to parallel Him, than in any other. So that He may be ſaid to be the Lord of Himſelf; as it is in the Verſe before the Text, that He is *the Lord of Anger*, in the *Hebrew* inſtead of *furious*; as we Tranſlate it, ſo He is the Lord of Patience. The end why God is *Patient*, is to ſhew his Power, *Rom.* 9. 22. *What, if God willing to ſhew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-ſuffering, the veſſels of wrath fitted to deſtruction?* To ſhew his Wrath upon Sinners, and his Power over Himſelf, in bearing ſuch Indignities, and for-

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bearing Punishment so long, when Men were Vessels of Wrath fitted for destruction, of whom there was no hopes of amendment. Had He immediately broken in pieces those Vessels, his power had not so eminently appear'd, as it hath done, in tolerating them so long, that had provoked Him to take them off so often. There is indeed the power of his Anger, and there is the power of his *Patience*; and his Power is more seen in his *Patience* than in his Wrath. 'Tis no wonder that He that is above all, is able to crush all. But it is a wonder, that He that is provok'd by all, doth not upon the first provocation, rid his Hands of all. This is the reason, why He did bear such a weight of Provocations from Vessels of Wrath, prepar'd for ruine, that He might γνωρίσαι τὸ δυνατὸν αὐτῦ, shew what He was able to do, the Lordship and Royalty He had over Himself. The Power of God is more manifest in his *Patience* to a multitude of Sinners, than it could be in Creating Millions of Worlds out of nothing; this was the δυνατὸν αὐτῦ, a Power over Himself.

5. This *Patience* being a Branch of Mercy, the exercise of it is *founded in the death of Christ*. Without the consideration of this, we can give no account why Divine *Patience* should extend it self to us, and not to the Fallen Angels. The Threatning extends it self to us, as well as to the Fallen Angels. The Threatning must necessarily have sunk Man, as well as those Glorious Creatures, had not Christ stept in to our relief. * Had not Christ interposed to satisfie the Justice of God, Man upon his Sin had been actually bound over to punishment, as well as the Fallen Angels were upon theirs, and been Fetter'd in Chains as strong as those Spirits feel. The reason why Man was not hurl'd into the same deplorable condition upon his Sin, as they were, is Christ's Promise of taking our Nature, and not theirs. Had God design'd Christ's taking their Nature, the same Patience had been exercised towards them, and the same offers would have been made to them, as are made to us. In regard of these Fruits of this Patience, Christ is said to buy the wickedst Apostates from Him, 1 Pet. 2. 1. *Denying the Lord that bought them*; such were bought by Him, as *bring upon themselves just destruction, and whose damnation slumbers not*, ver. 3. He purchased the continuance of their Lives, and the stay of their Execution, that Offers of Grace might be made to them. This Patience must be either upon the account of the Law, or the Gospel; for there are no other Rules whereby God Governs the World; a Fruit of the Law it was not, that spake nothing but Curses after Disobedience, not a Letter of Mercy was writ upon that; and therefore nothing of *Patience*.

Testard. de Natur. & Grat. Thes. 119.

Death and Wrath was denounced, no slowness to Anger intimated. It must be therefore upon the account of the Gospel, and a fruit of the *Covenant of Grace*, whereof *Christ* was Mediator. Besides, this Perfection being God's *waiting that He might be gracious*, Isaiah 30. 18. That which made way for God's Grace, made way for his waiting to manifest it. God discovered not his Grace, but in Christ; and therefore discovered not his Patience but in Christ; 'tis in Him He met with the Satisfaction of his Justice, that He might have a ground for the Manifestation of his Patience. And the Sacrifices of the Law, wherein the Life of a Beast was accepted for the Sin of a Man, discovered the ground of his forbearance of them, to be the expectation of the *great Sacrifice*, whereby Sin was to be compleatly expiated, *Gen.* 8. 21. The Publication of his Patience to the end of the World is presently after the *sweet savour He found in Noah's Sacrifice*. The promised and design'd Coming of Christ, was the Cause of that Patience God exercised before in the World. And his gathering the Elect together, is the reason of his Patience since his Death.

6. The naturalness of his *Veracity* and *Holiness*, and the *strictness of his Justice*, *are no bars to the exercise of his Patience*.

1. *His Veracity*. In those Threatnings where the Punishment is expresst, but not the time of Inflicting it prefix'd and determin'd in the Threatning, his *Veracity* suffers no damage by the delaying Execution; so it be once done, though a long time after, the Credit of his *Truth* stands unshaken. As when God promises a thing without fixing the time, He is at liberty to pitch upon what time He pleases for the performance of it, without staining his Faithfulness to his Word, by not giving the thing Promised presently. Why should the deferring of Justice upon an Offender, be any more against his *Veracity*, than his delaying an answer to the Petitions of a Suppliant? But the difference will lie in the threatning, Gen. 2. 17. *In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt die the death*. The time was there settled, *In that day thou shalt die*; some refer Day to eating, not to dying; and render the Sentence thus, I do not prohibit thee the eating this Fruit for a Day or two, but continually. In whatsoever Day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt die; but not understanding his dying that very day he should eat of it. Referring [*day*] to the extensiveness of the Prohibition, as to time. But to leave this as uncertain, it may be answered; That as in some Threatnings, a condition is implyed, though not expresst; as in that positive denouncing of the Destruction of *Nineveh*. *Jonah* 3. 4. *Yet fourty days, and Nineveh shall be destroy'd*. The Condition is imply'd, Unless they humble themselves, and repent, for upon their Repentance the Sentence was deferred. So here, *In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt dye the death*, or *certainly die*, unless there be a way found for the Expiation of thy Crime, and the righting my Honour; This *Condition*, in regard of the Event, may as well be asserted to be implyed in this Threatning, as that of Repentance was in the other. Or rather, *thou shalt die*, thou shalt die spiritually, thou shalt lose that Image of mine in thy Nature, that Righteousness which is as much the Life of thy Soul, as thy Soul is the Life of thy Body; that Righteousness whereby thou art enabled to live to Me, and thy own Happiness. What the Soul is to the Body, a quickning Soul, that the Image of God is to the Soul, a quickning Image. Or, *thou shalt die the death*, or certainly die, thou shalt be liable to Death. * And so it is to be understood, not of an actual Death of the Body, but the merit of Death, and the necessity of Death; thou wilt be obnoxious to Death, which will be avoided, if thou dost forbear to eat of the forbidden Fruit; thou shalt be a guilty Person, and so under a Sentence of Death, that I may when I please inflict it on thee. Death did come upon *Adam* that Day, because his Nature was vitiated. He was then also under an expectation of Death, he was obnoxious to it, tho that Day it was not poured out upon him in the full bitterness and gall of it. As when the Apostle saith, Rom. 8. 10. *The body is dead, because of sin*, he speaks to the Living, and yet tells them, The Body was dead because of sin; he means no more than that it was under a Sentence, and so a necessity of dying, though not actually dead. So thou shalt be under the Sentence of Death that Day, as

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certainly, as if that Day thou ſhouldſt ſink into the Duſt. And as by his *Patience* towards Man, not ſending forth Death upon him in all the bitter Ingredients of it, his Juſtice afterwards was more eminent upon Man's ſurety, than it would have been, if it had been then employ'd in all its ſevere Operations upon Man. So was his *Veracity* eminent alſo in making good this threatning, in inflicting the puniſhment included in it upon our nature aſſum'd by a mighty Perſon, and upon that Perſon in our Nature, who was infinitely higher than our Nature.

2. *His Juſtice and Righteouſneſs are not prejudiced by his Patience.* There is a hatred of the Sin in his Holineſs, and a Sentence paſt againſt the Sin in his Juſtice, though the execution of that Sentence be ſuſpended, and the Perſon reprieved by *Patience*, which is implyed, *Eccleſ.* 8. 11. *Becauſe ſentence againſt an evil work is not executed ſpeedily; therefore the hearts of the ſons of men is fully ſet in them to do evil*; Sentence is paſt, but a ſpeedy execution is ſtopt.

Some of the Heathens, who would not imagine God unjuſt, and yet ſeeing the Villanies and Oppreſſions of Men in the World remain unpuniſh'd, and frequently beholding proſperous wickedneſs, to free Him from the charge of *Injuſtice*, denied his Providence, and actual Government of the World: for if He did take notice of Humane Affairs, and concern Himſelf in what was done upon the Earth, they could not think an Infinite Goodneſs and *Juſtice* could be ſo ſlow to puniſh Oppreſſors, and relieve the Miſerable, and leave the World in that diſorder under the Injuſtice of Men. They judged ſuch a *Patience* as was exerciſed by Him, if He did Govern the World, was drawn out beyond the Line of fit and juſt. Is it not a Preſumption in Men to preſcribe a Rule of *Righteouſneſs* and Conveniency to their Creator? It might be demanded of ſuch, whether they never injur'd any in their Lives? and when certainly they have one way or other; would they not think it a very unworthy, if not unjuſt thing, that a Perſon ſo injur'd by them ſhould take a ſpeedy and ſevere Revenge on them? And if every Man ſhould do the like, would there not be a ſpeedy Diſpatch made of Mankind? Would not the World be a Shambles, and Men ruſh forwards to one anothers deſtruction, for the wrongs they have mutually receiv'd? If it be accounted a Virtue in Man, and no unrighteouſneſs, not preſently to be all on fire againſt an Offence; by what right ſhould any queſtion the conſiſtency of God's *Patience* with his *Juſtice?* Do we praiſe the Lenity of Parents to Children, and ſhall we diſparage the *long-ſuffering* of God to Men? We do not cenſure the Righteouſneſs of Phyſicians and Chyrurgeons, becauſe they cut off a corrupt Member this Day, as well as to Morrow? And is it juſt to aſperſe God, becauſe He doth defer his Vengeance, which Man aſſumes to Himſelf a right to do? We never account him a bad Governour that defers the Tryal, and conſequently the Condemnation and Execution of a Notorious Offender, for important Reaſons, and beneficial to the Publick, either to make the Nature of his Crime more evident, or to find out the reſt of his Complices by his diſcovery. A Governour indeed were unjuſt, if he commanded that which were Unrighteous, and forbad that which were Worthy and Commendable; but if he delays the Execution of a Convict Offender, for weighty Reaſons, either for the benefit of the State, whereof he is the Ruler, or for ſome advantage to the Offender himſelf, to make him have a Senſe of, and a regret for his Offence, we account him not unjuſt for this. God doth not by his *Patience* diſpence with the Holineſs of his Law, nor cut off any thing from its due Authority. If Men do ſtrengthen themſelves by his long-ſuffering againſt his Law, 'tis their fault, not any unrighteouſneſs in Him. He will take a time to vindicate the *Righteouſneſs* of his own Commands, if Men will wholly neglect the time of his *Patience*, in forbearing to pay a dutiful obſervance to his Precept. If Juſtice be natural to Him, and He cannot but puniſh Sin, yet He is not neceſſitated to conſume Sinners, as the Fire doth ſtubble put into it, which hath no command over its own Qualities, to reſtrain them from acting; But God is a free Agent, and may chooſe his own time, for the diſtribution of that Puniſhment his Nature leads Him to. Though He be naturally Juſt, yet it is not ſo natural to Him, as to deprive Him of a Dominion over his own Acts, and a freedom in the exerting them what time He judgeth moſt convenient in his Wiſdom. God is neceſſarily Holy, and is neceſſarily angry with Sin, his Nature can never like it, and cannot but be diſpleaſed with it; yet He hath a liberty to reſtrain the effects of this anger for a time, without diſgracing his Holineſs, or being interpreted to act Unrighteouſly; As well as a *Prince* or *State* may ſuſpend the Execution of a Law, which they will never break, only for a time, and for a publick benefit.

If God ſhould preſently Execute his *Juſtice*, this Perfection of *Patience*, which is a part of his Goodneſs, would never have an opportunity of diſcovery. Part of his Glory, for which He created the World, would lie in obſcurity from the knowledge of his Creature. His *Juſtice* would be ſignal in the deſtruction of Sinners, but this ſtream of his Goodneſs would be ſtopt up from any motion. One Perfection muſt not cloud another, God hath his Seaſons to diſcover all, one after another. *The times and ſeaſons are in his own power*, *Acts* 1. 7. The Seaſons of manifeſting his own Perfections as well as other things; Succeſſion of them in their diſtinct appearance makes no Invaſion upon the Rights of any. If Juſtice ſhould complain of an Injury from *Patience*, becauſe it is delay'd, *Patience* hath more reaſon to complain of an Injury from *Juſtice*, that by ſuch a Plea it would be wholly obſcur'd and unactive. For this Perfection hath the ſhorteſt time to act its part of any, it hath no ſtage but this World to move in; Mercy hath a Heaven, and Juſtice a Hell, to diſplay it ſelf to Eternity, but *long-ſuffering* hath only a ſhort-liv'd Earth for the compaſs of its operation.

Again, *Juſtice* is ſo far from being wrong'd by *Patience*, that it rather is made more Illuſtrious, and hath the fuller ſcope to exerciſe it ſelf; 'Tis the more righted for being deferred, and will have ſtronger grounds than before for its activity. The equity of it will be more apparent to every reaſon, the objections more fully anſwered againſt it, when the way of dealing with Sinners by *Patience* hath been ſlighted. When this Dam of Long-ſuffering is remov'd, the floods of Fiery Juſtice will ruſh down with more force and violence; *Juſtice* will be fully recompenc'd for the delay, when after *Patience* is abuſed, it can ſpread it ſelf over the Offender with a more unqueſtionable Authority, it will have more Arguments to hit the Sinner in the Teeth with, and ſilence him. There will be a ſharper edge for every ſtroke, the Sinner muſt not only pay for the ſcore of his former ſins, but the ſcore of abus'd *Patience*; ſo that *Juſtice* hath no reaſon to commence a ſuit againſt God's ſlowneſs to anger. What it ſhall want by the fulneſs of Mercy upon

upon the truly Penitent, it will gain by the contempt of *Patience* on the Impenitent Abuſers. When Men by ſuch a carriage are ripen'd for the ſtroke of *Juſtice*, *Juſtice* may ſtrike without any regret in it ſelf, or pull-back from Mercy. The contempt of *long-ſuffering* will ſilence the Pleas of the one, and Spirit the Severity of the other. To conclude, ſince God hath glorified his *Juſtice* on Chriſt, as a Surety for Sinners, his *Patience* is ſo far from interfering with the rights of his Juſtice, that it promotes it; 'tis diſpenſed to this end, that God might Pardon with Honour, both upon the ſcore of purchaſed Mercy, and contented Juſtice; that by a Penitent Sinners return, his Mercy might be acknowledged free, and the ſatisfaction of his *Juſtice* by Chriſt be glorified in Believing: for He is long-ſuffering from an unwillingneſs, *that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to Repentance*, 2 *Pet.* 3. 9. i. e. All to whom the Promiſe is made, for to ſuch the Apoſtle ſpeaks, and calls it *long-ſuffering to us-ward*; And Repentance being an acknowledgment of the demerit of Sin, and a breaking off unrighteouſneſs, gives a particular Glory to the freeneſs of Mercy, and the equity of *Juſtice*.

II. *The Second thing*; *How this Patience, or ſlowneſs to anger is manifeſted.*

1. To our *Firſt Parents*. His *ſlowneſs to anger was evidenced*, in not directing his Artillery againſt them, when they firſt attempted to rebel. He might have ſtruck them dead, when they began to bite at the temptation, and were inclinable to a ſurrender; for it was a degree of ſinning, and a breach of Loyalty, as well, though not ſo much as the conſummating Act. God might have given way to the floods of his wrath at the firſt ſpring of Man's aſpiring thoughts, when the monſtrous motion of being as God began to be curdled in his Heart; but He took no notice of any of their *Embryo* Sins, till they came to a ripeneſs, and ſtarted out of the womb of their minds, into the open Air; And after He had brought his Sin to Perfection, God did not preſently ſend that Death upon him, which he had merited, but continued his Life to the ſpace of 930 *Years*, *Gen.* 5. 5. The Sun and Stars were not arreſted from doing their Office for him. Creatures were continued for his uſe, the Earth did not ſwallow him up, nor a Thunder-bolt from Heaven raze out the Memory of him. Though he had deſerved to be treated with ſuch a Severity for his ungrateful demeanour to his Creator and Benefactor, and affecting an equality with Him, yet God continued him with a Sufficiency for his content, after he turned Rebel, though not with ſuch a Liberality as when he remain'd a Loyal Subject; and though He foreſaw that he would not make an end of Sinning, but with an end of Living, He uſed him not in the ſame manner, as He had uſed the Devils. He added Days and Years to him, after he had deſerved Death, and hath for this 5000 *Years* continued the Propagation of Mankind, and derived from his Loins an innumerable Poſterity, and hath crown'd Multitudes of them with Hoary Heads; He might have extinguiſh'd Humane Race at the firſt, but ſince He hath preſerved it till this Day, it muſt be interpreted nothing elſe, but the effect of an admirable Patience.

2. *His ſlowneſs to Anger is manifeſt to the Gentiles.* What they are, we need no other Witneſs than the Apoſtle *Paul*, who ſums up many of their crimes. *Rom.* 1. 29, 30, 31, 32. He doth Preface the Catalogue with a comprehenſive Expreſſion, *being fill'd with all unrighteouſneſs*; and concludes it with a dreadful Aggravation; *They not only do the ſame, but have pleaſure in them that do them.* They were ſo ſoak'd and naturaliz'd in wickedneſs, that they had no delight, and found no ſweetneſs in any thing elſe, but what was in it ſelf abominable; all of them were plung'd in Idolatry and Superſtition; none of them but either ſet up their great Men, or Creatures beneficial to the World, and ſome the damned Spirits in his ſtead, and paid an adoration to inſenſible Creatures or Devils, which was due to God. Some were ſo deprav'd in their Lives and Actions, that it ſeem'd to be the Intereſt of the reſt of the World, that they ſhould have been extinguiſh'd for the Inſtruction of their Contemporaries and Poſterity. The beſt of them had turn'd all Religion into a Fable, coin'd a World of Rites, ſome unnatural in themſelves, and moſt of them unbecoming a rational Creature to offer, and a Deity to accept; yet He did not preſently arm Himſelf againſt them with Fire and Sword, nor ſtop the courſe of their Generations, nor tare out all thoſe Relicks of Natural Light which were left in their Minds. He did not do what He might have done, but He wink'd at the *times of that Ignorance*, Acts 17. 30. their ignorant Idolatry: for that it refers to, *ver.* 29. *They thought the Godhead was like to Gold or Silver, or Stone graven by art, and Mens device*, ὑπεριδὼν, over-looking them; He demean'd Himſelf ſo, as if He did not take notice of them. He wink'd as if He did not ſee them, and would not deal ſo ſeverely with them: the Eye of his Juſtice ſeem'd to wink, in not calling them to an account for their ſin.

3. *His ſlowneſs to anger is manifeſt to the Iſraelites.* You know how often they are call'd a *ſtiff-necked People*; they are ſaid to do evil *from their youth*, i. e. from the time wherein they were erected a Nation and Common-wealth; and that *the City had been a provocation of his anger, and of his fury, from the day that they built it, even to this day*, i. e. the day of *Jeremiah*'s Propheſie, *that he ſhould remove it from before his face*, Jer. 32. 31. From the Days of *Solomon*, ſay ſome, which is too much a curtailing of the *Text*, as though their Provocations had taken date no higher than from the time of *Solomon*'s rearing the Temple, and beautifying the City, whereby it ſeem'd to be a new Building. They began more early, they ſcarce diſcontinued their revolting from God, they were a *grief to Him fourty Years together in the Wilderneſs*, *Pſal.* 95. 10. *Yet He ſuffer'd their manners*, Acts 13. 18. He bore with their ill behaviour, and ſawcineſs towards Him; and no ſooner was *Joſhua*'s Head laid, and the Elders that were their Conductors, gathered to their Fathers, but the next Generation forſook God, and ſmutted themſelves with the *Idolatry* of the Nations, *Judg.* 2. 7, 10, 11. And when He puniſhed them by proſpering the Arms of their Enemies againſt them, they were no ſooner delivered upon their Cry and Humiliation, but they began a new Scene of Idolatry. And though He brought upon them the Power of the *Babylonian Empire*, and laid Chains upon them, to bring them to their right Mind. And at ſeventy *Years* end He ſtruck off their Chains, by altering the whole Poſture of Affairs in that part of the World for their ſakes; Overturning one Empire, and ſettling another for their Reſtoration to their Ancient City. And though they did not after diſown Him for their God, and ſet up *Baal in his Throne*, yet they multiplied fooliſh Traditions, whereby they impaired the Authority of the Law; yet He ſuſtained them with a wonderful *Patience*, and preferred them before all other People in the firſt offers of the Goſpel; And after they had out-rag'd not only his Servants the Prophets, but his Son the Redeemer,

yet

yet he did not forſake them, but employed his Apoſtles to ſollicit them, and publiſh among them the Doctrine of Salvation. So that his treating this People, might well be call'd *much long ſuffering*, it being above one thouſand five hundred *Years*, wherein he bore with them, or mildly puniſhed them, far leſs than their Deſerts. Their coming out of *Egypt* being about the Year of the World 2450, and their final Deſtruction as a Commonwealth, not till about Forty *Years* after the Death of Chriſt; and all this while his *Patience* did ſometimes wholly reſtrain his Juſtice, and ſometimes let it fall upon them in ſome few drops, but made no total Devaſtation of their Countrey, nor wrote his Revenge in extraordinary bloody Characters, till the *Roman* Conqueſt, wherein he put a Period to them, both as a Church and State.

In *particular this Patience is manifeſt.*

1. In his *giving warning of Judgments, before he Orders them to go forth.* He doth not Puniſh in a Paſſion, and haſtily; He ſpeaks before he ſtrikes, and ſpeaks that he may not ſtrike. Wrath is publiſht, before it is executed, and that a long Time; an hundred and twenty *Years Advertiſement* was given to a debauch'd World, before the Heavens were open'd, to ſpout down a Deluge upon them. He will not be accuſed of coming unawares upon a People; He inflicts nothing, but what he foretold either immediately to the People that provoke him, or antiently to them that have been their forerunners in the ſame Provocation, *Hoſ.* 7. 12. *I will chaſtiſe them as their Congregation hath heard.* Many of the Leaves of the Old Teſtament are full of thoſe Preſages and *Warnings* of approaching Judgment. Theſe make up a great Part of the Volume of it in various Editions, according to the State of the ſeveral provoking Times. *Warnings* are given to thoſe People that are moſt abominable in his ſight; *Zeph.* 2. 1, 2. *Gather your ſelves together, yea gather together Oh Nation, not deſired*; 'tis a *Meioſis*, Oh Nation abhorr'd, *before the Decree bring forth.* He ſends his Heralds before he ſends his Armies; He *ſummons* them by the Voice of his Prophets, before he confounds them by the Voice of his Thunders. When a Parley is beaten, a White Flag of Peace is hung out, before a black Flag of Fury is ſet up. He ſeldom cuts down Men by his Judgments, before he hath *hewed them by his Prophets*, Hoſ. 6. 5. Not a remarkable Judgment but was *foretold:* The Floud to the Old World by *Noah:* The Famine to *Egypt* by *Joſeph:* The Earthquake by *Amos*, *Amos* 1. 1. The Storm from *Chaldea* by *Jeremy:* The Captivity of the *Ten Tribes* by *Hoſea:* The total Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, and the Temple by *Chriſt himſelf:* He hath choſen the beſt Perſons in the World to give thoſe Intimations; *Noah*, the moſt Righteous Perſon on the Earth for the Old World; and his *Son* the moſt beloved Perſon in Heaven for the *Jews* in the later Time. And in other parts of the World, and in the later Times where he hath not *warned* by Prophets, he hath ſupplied it by Prodigies in the Air and Earth; Hiſtories are full of ſuch *Items* from Heaven. Leſſer Judgments are fore-warners of greater, as Lightnings before Thunder, are Meſſengers to tell us of a ſucceeding Clap.

1. He doth *often give warning of Judgments.* He comes not to Extremity, till he hath often ſhaken the Rod over Men; He thunders often, before he cruſheth them with his Thunder-bolt; He doth not till after the *firſt and ſecond Admonition* puniſh a Rebel, as he would have us reject a Heretick. *He ſpeaks once, yea twice*, Job 33. 14. *and Man perceives it not*; He ſends *one Meſſage* after *another*, and waits the ſucceſs of many Meſſages, before he ſtrikes. *Eight Prophets* were order'd to acquaint the Old World with approaching Judgment: 2 *Pet.* 2. 5. He ſaved *Noah the eighth Perſon, a Preacher of Righteouſneſs bringing in the Flood upon the World of the ungodly*, called the eighth in reſpect of his Preaching, not in regard of his Preſervation; He was *the eighth* Preacher, in order from the beginning of the World, that endeavoured to reſtore the World to the way of Righteouſneſs. Moſt indeed conſider him here, as the *eighth Perſon* ſaved, ſo do our Tranſlators: And therefore add *Perſon*, which is not in the *Greek*. Some others conſider him here as the *eighth Preacher* of Righteouſneſs, reckoning *Enoch* the Son of *Seth* the firſt: Grounding it upon *Gen.* 4. 26. *Then began Men to call on the Name of the Lord*, Heb. *Then it was began to call in the Name of the Lord*; τὸ ὄνομα τῶ κυρίου θεῶ. Sept. *He began to call in the Name of the Lord*, which others render he began *to Preach*, or call upon Men in the Name of the Lord. The word קָרָא ſignifies to Preach, or to call upon Men by Preaching, *Prov.* 1. 21. *Wiſdom cryeth*, or *Preaches*; and if this be ſo, as it is very probable, 'tis eaſie to reckon him the *eighth Preacher*, by numbring the ſucceſſive Heads of the Generations; *Gen.* 5. Beginning at *Enoſh* the *firſt Preacher* of Righteouſneſs. * So many there were before God choakt the Old World with Water, and ſwept them away; 'tis clear he often did admoniſh by his Prophets, the *Jews* of their Sin, and the Wrath which ſhould come upon them. One Prophet, *Hoſea* Propheſied *Seventy Years*; for he Propheſied in the Days of Four Kings of *Judah*, and *one of Iſrael*, *Jeroboam* the Son of *Joaſh*, *Hoſ.* 1. 1.. or *Jeroboam the Second* of that Name. *Uzziah* King of *Judah*, in whoſe Reign *Hoſea* Propheſied, lived *thirty eight Years* after the Death of *Jeroboam*. The *Second Jotham*, *Uzziah*'s Succeſſor, Reigned *ſixteen Years*, *Ahaz ſixteen*, *Hezekiah twenty nine Years*; now take nothing of *Hezekiah*'s Time, and Date the beginning of his Propheſie from the laſt Year of *Jeroboam*'s Reign, and the Time of *Hoſea*'s Propheſie, will be *Seventy Years* compleat; wherein God warned thoſe People, and waited the return particularly of *Iſrael*; † and not leſs than *Five of thoſe* we call the *leſſer Prophets*, were ſent to foretel the Deſtruction of the *Ten Tribes*, and to call them to Repentance: *Hoſea*, *Joel*, *Amos*, *Micah*, *Jonah*; and though we have nothing of *Jonah*'s Propheſie in this concern of *Iſrael*, yet that he lived in the Time of the ſame *Jeroboam*, and Propheſied things, which are not upon Record in the Book of *Jonah*, is clear; 2 *Kings* 14. 15. And beſides thoſe, *Iſaiah* Propheſied alſo in the Reign of the ſame Kings, as *Hoſea* did; *Iſa.* 1. 1. And it is God's uſual Method, to ſend forth his Servants, and when their Admonitions are ſlighted, he Commiſſions others, before he ſends out his deſtroying Armies, *Mat.* 22. 3, 4, 7.

* Vid. *Gells Geographia.*

† *Sanctius.* Prolegom. in Hoſea. Prolog. *the* 3d.

2. He doth *often give warning of Judgments, that he might not pour out his Wrath.* He ſummons them to a ſurrender of themſelves, and a return from their Rebellion, that they might not feel the force of his Arms. He offers Peace before he ſhakes off the Duſt of his Feet, that his deſpiſed Peace might not return in Vain to him, to ſollicite a Revenge from his Anger. He hath a right to puniſh upon the *firſt* Commiſſion of a Crime, but he *warns* Men of what they have deſerved, of what his Juſtice moves him to inflict, that by having recourſe to his Mercy, he might not exerciſe the right of his Juſtice. God ſought to kill *Moſes* for not circumciſing

cumciſing his Son, *Exod.* 4. 24. Could God that ſought it, miſs of a way to do it? Could a Creature lurch or fly from him? God put on the garb of an Enemy, that *Moſes* might be diſcouraged from being an Inſtrument of his own Ruine. God manifeſted an Anger againſt *Moſes* for his neglect, as if he would then have deſtroyed him, that *Moſes* might *prevent* it, by caſting off his careleſsneſs, and doing his Duty. He ſought to kill him by ſome evident Sign, that *Moſes* might eſcape the Judgment by his Obedience. He threatens *Nineveh* by the Prophet with Deſtruction, that *Nineveh*'s Repentance might make void the Propheſie. He fights with Men by the Sword of his Mouth, that he might not pierce them by the Sword of his Wrath. He threatens, that Men might prevent the Execution of his Threatning; He terrifies, that he might not deſtroy, but that Men by Humiliation may lye proſtrate before him, and move the Bowels of his Mercy to a louder ſound, than the Voice of his Anger. He takes Time to whet his Sword, that Men may turn themſelves from the Edge of it. He roars like a Lion, that Men, by hearing his Voice, may ſhelter themſelves from being torn by his Wrath. There is Patience in the ſharpeſt threatning, that we may avoid the Scourge. Who can charge God with an eagerneſs to Revenge, that ſends ſo many *Heralds*, and ſo *often* before he ſtrikes, that he might be prevented from ſtriking? His Threatnings have not ſo much of a black Flag, as of an Olive Branch. He lifts up his Hand, before he ſtrikes, that Men might *See* and avert the ſtroke, *Iſaiah* 26. 11.

2. *His Patience is manifeſt, in long delaying his threatned Judgments, though he finds no Repentance in the Rebels.* He doth ſometimes delay his lighter Puniſhments, becauſe he doth not delight in torturing his Creatures; but he doth *longer delay* his deſtroying Puniſhments, ſuch as put an end to Mens Happineſs, and remit them to their final and unchangeable State; becauſe he *doth not delight in the Death of a Sinner.* While he is preparing his Arrows, he is waiting for an occaſion to lay them aſide, and dull their Points, that he may with Honour march back again, and disband his Armies. He brings lighter Smarts ſooner, that Men might not think him aſleep, but he ſuſpends the more terrible Judgments, that Men might be led to Repentance. He ſcatters not his conſuming Fires at the firſt, but brings on ruining Vengeance with a *ſlow pace*; *Sentence againſt an Evil Work is not ſpeedily executed*, Eccleſ. 8. 11. The *Jews therefore* ſay, that *Michael*, the Miniſter of Juſtice, flies with one Wing, but *Gabriel* the Miniſter of Mercy with two. An hundred and twenty Years did God wait upon the old World, and delay their Puniſhment, all the Time the *Ark was preparing*, 1 Pet. 3. 20. Wherein that Wicked Generation did not enjoy only a *bare Patience*, but a *ſtriving Patience.* Gen. 6. 3. *My Spirit ſhall not ſtrive with Man, yet his Days ſhall be one hundred and twenty Years*, the Days wherein I will ſtrive with him; that his Long-ſuffering might not loſe all its Fruit, and remit the Objects of it into the Hands of conſuming Juſtice. It was the *Tenth Generation of the World from* Adam, when the Deluge overflow'd it, ſo long did God bear with them. And the *Tenth Generation from* Noah wherein *Sodom* was conſumed. God did not come to keep his Aſſize in *Sodom*, till *the cry of their Sins was very ſtrong*, that it had been a wrong to his Juſtice to have reſtrain'd it any longer. The cry was ſo loud, that he could not be at quiet, as it were, on his Throne of Glory for the diſturbing noiſe, *Gen.* 18. 20, 21. Sin tranſgreſſeth the Law, the Law being violated, ſolicites Juſtice, Juſtice being urg'd pleads for Puniſhment; the cry of their Sins did as it were force him from Heaven to come down, and examine what cauſe there was for that Clamour. Sin cries *loud and long*, before he takes his Sword in Hand. *Four hundred Years* he kept off deſerved Deſtruction from the *Amorites*, and deferr'd making good his Promiſe to *Abraham*, of giving *Canaan* to his Poſterity out of his Long-ſuffering to the *Amorites*, *Gen.* 15. 16. In the *Fourth Generation* they ſhall come hither again, *for the Iniquity of the* Amorites *is not yet full.* Their meaſure was filling then, but not ſo full as to put a ſtop to any further *Patience* till *Four hundred Years after.* The uſual Time in ſucceeding Generations from the denouncing of Judgments to the Execution, is *Forty Years*, this ſome ground upon *Ezek.* 4. 6. *Thou ſhalt bear the Iniquity of the Houſe of* Judah *Forty Days*, taking each Day for a Year. Though *Hoſea* lived *Seventy Years*, yet from the beginning of his Prophecying Judgments againſt *Iſrael*, to the pouring them out upon that Idolatrous People, it was *Forty Years. Hoſea* as was mentioned before, propheſied againſt them in the Days of *Jeroboam the Second*, in whoſe Time God did wonderfully deliver *Iſrael*, 2 *Kings* 14. 26, 27. From that Time till the total Deſtruction of the *Ten Tribes* it was *Forty Years*, as may eaſily be computed from the Story, 2 *Kings* 15. 16, 17 *Chap.* by the Reign of the ſucceeding Kings. So *Forty Years* after the moſt horrid Villany that ever was committed in the Face of the Sun, *viz.* The *Crucifying the Son of God*, was *Jeruſalem* deſtroyed, and the Inhabitants captiv'd; ſo long did God delay a viſible Puniſhment for ſuch an outrage. Sometimes he *prolongs* ſending a threatned Judgment upon a meer ſhadow of Humiliation; ſo he did that denounced againſt *Ahab.* He turn'd it over to his Poſterity, and adjourn'd it to another Seaſon, 1 *Kings* 21. 29. He doth not iſſue out an Arreſt upon one Tranſgreſſion, you often find him not commencing a ſuit againſt Men, till *three and four Tranſgreſſions.* The firſt of *Amos*, all along that Chapter, and the Second Chapter; for *three and four*, i. e. *Seven.* A certain number for an uncertain. He gives not orders to his Judgments to march, till Men be obſtinate, and refuſe any Commerce with him. He ſtops them, till *there be no remedy*, 2 Chron. 36. 16. It muſt be a *great wickedneſs* that gives vent to them, *Hoſ.* 10. 15. Heb. *your wickedneſs of wickedneſs.* He is ſo *ſlow to Anger*, and ſtays the Puniſhment his Enemies deſerve, that he may ſeem to have forgot his kindneſs to his Friends, *Pſalm* 44. 24. *Wherefore hideſt thou thy Face and forgetteſt our Affliction, and Oppreſſion?* He lets his People groan under the Yoak of their Enemies, as if he were made up of kindneſs to his Enemies, and anger againſt his Friends. This delaying of Puniſhment to evil Men, is viſible in his ſuſpending the terrifying Acts of Conſcience, and ſupporting it only, in his checking, admoniſhing, and controuling Acts. The *Patience* of a Governour is ſeen in the patient mildneſs of his Deputy. *Davids* Conſcience did not terrifie him, till *nine Months* after his Sin of Murder. Should God ſet open the Mouth of this Power within us, not only the Earth, but our own Bodies, and Spirits, would be a burden to us. 'Tis long before God puts Scorpions into the hands of Mens Conſciences, to ſcourge them. He holds back the Rod, waiting for the hour of our return, as if that would be a recompence for our offences, and his forbearance.

3. *His Patience is manifeſt in his unwillingneſs to execute his Judgments, when he can delay no longer. He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men.*

Men, Lamen. 3. 33. *Heb. He doth not afflict from his Heart.* He takes no Pleaſure in it, as he is Creator. The height of Mens Provocations, and the neceſſity of the preſerving his Rights, and vindicating his Laws, obligeth him to it, as he is the Governour of the World. As a Judge may willingly condemn a Malefactor to Death out of affection to the Laws, and deſire to preſerve the Order of Government, but unwillingly, out of Compaſſion to the Offender himſelf. When he reſolved upon the Deſtruction of the Old World, he ſpake it, as a God grieved with an occaſion of Puniſhment, *Gen. 6. 6, 7. compared together.* When he came to reckon with *Adam*, *he walked*, he did not run with his Sword in his Hand upon him, as a mighty Man with an eagerneſs to deſtroy him, *Gen.* 3. 8. And that *in the cool of the Day*, a Time when Men tired in the Day, are unwilling to engage in a hard Employment. His exerciſing Judgment, is a *coming out of his Place*, Iſa. 26. 21. *Micah* 1. 3. He comes out of his Station, to exerciſe Judgment; a Throne is more his Place than a Tribunal. Every Prophecy loaded with Threatnings, is call'd the *Burden of the Lord*, a burden to him to execute it, as well as to Men to ſuffer it. Though *three Angels* came to *Abraham* about the Puniſhment of *Sodom*, whereof one *Abraham* ſpeaks to as to God, yet but *two* appear'd at the Deſtruction of *Sodom*; as if the Governour of the World were unwilling to be preſent at ſuch dreadful Work, *Gen.* 19. 1. And when the Man that had the Inkhorn by his ſide, that was appointed, to mark thoſe that were to be preſerved in the common Deſtruction, return'd to give an account of the performing his Commiſſion, *Ezek.* 9. 10. We read not of the return of thoſe that were to kill, as if God delighted only to hear again of his Works of Mercy, and had no mind to hear again of his ſevere Proceedings.

* *Mercer in Gen.* 1. 5. * The *Jews* to ſhew Gods unwillingneſs to Puniſh, imagine that Hell was created the Second Day, becauſe that Days work is not pronounced good by God, as all the other Days works are, *Gen.* 1. 8.

† *Creſſol. Decad.* 2. *p.* 163. 1. *When God doth Puniſh he doth it with ſome regret.* † When he hurls down his Thunders, he ſeems to do it with a backward Hand: Becauſe with an unwilling Heart. He created, ſaith *Chryſoſtom*, the World in Six Days, but was Seven *Days* in deſtroying one City *Jericho*, which he had before devoted to be razed to the ground. What is the Reaſon, ſaith he, that God is ſo quick to build up, but ſlow to pull down? His Goodneſs excites his Power to the One, but is not earneſt to perſwade him to the Other. When he comes to ſtrike, he doth it with a ſigh or groan, *Iſa.* 1. 24. *Ah I will eaſe me of my Adverſaries, and avenge me on my Enemies.* הוי *Ah*, a note of Grief. So *Hoſ.* 6. 4. *Oh Ephraim what ſhall I do unto thee? Oh Judah, what ſhall I do unto thee?* 'Tis an *Addubitatio*, a Figure in Rhetorick, as if God were troubled, that he muſt deal ſo ſharply with them, and give them up to their Enemies. I have tried all means to reclaim you, I have uſed all ways of Kindneſs, and nothing prevails. What ſhall I do? My Mercy invites me to ſpare them, and their ingratitude provokes me to Ruine them. God had born with that People of *Iſrael* almoſt *three hundred Years*, from the ſetting up of the Calves at *Dan* and *Bethel*; ſent many a Prophet to warn them, and ſpent many a Rod to reform them. And when he comes to execute his Threatnings, he doth it with a conflict in himſelf, *Hoſea* 11. 8. *How ſhall I give thee up, Oh Ephraim? How ſhall I deliver thee, Iſrael?* As if there were a pull-back in his own Bowels, he ſolemnizeth their approaching Funeral with a hearty groan; and takes his Farewel of the dying Malefactor with a Pang in himſelf. How often in former Times when he had ſign'd a warrant for their Execution, did he call it back? *Pſalm* 78. 38. *Many a Time turn'd he his Anger away.* Many a Time he recall'd, or order'd his Anger, to *return again* as the Word ſignifies, as if he were irreſolute what to do. He recall'd it, as a Man doth his Servant ſeveral Times, when he is ſending him upon an unwelcome Meſſage; or as a tender Hearted Prince, wavers, and trembles, when he is to ſign a Writ for the Death of a Rebel, that hath been before his Favourite, as if when he had ſign'd the Writ, he blotted out his Name again, and flung away the Pen. And his Method is remarkable, when he came to puniſh *Sodom*; though the cry of their Sin had been fierce in his Ears, yet when he comes to make Inquiſition, he declares his Intention to *Abraham*, as if he were deſirous that *Abraham* ſhould have helped him to ſome Arguments, to ſtop the out-goings of his Judgment. He gave Liberty to the beſt Perſon in the World, to ſtand in the gap, and enter into a Treaty with him, to ſhew (ſaith one *) how willingly his Mercy would have Compounded with his Juſtice for their Redemption. And *Abraham* interceded ſo long, till he was aſhamed for pleading the Cauſe of *Patience* and Mercy, to the wrong of the Rights of Divine Juſtice. Perhaps had *Abraham* had the Courage to ask, God would have had the Compaſſion to grant a Reprieve juſt at the Time of Execution.

* *Pierce* ſinner im-plead. *pag.* 227.

2. *His Patience is manifeſt, in that when he begins to ſend out his Judgments, he doth it by Degrees.* His Judgments are *as the Morning Light*, which goes forth by *degrees* in the Hemiſphere, *Hoſ.* 6. 5. He doth not ſhoot all his Thunders at once, and bring his ſharpeſt Judgment in array at one Time, but gradually, that a People may have Time to turn to him, *Joel* 1. 4. Firſt the *Palmer-worm*, then the *Locuſt*, then the *Canker-worm*, then the *Caterpillar*; what one left, the other was to eat, if there were not a timely return. A Jewiſh Writer, † ſaith, theſe Judgments came not all in one Year, but *one Year after another.* The Palmer-worm and Locuſt might have eaten all, but Divine Patience ſet bounds to the devouring Creatures. God had been firſt as a *Moth to Iſrael*; Hoſ. 5. 12. *Therefore will I be to the Houſe of Ephraim as a Moth*; *Rivet* tranſlates it, *I have been*, in the *Hebr.* 'tis I, without adding, I have been, or I will be, and more probably I have been; I was as a Moth, which makes little Holes in a Garment, and conſumes it not all at once; and as *rottenneſs to the Houſe of Judah*, or a Worm that eats into Wood by Degrees. Indeed this People had conſum'd inſenſibly, partly by civil Combuſtions, change of Governours, Foreign Invaſions, yet they were as obſtinate in their Idolatry as ever; at laſt God would be no longer to them as a Moth, but as a *Lion*, tear, and go away; *ver.* 14. So, *Hoſ.* 2. God had diſowned *Iſrael* for his Spouſe, *ver.* 2. *She is not my Wife, neither am I her Husband*, yet he had not taken away her Ornaments, which by the right of Divorce he might have done, but ſtill expected her Reformation, for that the Threatning intimates, *ver.* 3. let her put away her Whoredom, *leſt I ſtrip her Naked, and ſet her as in the Day when ſhe was born* If ſhe returned, ſhe might recover what ſhe had loſt, if not, ſhe might be ſtript of what remained. Thus God dealt with *Judah*, Ezek. 9. 3. The Glory of God goes firſt from the *Cherub* to the *Threſh-*

† *Kimchi.*

hold of the Houſe, and ſtays there, as if he had a mind to be invited back again; then it goes from the Threſhold of the Houſe, and ſtands over the *Cherubims*, as if upon a penitent Call it would drop down again to its ancient Station and Seat, over which it hovered; *Ezek.* 10. 18. And when he was not ſollicited to return, he departs out of the City, and ſtood upon the Mountain, which is on the Eaſt part of the City, *Ezek.* 11. 23. looking ſtill towards, and hovering about the Temple, which was on the Eaſt of *Jeruſalem*, as if loath to depart, and abandon the Place and People. He walks ſo leaſurely with his Rod in his Hand, as if he had a Mind rather to fling it away, than uſe it. His *Patience* in not pouring out all his Vials, is more remarkable than his Wrath in pouring out one or two. Thus hath God made his ſlowneſs to Anger viſible to us in the gradual Puniſhment of us; Firſt, the *Peſtilence* on this City, then *Firing* our Houſes, *Conſumption* of Trade, theſe have not been anſwer'd with ſuch a Carriage as God expects, therefore a greater is reſerved. I dare Prognoſticate, upon Reaſons you may gather from what hath been ſpoke before, if I be not much miſtaken, the Forty Years of his uſual *Patience* are very near expired, he hath inflicted ſome, that he might be met with in a way of Repentance, and omit with Honour the inflicting the Remainder.

4. *His Patience is manifeſt, in moderating his Judgments, when he ſends them.* Doth he empty his Quiver of his Arrows, or exhauſt his Magazines of Thunder? No, he could roul one Thunder-bolt ſucceſſively upon all Mankind; 'tis as eaſie with him to Create a perpetual motion of Lightning and Thunder, as of the Sun and Stars, and make the World, as terrible by the one, as it is delightful by the other. He opens not all his Store, he ſends out a light Party to Skirmiſh with Men, and puts not in array his whole Army, *He ſtirs not up all his Wrath*, Pſalm 78. 38. He doth but pinch, where he might have torn a ſunder; when he takes away much, he leaves enough to ſupport us. If he had ſtirred up all his Anger, he had taken away all, and our Lives to boot. He takes up but a few ſparks, takes but one Firebrand to fling upon Men, when he might diſcharge the whole Furnace upon them; he ſends but a few drops out of the Cloud, which he might make to break in the groſs, and fall down upon our Heads to overwhelm us; he abates much of what he might do. When he might ſweep away a whole Nation by deluges of Water, corruption of the Air, or convulſions of the Earth, or by other ways that are not wanting at his Order. He picks out only *ſome* Perſons, ſome Families, ſome Cities, ſends a Plague into one Houſe, and not into another; how is *Patience* to the ſtock of a Nation, while he inflicts Puniſhment upon ſome of the moſt notorious Sinners in it. *Herod* is ſuddenly ſnatcht away, being willingly flattered into the Thoughts of his being a God; God ſingl'd out the chief in the Herd, for whoſe ſake he had been affronted by the Rabble. *Acts* 12. 22, 23. Some find him ſparing them, while others feel him deſtroying them; he arreſts ſome, when he might ſeize all, all being his Debtors; and often in great Deſolations brought upon a People for their Sin, he hath left a *ſtump* in the Earth, as *Daniel* ſpeaks, *Dan.* 4. 15. for a Nation to grow upon it again, and ariſe to a ſtronger Conſtitution. He doth puniſh *leſs than our Iniquities deſerve*, Ezra 9. 13. and rewards us *not according to our Iniquities*, Pſal. 103. 10. The greatneſs of any Puniſhment in this Life, anſwers not the greatneſs of the Crime. Though there be an Equity in whatſoever he doth, yet there is not an equality to what we deſerve. Our Iniquities would juſtifie a ſeverer Treating of us; his Juſtice goes not here to the end of its Line, 'tis ſtopped in its Progreſs, and the blows of it weakned by his *Patience*; he did not curſe the Earth after *Adams* fall, that it ſhould bring forth no Fruit, but that it ſhould not bring forth Fruit without the wearifom Toil of Man, and ſubjected him to Diſtempers preſently, but inflicted not Death immediately; while he puniſhed him, he ſupported him; and while he expelled him from *Paradiſe*, he did not order him not to caſt his Eye towards it, and conceive ſome hopes of regaining that happy Place.

5. *His Patience is ſeen in giving great Mercies after Provocations.* He is ſo *ſlow to Anger*, that he heaps many kindneſſes upon a Rebel, inſtead of Puniſhment. There is a proſperous wickedneſs, wherein the Provokers ſtrength continues firm; the Troubles which like Clouds drop upon others, are blown away from them, and they are *not plagued like other Men*, that have a more worthy demeanour towards God, *Pſalm* 73. 3, 4, 5. He doth not only continue their Lives, but ſends out freſh Beams of his Goodneſs upon them, and calls them by his Bleſſings, that they may acknowledge their own Fault and his Bounty, which he is not obliged to by any gratitude he meets with from them, but by the richneſs of his own patient Nature: For he finds the unthankfulneſs of Men as great as his Benefits to them. He doth not only continue his outward Mercies, while we continue our Sins, but ſometimes gives freſh Benefits after new Provocations: That if poſſible he might excite an ingenuity in Men. When *Iſrael* at the *Red Sea* flung dirt in the Face of God, by quarrelling with his Servant *Moſes* for bringing them out of *Egypt*, and miſ-judging God in his Deſign of Deliverance, and were ready to ſubmit themſelves to their former Oppreſſors, *Exod.* 14. 11, 12. which might juſtly have urged God to ſay to them, take your own Courſe; yet he is not only *patient* under their unjuſt Charge, but *makes bare his Arm in a deliverance at the Red Sea*, that was to be an amazing Monument to the World in all Ages; and afterwards when they repiningly quarrelled with him in their wants in the Wilderneſs, he did not only not Revenge himſelf upon them, or caſt off the Conduct of them, but bore with them by a miraculous long ſuffering, and ſupplied them with miraculous proviſion, *Manna* from Heaven, and Water from a Rock. Food is given to ſupport us, and Cloaths to cover us, and Divine *Patience* makes the Creatures, which we turn to another uſe, than what they were at firſt intended for, ſerve us contrary to their own *Genius:* For had they Reaſon, no queſtion but they would complain, to be ſubjected to the Service of Man, who hath been ſo ungrateful to their Creator, and groan at the abuſe of God's *Patience*, in the abuſe they themſelves ſuffer from the Hands of Man.

6. *All this is more manifeſt, if we conſider the Provocations he hath.* Wherein his *ſlowneſs to Anger* infinitely tranſcends the *Patience* of any Creature; nay the Spirits of all the Angels and Glorified Saints in Heaven, would be too narrow to bear the Sins of the World for one Day, nay not ſo much as the Sins of Churches, which is a little ſpot in the whole World: 'Tis becauſe *he is the Lord*, one of an infinite Power over himſelf, that not only the whole Maſs of the Rebellious World, but of *the Sons of* Jacob (either conſidered as a Church and Nation ſpringing from the Loyns of *Jacob*, or conſidered as the Regenerate Part of the World,

World, ſometimes called the Seed of *Jacob*) *are not conſumed*, Mal. 3. 6. A *Jonah* was angry with God, for recalling his Anger from a ſinful People; had God committed the Government of the World to the Glorified Saints, who are perfect in Love and Holineſs, the World would have had an End long ago; they would have acted that, which they Sue for at the Hands of God, and is not granted them, *Rev.* 6. 10. *How long Lord holy and true, doſt thou not avenge our Blood, on them that dwell on the Earth?* God hath Deſigns of *Patience* above the World, above the unſinning Angels, and perfectly renewed Spirits in Glory. The greateſt Created long ſuffering is infinitely diſproportion'd to the Divine; Fire from Heaven would have been ſhowred down before the greateſt Part of a Day were ſpent, if a Created Patience had the Conduct of the World, though that Creature were poſſeſſed with the Spirit of Patience, extracted from all the Creatures which are in Heaven, or are, or ever were upon the Earth. Methinks *Moſes* intimates this; for as ſoon as God had paſſed by proclaiming his Name Gracious, and *Long ſuffering*; as ſoon as ever *Moſes* had paid his Adoration, he falls a Praying, that God would go with the *Iſraelites*; Exod. 34. 8, 9. *For it is a ſtiff-necked People*: What an Argument is here for God to go along with them? He might rather, ſince he had heard him but juſt before ſay, he would *by no means clear the Guilty*, deſire God to ſtand further off from them, for fear the Fire of his Wrath ſhould burſt out from him, to burn them as he did the *Sodomites*. But he conſiders, that as none but God had ſuch Anger to deſtroy them, ſo none but God had ſuch a *Patience* to bear with them; 'tis as much as if he ſhould have ſaid, Lord! if thou ſhould'ſt ſend the moſt tender-hearted Angel in Heaven to have the guidance of this People, they would be a loſt People; a Period will quickly be ſet to their Lives, no Created Strength can reſtrain its Power from cruſhing ſuch a ſtiff-necked People; Fleſh and Blood cannot bear them, nor any Created Spirit of a greater might.

1. Conſider *the greatneſs of the Provocations*. No light Matter, but *Actions of a great Defiance*: What is the practical Language of moſt in the World, but that of *Pharaoh? Who is the Lord that I ſhould obey him?* How many Queſtion his Being, and more, his Authority? What blaſphemies of him, what reproaches of his Majeſty? Men *drinking up Iniquity like Water, and* with a haſte and ardency *ruſhing into Sin, as the Horſe into the Battle*. What is there in the reaſonable Creature, that hath the quickeſt Capacity, and the deepeſt Obligation to ſerve him, but Oppoſition and Enmity, a ſlight of him in every thing, yea the Services moſt ſeriouſly performed, unſuited to the Royalty and Purity of ſo great a Being? Such *Provocations* as dare him to his Face, that are a burden to ſo Righteous a Judge, and ſo great a Lover of the Authority and Majeſty of his Laws; that were there but a ſpark of Anger in him, 'tis a wonder it doth not ſhew it ſelf; when he is invaded in all his Attributes, 'tis aſtoniſhing that this ſingle one of *Patience* and Meekneſs, ſhould withſtand the aſſault of all the reſt of his Perfections; his Being which is attack'd by Sin, ſpeaks for Vengeance. His Juſtice cannot be imagin'd to ſtand ſilent, without charging the Sinner. His Holineſs cannot but encourage his Juſtice to urge its Pleas, and be an Advocate for it. His Omniſcience proves the Truth of all the Charge; and his abuſed Mercy hath little Encouragement, to make Oppoſition to the Indictment; nothing but *Patience* ſtands in the gap to keep off the Arreſt of Judgment from the Sinner.

2. His *Patience* is manifeſt, if you conſider the *Multitudes of theſe Provocations*. Every Man hath Sin enough in a Day to make him ſtand amazed at Divine *Patience*, and to call it as well as the Apoſtle did, *all long ſuffering*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 16. How few Duties of a perfectly right ſtamp are performed? What unworthy Conſiderations mix themſelves like droſs, with our pureſt and ſincereſt Gold? How more numerous are the reſpects of the Worſhippers of him to themſelves, than unto him? How many Services are paid him, not out of Love to him, but becauſe he ſhould do us no hurt, and ſome Service; when we do not ſo much Deſign to pleaſe him, as to pleaſe our ſelves by Expectations of a Reward from him? What Maſter would endure a Servant that endeavoured to pleaſe him, only becauſe he ſhould not kill him? Is that former Charge of God upon the Old World yet out of date, that the *Imagination of the thoughts of the Heart of Man was only Evil, and that continually?* Gen. 6. 5. Was not the New World as chargeable with it as the Old? Certainly it was; *Gen.* 8. 21. And is of as much force this very minute, as it was then; how many are the Sins againſt Knowledge, as well as thoſe of Ignorance; preſumptuous Sins as well as thoſe of Infirmity? How numerous thoſe of Omiſſion and Commiſſion? * 'Tis above the reach of any Man's Underſtanding to conceive all the Blaſphemies, Oaths, Thefts, Adulteries, Murders, Oppreſſions, Contempt of Religion, the open Idolatries of *Turks* and *Heathens*, the more ſpiritual and refin'd Idolatries of others. Add to thoſe the ingratitude of thoſe that profeſs his Name, their Pride, Earthlineſs, Careleſsneſs, Sluggiſhneſs to Divine Duties; and in every one of thoſe a *Multitude of Provocations*; the whole Man being engag'd in every Sin, the Underſtanding contriving it, the Will embracing it, the Affections complying with it, and all the Members of the Body Inſtruments in the Acting the Unrighteouſneſs of it; every one of theſe Faculties beſtowed upon Men by him, are armed againſt him in every Act: And in every Employment of them there is a diſtinct Provocation, though center'd in one ſinful End and Object. What are the Offences all the Men of the World receive from their fellow Creatures, to the injuries God receives from Men, but as a ſmall Duſt of Earth to the whole Maſs of Earth and Heaven too? What Multitudes of Sins is one prophane Wretch guilty of in the ſpace of 20, 40, 50 Years? Who can compute the vaſt number of his Tranſgreſſions, from the firſt uſe of Reaſon to the Time of the Separation of his Soul from his Body; from his *entrance* into the World to his *Exit?* What are thoſe, to thoſe of a whole Village of the like Inhabitants? What are thoſe to thoſe of a great City? Who can number up all the foul-mouth'd Oaths, the beaſtly exceſs, the goatiſh uncleanneſs committed in the ſpace of a Day, Year, Twenty Years in this City, much leſs in the whole Nation, leaſt of all in the whole World? Were it no more than the common Idolatry of former Ages, when the whole World turn'd their backs upon their Creator, and paſſed him by to ſue to a Creature, a Stock, or Stone, or a degraded Spirit. How provoking would it be to a Prince to ſee a whole City under his Dominion deny him a Reſpect; and pay it to his Scullion, or the common Executioner he employs? Add to this the unjuſt Invaſions of Kings, the Oppreſſions exerciſed upon Men, all the Private and Publick Sins that have been committed in the World, ever ſince it began. The *Gentiles* were deſcrib'd by the *Apoſtle*, *Rom.* 1. 29, 30, 31. in a black Character, *They were Haters of God*; yet how did

* *Leſſius* pag. 152.

did the *Riches of his Patience* preſerve Multitudes of ſuch diſingenuous Perſons, and how many *Millions of ſuch haters of Him* breath every Day in his Air, and are maintained by his Bounty, have their Tables ſpread, and their Cups fill'd to the brim, and that too in the midſt of reiterated Belchings of their Enmity againſt Him? All are under ſufficient *Provocations* of Him to the higheſt Indignation. The Preſiding Angels over Nations could not forbear, in Love and Honour to their Governour, to arm themſelves to the Deſtruction of their ſeveral Charges, if *Divine Patience* did not ſet them a Pattern, and their Obedience incline them to expect his Orders, before they act what their Zeal would prompt them to. The Devils would be glad of a Commiſſion to deſtroy the World, but that his *Patience* puts a ſtop to their fury, as well as his own Juſtice.

3. Conſider the *long time of this Patience.* He ſpread out his Hands *all the day* to a Rebellious World. *Iſaiah* 65. 2. All Mens Day, all God's Day, which is a *thouſand Years*, He hath born with the groſs of Mankind, with all the Nations of the World, in a long *ſucceſſion of Ages* for *five thouſand Years*, and upwards, already, and will bear with them till the time comes for the World's diſſolution. He hath ſuffered the monſtrous Acts of Men, and endur'd the contradictions of a ſinful World againſt Himſelf, from the firſt Sin of *Adam* to the laſt committed this Minute. The Line of his *Patience* hath run along with the duration of the World to this Day; and there is not any one of *Adam*'s Poſterity but hath been expenſive to Him, and partaked of the Riches of it.

4. *All theſe He bears when He hath a Senſe of them.* He *ſees* every Day the Roll and Catalogue of Sin increaſing, He hath a *diſtinct view* of every one from the Sin of *Adam* to the laſt, fill'd up in his *Omniſcience*, and yet gives no order for the arreſt of the World. He knows Men fitted for Deſtruction, all the inſtants He exerciſeth *long-ſuffering* towards them, which makes the Apoſtle call it not ſimply *long-ſuffering* without the addition of πολλῆ, *much long-ſuffering*, *Rom.* 9. 23. There is not a grain in the whole Maſs of Sin, that He hath not a diſtinct knowledge of, and of the quality of it. He perfectly underſtands the Greatneſs of his own Majeſty that is vilified, and the nature of the offence that doth diſparage Him. He is ſollicited by his *Juſtice*, directed by his *Omniſcience*, and armed with Judgments to vindicate Himſelf, but his Arm is reſtrained by *Patience.* To conclude, no indignity is hid from Him, no Iniquity is beloved by Him, the hatred of their ſinfulneſs is infinite, and the knowledge of their malice is exact. The ſubſiſting of the World under ſuch weighty Provocations, ſo numerous, ſo long time, and with his full Senſe of every one of them, is an evidence of ſuch a *forbearance* and *long-ſuffering*, that the addition of *Riches* which the Apoſtle puts to it, *Rom.* 2. 4. labours with an inſufficiency clearly to diſplay it.

III. *Why God doth exerciſe ſo much Patience.*

1. *To ſhew Himſelf appeaſeable.* God did not declare by his *Patience* to former Ages, or any Age, that he was appeaſed with them, or that they were in his Favour, but that he was appeaſable, that he was not an implacable Enemy, but that they might find him favourable to them, if they did ſeek after him, the continuance of the World by *Patience*, and the beſtowing many Mercies by Goodneſs, were not a natural Revelation of the manner how He would be appeaſed: that was made known only by the *Prophets*, and after the coming of Chriſt by the *Apoſtles*; and had indeed been Intelligible in ſome ſort to the whole World, had there been a Faithfulneſs in *Adam*'s Poſterity, to tranſmit the Tradition of the Firſt Promiſe to ſucceeding Generations. Had not the knowledge of that died by their careleſneſs and neglect, it had been eaſie to tell the reaſon of God's *Patience* to be in order to the exhibition of the *Seed of the Woman, to bruiſe the Serpents Head.*

They could not but naturally know themſelves Sinners, and worthy of Death; they might by eaſie reflections upon themſelves, collect that they were not in that comely and harmonious Poſture now, as they were when God firſt wrought them with his own Finger, and placed them as his Lieutenants in the World; they knew they did grievouſly offend Him, this they were taught by the ſprinklings of his Judgments among them ſometimes. And ſince He did not utterly root up Mankind, his ſparing *Patience* was a Prologue of ſome further Favours, or pardoning Grace to be diſplay'd to the World by ſome Methods of God yet unknown to them. Though the Earth was ſomething impair'd by the Curſe after the Fall, yet the main Pillars of it ſtood; the ſtate of the natural Motions of the Creature was not chang'd, the Heavens remain'd in the ſame poſture, wherein they were Created, the Sun and Moon, and other Heavenly Bodies, continued their uſefulneſs and refreſhing Influences to Man. *The Heavens* did ſtill *declare the Glory of God, day unto day* did *utter ſpeech, their Line is gone throughout all the Earth, and their words to the end of the World*, Pſal. 19. 1, 2, 3, 4. Which declar'd God to be willing to do good to his Creatures, and were as ſo many Legible Letters or Rudiments, whereby they might read his *Patience*, and that a further deſign of Favour to the World lay hid in that *Patience. Paul* applies this to the Preaching of the Goſpel, *Rom.* 10. 18. *Have they not heard the word of God? yes verily, their ſound went into all the Earth, and their words unto the end of the World.* Redeeming Grace could not be ſpell'd out by them in a clear notion, but yet they did declare that which is the Foundation of Goſpel-Mercy. Were not God *Patient*, there were no room for a Goſpel-Mercy, ſo that the Heavens declare the Goſpel, *not formally*, but *fundamentally*, in declaring the *long-ſuffering* of God, without which no Goſpel had been fram'd, or could have been expected. They could not but read in thoſe things favourable Inclinations towards them. And though they could not be ignorant, that they deſerved a mark of Juſtice, yet ſeeing themſelves ſupported by God, and beholding the regular Motions of the Heavens from Day to Day, and the Revolutions of the Seaſons of the Year, the natural Concluſion they might draw from thence was, That God was *placable*; ſince He behav'd Himſelf more as a tender Friend, that had no Mind to be at War with them, than an enraged Enemy. The good things which He gave them, and the *Patience* whereby He ſpar'd them, were no Arguments of an *implacable* Diſpoſition; and therefore of a Diſpoſition *willing to be appeaſed.* This is clearly the deſign of the *Apoſtles* arguing with the *Lyſtrians*, when they would have offered Sacrifices to *Paul*, *Acts* 14. 17. When *God ſuffered all Nations to walk in their own ways, He did dot leave Himſelf without witneſs, giving Rain from Heaven, and fruitful Seaſons.* What were thoſe witneſſes of? Not only the Being of a God, which they owned, as appears by their readineſs to Sacrifice to thoſe that were not Gods, only ſuppoſed to be ſo in their falſe Imaginations; but witneſſes to the tenderneſs of God, that He had no mind to be ſevere with his

his Creatures; but would allure them by ways of Goodneſs. * Had not *God's Patience* tended to this end, to bring the World under another Diſpenſation, the *Apoſtles* arguing from it had not been ſutable to his deſign, which ſeems to be a hindring the Sacrifices they intended for them, and a drawing them to embrace the Goſpel, and therefore preparing the way to it, by ſpeaking of the *Patience* and Goodneſs of God to them, as an unqueſtionable teſtimony of the *Reconcilableneſs of God* to them, by ſome Sacrifice which was repreſented under the common Notion of Sacrifices. Theſe things were not Witneſſes of Chriſt, or Syllables whereby they could ſpell out the Redeeming Perſon; but Witneſſes that God was *placable* in his own Nature. When Man abuſed thoſe noble Faculties God had given him, and diverted them from the Uſe and Service God intended them for, God might have ſtript Man of them, the firſt time that he miſ-imployed them; and it would have ſeemed moſt agreeable to his Wiſdom and Juſtice, not to ſuffer Himſelf to be abuſed, and the World to go contrary to its natural end. But ſince He did not level the World with its firſt nothing, but healed the World ſo favourably, it was evident, that his *Patience* pointed the World to a further deſign of Mercy and Goodneſs in Him. To imagine that God had no other deſign in his long-ſuffering but that of Vengeance, had been a Notion unſuitable to the Goodneſs and Wiſdom of God. He would never have pretended Himſelf to be a Friend, if He had harboured nothing but Enmity in his heart againſt them.

*Amyrald. Diſſert. P. 191, 192.

It had been far from his Goodneſs, to give them a cauſe to ſuſpect ſuch a deſign in Him, as his *Patience* certainly did, had He not intended it. Had He preſerv'd Men only for Puniſhment, 'tis more like, He would have treated Men, as Princes do thoſe they reſerve for the Ax or Halter, give them only things neceſſary, to uphold their Lives till the Day of Execution, and not have beſtowed upon them ſo many good things, to make their Lives delightful to them; nor have furniſh'd them with ſo many excellent Means to pleaſe their Senſes, and recreate their Minds; it had been a mocking of them to treat them at that rate, if nothing but puniſhment had been intended towards them. If the end of it to *lead Men to Repentance*, were eaſily intelligible by them, as the Apoſtle intimates (*Rom.* 2. 4. which is to be Link'd with the former Chapter, a Diſcourſe of the *Gentiles*. Not knowing, ſaith he, *That the riches of his forbearance and goodneſs, leads thee to Repentance.)* It alſo gives them ſome ground to hope for Pardon. For what other argument can more induce to Repentance, than an expectation of Mercy upon a relenting and acknowledging the crime? Without a deſign of Pardoning Grace, his *Patience* would have been in great meaſure exercis'd in vain: For by meer *Patience* God is not reconcil'd to a Sinner, no more than a Prince to a Rebel by bearing with him. Nor can a Sinner conclude Himſelf in the favour of God, no more than a Rebel can conclude himſelf in the favour of his Prince; only this he may conclude, that there is ſome hopes He may have the grant of a Pardon, ſince he hath time to Sue it out. And ſo much did the *Patience* of God naturally ſignifie, that He was of a reconcilable Temper, and was willing Men ſhould Sue out their Pardon upon Repentance; otherwiſe He might have magnified his Juſtice, and condemned Men by the Law of Works.

2. *He therefore exerciſed ſo much Patience to wait for Mens Repentance.* All the notices and warnings that God gives Men of either publick or perſonal Calamities, is a continual *Invitation to Repentance.* This was the common Interpretation the Heathens made of extraordinary Preſages and Prodigies, which ſhew'd as well the delays as the approaches of Judgments. What other Notion but this, that thoſe *warnings of Judgments* witneſs a *ſlowneſs to anger*, and a willingneſs to turn his Arrows another way, ſhould move them to multiply Sacrifices, go weeping to their Temples, ſound out Prayers to their Gods, and ſhew all thoſe other Teſtimonies of a Repentance, which their blind Underſtandings hit upon. If a * Prince ſhould ſometimes in a light and gentle manner puniſh a Criminal, and then relax it, and ſhew him much kindneſs, and afterwards inflict upon him another kind of Puniſhment as light as the former, and leſs than was due to his Crime, what could the Malefactor ſuſpect by ſuch a way of proceeding, but that the Prince by thoſe gently repeated Chaſtiſements, had a mind to move him to a regret for his Crime? And what other thoughts could Men naturally have of God's conduct, that He ſhould warn them of great Judgments, ſend light Afflictions, which are Teſtimonies rather of a *Patience*, than of a ſevere wrath, but that it was intended to move them to a relenting, and a breaking off their Sins by working Righteouſneſs? Though *Divine Patience* doth not in the event, induce Men to Repentance, yet the natural tendency of ſuch a treatment, is to mollifie Mens Hearts, to overcome their obſtinacy, and no Man hath any reaſon to judge otherwiſe of ſuch a proceeding. The *long-ſuffering of God is Salvation*, ſaith *Peter*, 2 *Pet.* 3. 15. i. e. hath a tendency to Salvation, in its being a ſollicitation of Men to the means of it: For the Apoſtle cites *Paul* for the confirmation of it, *Even as our beloved Brother Paul hath written unto you*, which muſt refer to *Rom.* 2. 4. *It leads to Repentance*, ἄγει, it conducts, which is more than barely to invite; it doth as it were take us by the hand, and point us to the way wherein we ſhould go, and for this end it was exerciſed not only towards the *Jews*, but towards the *Gentiles*, not only towards thoſe that are within the Pale of the Church, and under the Dews of the Goſpel, but to thoſe that are in Darkneſs, and in the ſhadow of Death: For this Diſcourſe of the Apoſtle was but an inference from what he had treated of in the *firſt Chapter*, concerning the Idolatry and Ingratitude of the *Gentiles*; ſince the *Gentiles* were to be puniſhed for the *abuſe* of it as well as the *Jews*, as he intimates, *ver.* 9. 'tis plain that his *Patience*, which is exerciſed towards the Idolatrous *Gentiles*, was to *allure them to Repentance* as well as others; and it was a ſufficient Motive in it ſelf to perſuade them to a change of their vile and groſs acts, to ſuch as were morally good. And there was enough in God's dealing with them, and in that Light they had to engage them to a better courſe, than what they uſually walked in. And though Men do abuſe God's *long-ſuffering*, to incourage their Impenitence, and perſiſting in their Crimes, yet that they cannot reaſonably imagine that to be the end of God, is evident; their own Gripes of Conſcience would acquaint them, that it is otherwiſe. They know that Conſcience is a Principle that God hath given them as well as Underſtanding, and Will and other Faculties. That God doth not approve of that, which the voice of their *own Conſciences*, and of the *Conſciences of all Men*, under natural Light, are utterly againſt. And if there were really in this *forbearance* of God an approbation of Mens Crimes, Conſcience could not frequently and univerſally in all Men check them for them. What Authority could *Conſcience* have to do it? But this

*Amyrald. Moral, To. P. 186.

this it doth in all Men. As the *Apoſtle*, *Rom.* 1. 22. *They know the judgment of God, that thoſe that do ſuch things*, which he had mentioned before, *are worthy of death.* In this thing the Conſciences of all Men cannot cry; they could not therefore conclude from hence God's approbation of their Iniquities, but his deſire that their Hearts ſhould be touched with a *Repentance* for them.

The *Sin of Ephraim is hid*, *Hoſ.* 13. 12, 13. i. e. God doth not preſently take notice of it, to order puniſhment; He lays it in a ſecret place from the Eye of his Juſtice, that *Ephraim* might not be his unwiſe Son, and *ſtay long in the place of breaking forth of Children*, i. e. That He ſhould ſpeedily reclaim himſelf, and not continue in the way of Deſtruction. God hath no need to abuſe any, He doth not lie to the Sons of Men, if He would have Men periſh, He could eaſily deſtroy them, and have done it long ago. He did not leave the woman *Jezabel* in being, nor lengthened out her time, but as a ſpace to *Repent.* *Revelations* 2. 21. That ſhe might reflect upon her ways, and devote her ſelf ſeriouſly to his ſervice, and her own happineſs. His *Patience* ſtands between the offending Creature and Eternal Miſery a long time, that Men might not fooliſhly throw away their Souls, and be damned for their Impenitency; by this He ſhews Himſelf ready to receive Men to Mercy upon their return. To what purpoſe doth He invite Men to *Repentance*, if He intended to deceive them, and damn them after they Repent?

3. *He doth exerciſe Patience for the Propagation of Mankind.* If God puniſhed every ſin *preſently*, there would not only be a Period put to Churches, but to the World; without *Patence Adam* had ſunk into Eternal Anguiſh the firſt Moment of his Provocation; and the whole World of Mankind in his Loins, had periſhed with him, and never ſeen the Light. If this Perfection had not interpoſed after the firſt Sin, God had loſt his end in the Creation of the World, which He *Created not in vain, but formed it to be inhabited*, *Iſai.* 45. 18. It had been inconſiſtent with the Wiſdom of God, to make a World to be inhabited, and deſtroy it upon Sin, when it had but two Principal Inhabitants in it; the reaſon of his making this Earth had been inſignificant; He had not had any upon Earth to Glorifie Him, without erecting another World, which might have proved as ſinful, and as quickly wicked as this; God ſhould have always been pulling down, and rearing up, creating and annihilating, one World would have come after another, as Wave after Wave in the Sea. His *Patience* ſtept in to ſupport the Honour of God, and the *continuance* of Men, without which one had been in part impaired, and the other totally loſt.

4. *He doth exerciſe Patience for the Continuance of the Church.* If he be not *patient* toward Sinners, what ſtock would there be for Believers to ſpring up from? He bears with the provoking Carriage of Men, Evil Men; becauſe out of their Loins he intends to extract others, which he will form for the Glory of his Grace. He hath ſome unborn, that belong to the *Election of Grace*, *which* are to be the Seed of the worſt of Men; *Jeroboam* the chief incendiary of the *Iſraelites* to Idolatry, had an *Abijah*, in whom was found *ſome good thing towards the Lord God of Iſrael*, 1 Kings 14. 13. Had *Ahaz* been ſnapt in the firſt Act of his Wickedneſs, the *Iſraelites* had wanted ſo good a Prince, and ſo good a Man as *Hezekiah*, a branch of that wicked Predeceſſor. What Gardiner cuts off the Thorns from the Roſe-buſh, till he hath gathered the Roſes? And Men do not uſe to burn all the Crab-tree, but preſerve a Stock, to engraft ſome ſweet Fruit upon. There could not have been a Saint in the Earth, nor conſequently in Heaven, had it not been for this Perfection. He did not deſtroy the *Iſraelites* in the Wilderneſs, that he might keep up a Church among them, and not extinguiſh the whole Seed that were Heirs of the Promiſes and Covenant made with *Abraham.* Had God puniſhed Men for their Sins as ſoon as they had been committed, none would have lived to have been better, none could have continued in the World to Honour him by their Virtues? *Manaſſeh* had never been a Convert, and many bruti ſh Men had never been changed from Beaſts to Angels, to Praiſe and acknowledge their Creator. Had *Peter* received his due recompence upon the denial of his Maſter, he had never been a Martyr for him; nor had *Paul* been a Preacher of the Goſpel, nor any elſe: And ſo the Goſpel had not ſhined in any Part of the World. No Seed would have been brought into Chriſt, Chriſt is beholding immediately to this Attribute, for all the Seed he hath in the World; 'tis for his *Name ſake* that he doth *defer* his *Anger*, and for his *Praiſe*, that he doth refrain from *cutting us off*, Iſa. 48. 9. And in the next *Chapter* follows a Propheſie of Chriſt. To overthrow Mankind for Sin, were to prevent the ſpreading a *Church* in the World. A Woman that is guilty of a Capital Crime, and lies under a condemning Sentence, is reprieved from Execution, for her being with Child. 'Tis for the Child's ſake the Woman is reſpited, not for her own; 'tis for the *Elects ſake* in the Loins of Tranſgreſſors, that they are a *long Time* ſpared, and not for their own. *Iſa.* 65. 8, 9. *As the new Wine is found in the Cluſter, and one ſaith, deſtroy it not for a Bleſſing is in it; ſo will I do for my Servants ſake, that I may not deſtroy them all: As a Husbandman ſpares a Vine for ſome good Cluſters in it.* He had ſpoke of Vengeance before, yet he would reſerve ſome, from whom he would bring forth thoſe, that ſhould be *Inheritors of his Mountains:* That he might make up his Church of *Judea*, *Jeruſalem* being a Mountainous Place, and the Type of the Church in all Ages. What is the Reaſon he doth not level his Thunder at the Heads of thoſe, for whoſe Deſtruction he receives ſo many Petitions from the *Souls under the Altar*, Rev. 6. 9, 10. Becauſe God had others to write a Teſtimony for him in their own Blood, and perhaps out of the Loins of thoſe for whom Vengeance was earneſtly ſupplicated; * and God as the Maſter of a Veſſel, lies *Patiently* at Anchor, till the laſt Paſſenger he expects, be taken in.

* *Smith* on Creed, p. 404.

5. *For the ſake of his Church he is patient to wicked Men.* The Tares are *Patiently* endured till the Harveſt, for fear in the plucking up the one, there might be ſome Prejudice done to the other. Upon this account he ſpares ſome, who are worſe than others, whom he cruſheth by ſignal Judgments; the *Jews* had committed Sins worſe than *Sodom*, for the Confirmation of which we have God's Oath, *Ezek.* 16. 48. and more by half than *Samaria*, or the Ten Tribes had done, *ver.* 51. Yet God ſpared the *Jews*, though he deſtroyed the *Sodomites.* What was the Reaſon, but a large Remnant of Righteous Perſons, *more Cluſters* of good Grapes were found among them, than grew in *Sodom*, *Iſa.* 1. 9. A few more Righteous in *Sodom* had dampt the Fire and Brimſtone deſign'd for that Place; and a *Remnant of ſuch in Judea* was a Bar to that fierceneſs of Anger, which otherwiſe would have quickly conſumed them. Had there been but *Ten Righteous* in *Sodom*, *Divine Patience* had ſtill bound the Arms of Juſtice, that it ſhould not have prepared its Brimſtone, notwithſtanding the clamour

mour of the Sins of the Multitude. *Judea* was ripe for the Sickle, but God would put a Lock upon the Torrent of his Judgments, that they ſhould not flow down upon that wicked Place, to make them a Deſolation and a Curſe, as long as tender-hearted *Joſiah* lived, *who had humbled himſelf* at the Threatning, and wept before the Lord; 1 *Kings* 22. 19, 20. Sometimes he bears with wicked Men, that they might exerciſe the *Patience* of the Saints, *Rev.* 14. 12. The whole Time of the *forbearance of Antichriſt* in all his Intruſions into the Temple of God, Invaſions of the Rights of God, Uſurpations of the Office of Chriſt, and beſmearing himſelf with the Blood of the Saints, was to give them an opportunity of *Patience*. God is *Patient* towards the Wicked, that by their means he might try the Righteous. He burns not the wiſp, till he hath ſcoured his Veſſels; nor lays by the Hammer till he hath formed ſome of his Matter into an excellent Faſhion. He uſeth the worſt Men as Rods to correct his People, before he ſweeps the Twigs out of his Houſe. God ſometimes uſes the Thorns of the World, as a hedge to ſecure his Church, ſometimes as Inſtruments to try, and exerciſe it. Howſoever he uſeth them, whither for Security or Trial, he is *Patient* to them for his Churches Advantage.

6. When Men are not brought to Repentance by his *Patience*, *he doth longer Exerciſe it to manifeſt the Equity of his Future Juſtice upon them.* As *Wiſdom is juſtified* by her obedient Children, ſo is Juſtice juſtified by the Rebels againſt *Patience*, the Contempt of the latter is the Juſtification of the former. The *Apoſtles were unto God a ſweet ſavour of Chriſt in them that periſh*, as well as in them that were ſaved, by the Acceptation of their Meſſage, 2 *Cor.* 2. 15. Both are fragant to God, his *Mercy* is Glorified by the ones Acceptance of it, and his *Juſtice* freed from any charge againſt it by the others Refuſal. The Cauſe of Mens Ruine cannot be laid upon God, who provided means for their Salvation, and ſollicited their complyance with him. What Reaſon can they have to charge the Judge with any wrong to them, who reject the tenders he makes, and who hath forborn them with ſo much *Patience*, when he might have cenſured them by his Righteous Juſtice, upon the firſt Crime they committed, or the firſt refuſal of his gracious offers? *Quanto Dei magis judicium tardum eſt tanto magis juſtum.* * After the deſpiſing of *Patience*, there can be no Suſpition of an irregularity in the Acts of Juſtice. Man hath no Reaſon to fall foul in his Charge upon God, if he were puniſhed for his own Sin, conſidering the Dignity of the injured Perſon, and the meanneſs of himſelf the Offender; but his Wrath is more juſtified, when it is poured out upon thoſe whom he hath endured with much long-ſuffering. There is no Plea againſt the ſhooting of his Arrows into thoſe, for whom this Voice hath been loud, and his Arms open for their return. As *Patience* while it is exerciſed, is the ſilence of his Juſtice, ſo when it is abuſed, it ſilenceth Mens complaints againſt his Juſtice. The *Riches of his forbearance* made way for the manifeſting the *Treaſures of his Wrath.* If God did but a little bear with the Inſolencies of Men, and cut them off after two or three Sins, he would not have opportunity to ſhew either the *Power of his Patience*, or that of his Wrath; but when he hath a right to puniſh for one Sin, and yet bears with them for many, and they will not be reclaimed, the Sinner is more inexcuſable, Divine Juſtice leſs chargeable, and his *Wrath more powerful*, Rom. 9. 22. *What if God willing to ſhew his Wrath, and to make his Power known, endured with much long-ſuffering, the Veſſels of Wrath fitted for Deſtruction?* The proper and immediate End of his *long-ſuffering*, is to lead Men to Repentance, but after they have by their Obſtinacy, fitted themſelves for Deſtruction, he bears *longer* with them, to *magnifie his Wrath* more upon them, and if it is not the *finis operantis*, 'tis at leaſt the *finis operis*, where *Patience* is abuſed. Men are apt to complain of God, that he deals hardly with them; the *Iſraelites* ſeem to charge God with too much ſeverity, to caſt them off, when ſo many Promiſes were made to the Fathers for their Perpetuity and Preſervation, which is intimated, *Hoſ.* 2. 2. *Plead with your Mother, plead*; by the double Repetition of the Word *Plead*; do not accuſe me of being falſe, or too rigorous, but accuſe your Mother, your Church, your Magiſtracy, your Miniſtry, for their ſpiritual Fornications which have provoked me; for their נַאֲפוּפֶיהָ intimating the greatneſs of their Sins by the Reduplication of the Word; *leſt I ſtrip her naked.* I have Born with her under many Provocations, and I have not yet taken away all her Ornaments, or ſaid to her according to the Rule of Divorce, *res tuas tibi habeto.* God anſwers their Impudent Charge, *She is not my Wife, nor am I her Husband:* He doth not ſay firſt, I am not her Husband, but ſhe is not my Wife; *She firſt* withdrew from her Duty, by breaking the Marriage-Covenant, and then I ceaſed to be her Husband. No Man ſhall be condemned, but he ſhall be convinced of the due Deſert of his Sin, and the Juſtice of God's proceeding. God will lay open Mens guilt, and repeat the meaſures of his *Patience*, to juſtifie the Severity of his Wrath, *Hoſ.* 7. 10. *Sins will teſtifie to their Face.* What is in its own Nature a Preparation for Glory, Men by their obſtinacy make a Preparation for a more indiſputable Puniſhment. We ſee many evidences of God's *forbearance* here, in ſparing Men under thoſe Blaſphemies which are audible, and thoſe prophane Carriages which are viſible, which would ſufficiently juſtifie an Act of ſeverity; yet when Mens ſecret Sins both in Heart and Action, and the vaſt Multitude of them, far ſurmounting what can arrive to our Knowledge here, ſhall be diſcovered, how great a Luſtre will it add to God's bearing with them, and make his Juſtice Triumph without any reaſonable demur from the Sinner himſelf! He is *long-ſuffering* here, that his Juſtice may be more Publick hereafter.

* *Minuc. Felix pag.* 41.

IV. *The* USE.

I. For *Inſtruction.*

1. How is this *Patience of God abuſed!* The *Gentiles* abuſed thoſe Teſtimonies of it, which were written in Showers, and fruitful Seaſons. No Nation was ever ſtript of it, under the moſt provoking Idolatries till after multiplyed ſpurns at it. Not a Perſon among us but hath been guilty of the abuſe of it. How have we contemned that which demands a Reverence from us? How have we requited God's waitings with Rebellions, while he hath continued urging and expecting our return? *Saul* relented at *David*'s forbearing to revenge himſelf, when he had his proſecuting and induſtrious Enemy in his Power, 1 *Sam.* 24. 17. *Thou art more Righteous than I, thou haſt rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee Evil.* And ſhall we not relent at God's wonderful *long-ſuffering*, and ſilencing his Anger ſo much? He could puff away our Lives, but he will not, and yet we endeavour to ſtrip him of his Being, though we cannot.

I. *Let us conſider the ways, how ſlowneſs to Anger is abuſed.*

1. *'Tis abused by mis-interpretations* of it, when Men slander his *Patience*, to be only a carelessness, and neglect of his Providence; as *Averroes* argued from his slowness to Anger, a total neglect of the Government of the lower World. Or when Men from his *long-suffering* charge him with Impurity, as if his *Patience* were a Consent to their Crimes; and because he suffered them, without Calling them to Account, he were one of their Partisans, and as *wicked as themselves*, Psalm 50. 21. *Because I kept silence, thou thoughtest I was altogether such a one as thy self.* His silence makes them conclude him to be an Abettor of, and a Consort in their Sins; And think him more pleased with their Iniquity, than their Obedience. Or when they will infer from his *forbearance* a want of his Omniscience: Because he suffers their Sins, they imagine he forgets them, *Psalm* 10. 11. *He hath said in his Heart God hath forgotten.* Thinking his *Patience* proceeds not from the sweetness of his Nature, but a weakness of his Mind. How base is it instead of admiring him, to disparage him for it; and because he stands in so advantageous a Posture towards us, not to own the choicest Prerogatives of his Deity? This is to make a Perfection so useful to us, to shadow, and extinguish those others, which are the prime flowers of his Crown.

2. *His Patience is abused, by continuing in a course of Sin under the Influences of it.* How much is it the practical Language of Men, come let us commit this, or that Iniquity, since *Divine Patience* hath suffered worse than this at our Hands? Nothing is remitted to their sensual Pleasures and Eagerness in them. How often did the *Israelites* repeat their murmurings against him, as if they would put his *Patience* to the utmost Proof, and see how far the Line of it could extend? They were no sooner satisfied in one thing, but they quarrelled with him about another, as if he had no other Attribute to put in motion against them. They tempted him, as often as he relieved them, as though the Declaration of his Name to *Moses*, 34th *of Exod. To be a God Gracious and Long-suffering*, had been intended for no other Purpose but a Protection of them in their Rebellions. Such a sort of Men the Prophet speaks of, that were *setled in their Lees*, or Dregs, *Zeph.* 1. 12. They were congeal'd and frozen in their successful wickedness; such an abuse of *Divine Patience* is the very Dregs of Sin; God chargeth it highly upon the *Jews*, Isa. 57. 11. *I have held my Peace, even of old, and thou feareſt me not*, my Silence made thee Confident, yea Impudent in thy Sin.

3. *His Patience is abused, by repeating Sin, after God hath, by an Act of his Patience, taken off some Affliction from Men.* As Metals melted in the Fire remain fluid under the Operation of the Flames, yet when removed from the Fire, they quickly return to their former hardness, and sometimes grow harder than they were before. So Men who in their Afflictions seem to be melted, like *Ahab*, confess their Sins, lye prostrate before God, and seek him early, yet if they be brought from under the Power of their Afflictions, they return to their old Nature, and are as stiff against God, and resist the blows of the Spirit, as much as they did before. They think they have a new stock of Patience, to Sin upon. *Pharaoh* was somewhat thaw'd under Judgments, and frozen again under *forbearance*, *Exod.* 9. 27, 34. Many will howl when God strikes them, and laugh at him when he *forbears* them. Thus that *Patience* which should *melt* us, doth often *harden* us, which is not an effect natural to his *Patience*, but natural to our abusing Corruption.

4. *His Patience is abus'd, by taking Encouragement from it, to mount to greater Degrees of Sin.* Because God is *slow to Anger*, Men are more fierce in Sin, and not only continue in their old Rebellions, but heap new upon them. If he spare them for *three Transgressions* they will commit *four*, as is intimated in the *first and second of* Amos; *Mens Hearts are fully set in them to do Evil, because Sentence against an Evil Work is not speedily executed*, Eccles. 8. 11. Their Hearts are more desperately bent; before they had some waverings, and pull-backs, but after a fair Sun-shine of *Divine Patience*, they entertain more unbridled Resolutions, and pass forward with more Liberty and Licentiousness. They make his *long-suffering* subservient to turn out all those little relentings, and regrets they had before, and banish all Thoughts of barring out a Temptation. No Encouragement is given to Men by *God's Patience*, but they force it by their Presumption. They invert Gods Order, and bind themselves stronger to Iniquity by that which should bind them faster to their Duty. A happy escape at Sea makes Men go more confidently into the deeps afterward. Thus we deal with God, as Debtors do with good natur'd Creditors: Because they do not Dunn them for what they owe, they take Encouragement to run more upon the score, till their summ amounts above their ability of Payment.

But let it be *considered*,

1. *That this abuse of Patience is a high Sin.* As every Act of *forbearance* obligeth us to Duty, so every Act of it abused, encreaseth our Guilt. The more frequent its Sollicitations of us have been, the deeper Aggravations our Sin receives by it. Every Sin, after an Act of *Divine Patience*, contracts a blacker guilt. The sparing us after the last Sin we committed, was a superadded Act of *long-suffering*, and a laying out more of his Riches upon us: And therefore every new Act committed, is a despite against greater Riches expended, and greater Cost upon us, and against his preserving us from the Hand of Justice for the last Transgression. 'Tis dis-ingenious not to have a due Resentment of so much Goodness, and base to injure him the more, because he doth not Right himself. Shall he receive the more wrongs from us, by how much the sweeter he is to us? No Mans Conscience but will tell him, 'tis vile to prefer the Satisfaction of a sordid Lust, before the Councel of a God of so gracious a Disposition. The sweeter the Nature, the fouler is the Injury that is done unto it.

2. *'Tis dangerous to abuse his Patience.* Contempt of kindness is most irksom to an ingenious Spirit, and he is worthy to have the Arrows of Gods Indignation lodg'd in his Heart, who *despiseth the Riches of his long-suffering.* For,

1. *The Time of Patience will have an End.* Tho' his Spirit strives with Man, yet it shall *not always strive*, Gen. 6. 3. Though there be a Time wherein *Jerusalem* might *know the Things that concern her Peace*, yet there is another Period wherein they should be *hid from her Eyes*, Luke 19. 43. *Oh that thou hadst known in this thy Day?* Nations have their Day, and Persons have their Day, and the Day of most Persons is shorter than the Day of Nations. *Jerusalem* had her Day of *Forty Years*, but how many particular Persons were taken off, before the last or middle Hours of that Day were arriv'd? *Forty Years was God griev'd* with the Generation of the *Israelites*, Heb. 3. 11. One Carckass dropt after another in that limited Time, and at the end not a Man but fell under the Judicial Stroke, except *Caleb*

leb and *Joshua*. *One hundred and twenty Years* was the Term set to the Mass of the Old World, but not to every Man in the old World; some fell while the *Ark* was preparing, as well as the whole Stock when the Ark was compleated. Though he be *patient* with most, yet he is not in the same Degree with all; every Sinner hath his Time of sinning, beyond which he shall proceed no further, be his Lusts never so impetuous, and his Affections never so imperious. The *Time of his Patience* is in Scripture set forth sometimes by *Years*; *three Years* he came to find Fruit on the Fig-tree; sometimes by *Days*, some Men Sins are sooner ripe, and fall. There is a *measure* of Sin, *Jer.* 51. 13. Which is set forth by the *Ephah*, *Zach.* 5. 8. Which when it is fill'd, is *seal'd* up, and a weight of Lead cast upon the Mouth of it. When Judgments are preparing, once and twice the Lord is prevail'd with by the Intercession of the Prophet. The prepar'd *Grashoppers* are not sent to devour, and the *kindled Fire* is not blown up to consume, *Amos* 7. from *ver.* 1. to *ver.* 8. But at last God takes the *plumb-line*, to sute and measure Punishment to their Sin, and would not pass by them any more, and when their Sin was ripe, represented by a *Basket of Summer-fruit*, God would with-hold his Hand no longer, but brought such a Day upon them, wherein the *Songs of the Temple should be howlings, and dead Bodies be in every Place*, Amos 8. 2, 3. He lays by any further Thoughts of *Patience* to speed their Ruine. God had born *long* with the *Israelites*, and long it was before he gave them up. He would first break the *bow in Jezreel*, Hos. 1. 5. Take away the Strength of the Nation by the Death of *Zachariah*, the last of *Jehu*'s Race, which introduc'd Civil Dissentions and Ambitious Murders for the Throne, whereby in weakning one Part, they weakned the whole; or as some think, alluding to *Tiglah Pilezar*, who carried Captive two Tribes and a half. If this would not reclaim them, then follows *Loruhamah*, *I will not have Mercy*, I will sweep them out of the Land, *verse* 6. If they did not Repent they should be *Loammi*, verse 9. *You are not my People*, and *I will not be your God*. They should be discovenanted, and stript of all federal Relation. Here *Patience* for ever withdrew from them, and wrathful Anger took its Place. And for particular Persons, the Time of Life, whither shorter or longer, is the only Time of *long-suffering*. It hath no other Stage, than the present State of Things to Act upon. There is none else to be expected after, but giving account of what hath been done in the Body, not of any thing done after the Soul is fled from the Body. The *Time of Patience* ends with the first Moment of the Souls Departure from the Body. This Time only is the *Day of Salvation*, i. e. The Day wherein God offers it, and the Day wherein God waits for our Acceptance of it. 'Tis at his Pleasure to shorten or lengthen our Day, not at ours. 'Tis not our long suffering, but his, he hath the command of it.

2. *God hath Wrath to punish, as well as Patience to bear*. He hath a fury to Revenge the outrages done to his meekness, when his Messages of Peace sent to reclaim Men are slighted, his Sword shall be whetted, and his Instruments of War prepar'd, *Hos.* 5. 8. *Blow ye the Cornet in Gibeah, and the Trumpet in Ramah*. As he deals gently like a Father, so he can punish capitally as a Judge. Though he holds his Peace for a long Time, yet at last he will go forth like a mighty Man, and stir up jealousie as a Man of War, to cut in pieces his Enemies. 'Tis not said, he hath no Anger, but that he is *slow to Anger*, but sharp in it. He hath a *Sword* to cut, and a *Bow* to shoot, and *Arrows* to pierce, *Psalm* 12. 13. Though he be long a drawing the one out of its Scabbard, and long a fitting the other to his Bow, yet when they are ready, he strikes home and hits the Mark. Though he hath a *Time of Patience*, yet he hath also a *Day of Rebuke*, Hos. 5. 9. Though *Patience* over-rules Justice by suspending it, yet Justice will at last overrule *Patience* by an utter silencing it. God is Judge of the whole Earth to right Men, yet he is no less Judge of the Injuries he receives to right himself. Though God a while was pressed with the murmurings of the *Israelites*, after their comeing out of *Egypt*, and seemed desirous to give them all Satisfaction upon their unworthy Complaints, yet when they came to open Hostility, in setting a *Golden Calf* in his Throne, he Commissions the *Levites, to kill every Man his Brother and Companion in the Camp*, Exod. 32. 27. And how desirous soever he was to content them before, they never murmured afterwards, but they severely smarted for it. When once he hath begun to use his Sword, he sticks it up naked, that it might be ready for use upon every occasion. Though he hath Feet of Lead, yet he hath Hands of Iron. It was long that he supported the pievishness of the *Jews*, but at last he captiv'd them by the Arms of the *Babylonians*, and laid them wast by the Power of the *Romans*. He planted by the *Apostles* Churches in the East, and when his Goodness and *Long-suffering*, prevail'd not with them, he tore them up by the roots. What Christians are to be found in those once famous Parts of *Asia*, but what are overgrown with much Error and Ignorance?

3. *The more his Patience is abus'd, the sharper will be the Wrath he inflicts*. As his Wrath restrained, makes his *Patience long*; so his Compassions restrained, will make his *Wrath severe*. As he doth transcend all Creatures in the measures of the one, so he transcends all Creatures in the sharpness of the other. Christ is describ'd with *Feet of Brass*, as if they burn'd in a Furnace, *Rev.* 1. 15. slow to move, but heavy to crush, and hot to burn. His Wrath loseth nothing by delay; it grows the fresher by sleeping, and strikes with greater Strength when it awakes. All the Time Men are abusing his *Patience*, God is whetting his Sword, and the longer it is whetting, the sharper will be the edge. The longer he is fetching his blow, the sharper it will be. The heavier the Canons are, the more difficultly are they drawn to the besieged Town, but when arriv'd, they recompence the slowness of their March by the fierceness of their Battery. *Because I have purged thee*, i. e. used means for thy Reformation, and waited for it, *and thou wast not purg'd, thou shalt not be purg'd from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my Fury to rest upon thee. I will not go back, neither will I spare, according to thy ways, and according to thy doings shall they judge thee*, Ezek. 24. 13, 14. God will spare as little then, as he spar'd much before. His *Wrath* shall be as raging upon them, as the Sea of their wickedness was within them. When there is a bank to forbid the Irruption of the Streams, the Waters swell, but when the Bank is broke, or the Lock taken away, they rush with the greater Violence, and ravage more than they would have done, had they not met with a stop. The longer a Stone is a falling, the more it bruiseth, and grinds to Powder. There is a greater Treasure of Wrath laid up by the *abuses of Patience*. Every Sin must have a just *recompence of Reward*; and therefore every Sin, in regard of its Aggravations must be more punished, than a Sin in the singleness and simplicity of its own Nature. As

Treaſures of Mercy are kept by God for us, *he keeps Mercy for thouſands*, ſo are Treaſures of Wrath kept by him, to be expended; and a Time of Expence there muſt be, *Patience* will account to Juſtice all the good Offices it hath done the Sinner, and demand to be righted by Juſtice. Juſtice will take the account from the Hands of *Patience*, and exact a recompence for every diſingenuous Injury offered to it. When Juſtice comes to Arreſt Men for their Debts, *Patience*, Mercy and Goodneſs will ſtep in as Creditors, and clap their Actions upon them, which will make their Condition ſo much more deplorable.

4. *When he puts an end to his abus'd Patience, his Wrath will make quick, and ſure Work.* He that is *ſlow to Anger*, will be *ſwift* in the Execution of it. The departure of God from *Jeruſalem*, is deſcribed with *Wings* and *Wheels*, Ezek. 11. 23. One ſtroke of his Hand is irreſiſtible, he that hath ſpent ſo much Time in waiting, needs but one Minute to Ruine; though it be long ere he draws his Sword out of his Scabbard, yet when once he doth it, he diſpatcheth Men at a blow. *Ephraim*, or the Ten *Tribes*, had a *long Time of Patience* and Proſperity, but now ſhall a *Month devour him with his Portion*, Hoſea 5. 7. One fatal Month puts a Period to the many Years Peace and Security of a ſinful Nation. His Arrows wound *ſuddenly*, Pſalm 64. 7. And while Men are about to fill their Bellies, he caſts the Fruits of his Wrath upon them, *Job* 20. 23. Like Thunder out of a Cloud, or a Bullet out of a Cannon, that ſtrikes Dead before it is heard. God deals with Sinners, as Enemies do with a Town, who batter it not by planted Guns, but ſecretly undermine and blow up the Walls, whereby they involve the Garriſon in a ſuddain Ruine, and carry the Town. God ſpar'd the *Amalekites* a long Time after the Injury committed againſt the *Iſraelites* in their Paſſage out of *Egypt* to *Canaan*, but when he came to reckon with them, he would waſte them in a trice, and make an *utter Conſumption* of them, 1 *Sam.* 15. 2, 3. He deſcribes himſelf by a *travelling Woman*, Iſa. 42. 14. That hath born long in her Womb, and at laſt ſends forth her Birth with ſtrong cries. Though he hath held his Peace, been ſtill and refrained himſelf, yet at laſt, he will deſtroy and devour at *once*. The *Ninevites* ſpar'd in the Time of *Jonah* for their Repentance, are in *Nahum* threatned with a certain and total Ruine; when God ſhould come to bring them to an account for his *length and Patience*, ſo much abus'd by them. Though God endur'd the murmuring *Iſraelites* ſo long in the Wilderneſs, yet he paid them off at laſt, and took away the Rebels in his Wrath. He uttered their Sentence with an irreverſible Oath, that *none of them ſhould enter into his Reſt*, and he did as ſurely execute it, as he had ſolemnly ſworn it.

5. *Though he doth defer his viſible Wrath, yet that very delay may be more dreadful than a quick Puniſhment.* He may forbear ſtriking, and give the Reins to the hardneſs and corruption of Mens Hearts. He may ſuffer them to walk in their own Counſels, without any more ſtriving with them, whereby they make themſelves fitter fuel for his Vengeance. This was the fate of *Iſrael*, when they would not hearken to his Voice, he *gave them up to their own Hearts Luſts, and they walked in their own Counſels*, Pſalm 81. 12. Though his ſparing them had the outward aſpect of *Patience*, it was a wrathful one, and attended with Spiritual Judgments: Thus many *abuſers of Patience* may ſtill have their Line lengthened, and the Candle of Proſperity to ſhine upon their Heads, that they may encreaſe their Sins, and be the fitter Mark at laſt for his Arrows. They ſwim down the Stream of their own ſenſuality with a deplorable Security, till they fall into an unavoidable gulf, where at laſt it will be a great Part of their Hell, to reflect on the length of *Divine Patience* on Earth, and their inexcuſable abuſe of it.

2. *It informs us of the Reaſon, why he lets the Enemies of his Church oppreſs it, and defers his Promiſe of the Deliverance of it.* If he did puniſh them preſently, his Holineſs and Juſtice would be glorified, but his Power over himſelf in his *Patience* would be obſcured. Well may the Church be content, to have a Perfection of God glorified, that is not like to receive any Honour in another World by any Exerciſe of it ſelf. If it were not for this *Patience*, he were uncapable to be the Governour of a ſinful World; he might without it be the Governour of an Innocent World, but not of a criminal one; he would be the deſtroyer of the World, but not the orderer and diſpoſer of the extravagancies and ſinfulneſs of the World. The Intereſt of his Wiſdom in drawing Good out of Evil, would not be ſerved, if he were not clothed with this Perfection as well as with others. If he did preſently deſtroy the Enemies of his Church upon the firſt Oppreſſion, his Wiſdom in contriving, and his Power in accompliſhing Deliverance againſt the united Powers of Hell and Earth, would not be Viſible, no nor that Power in preſerving his People unconſumed in the Furnace of Affliction. He had not got ſo great a Name in the reſcue of his *Iſrael* from *Pharaoh*, had he thundred the Tyrant into Deſtruction upon his firſt Edicts againſt the Innocent. If he were not *patient* to the moſt violent of Men, he might ſeem to be Cruel. But when he offers Peace to them under their Rebellions, waits that they may be Members of his Church, rather than Enemies to it; he frees himſelf from any ſuch Imputation, even in the Judgment of thoſe that ſhall feel moſt of his Wrath; 'tis this renders the Equity of his Juſtice unqueſtionable, and the Deliverance of his People righteous in the Judgment of thoſe from whoſe Fetters they are delivered. *Chriſt Reigns in the midſt of his Enemies*, to ſhew his Power over himſelf, as well as over the Heads of his Enemies, to ſhew his Power over his Rebels. And though he retards his Promiſe, and ſuffers a great interval of Time between the Publication and Performance, ſometimes *Years*, ſometimes *Ages* to paſs away, and little appearance of any Preparation, to ſhew himſelf a God of Truth; 'tis not that he hath forgotten his Word, or repents that ever he paſſed it, or ſleeps in a ſupine neglect of it: But that Men might not periſh, but bethink themſelves, and come as Friends into his Boſom, rather than be cruſh'd as Enemies under his Feet, 2 *Pet.* 3. 9. *The Lord is not ſlack concerning his Promiſe, but is long-ſuffering to us-ward, not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to Repentance.* Hereby he ſhews, that he would be rather pleaſed with the Converſion, than the Deſtruction of Men.

3. *We ſee the Reaſon, why Sin is ſuffered to remain in the Regenerate*; to ſhew his *Patience* towards his own; for ſince this Attribute hath no other Place of Appearance but in this World, God takes Opportunity to manifeſt it: Becauſe at the cloſe of the World, it will remain cloſed up in the Deity, without any further Operation. As God ſuffers a Multitude of Sins in the World, to evidence his *Patience* to the wicked, ſo he ſuffers great Remainders of Sin in his People, to ſhew his *Patience* to the Godly. His ſparing Mercy is admirable, before their Converſion, but more admirable in bearing with them after ſo high an Obligation, as the conferring upon them ſpecial Converting Grace.

2. *The*

2. *The Second Use is of Comfort.* 'Tis a vaſt *Comfort* to any, when God is Pacified towards them; but it is ſome Comfort to all, that God is yet *Patient* towards them, though but very little to a refractory Sinner. His *continued Patience* to all, ſpeaks a poſſibility of the cure of all, would they not ſtand againſt the way of their recovery. 'Tis a Terror that God hath Anger, but it is a mitigation of that Terror, that God is *ſlow* to it; while his Sword is in his Sheath, there is ſome hopes to prevent the drawing of it; alas, if He were all fire and ſword upon ſin, what would become of us? we ſhould find nothing elſe but over-flowing Deluges, or ſweeping Peſtilences, or perpetual flaſhes of *Sodom*'s Fire and Brimſtone from Heaven. He dooms us not preſently to Execution, but gives us a long breathing time after the Crime, that by retiring from our Iniquities, and having recourſe to his Mercy, He may be with-held for ever from ſigning a Warrant againſt us, and change his Legal Sentence into an Evangelical Pardon. 'Tis a ſpecial *Comfort* to his People, that He is a *Sanctuary to them*, Ezek. 11. 16. A place of Refuge, a place of Spiritual Communications; but it is ſome Refreſhment to all in this Life, that He is a defence to them: for ſo is his *Patience* call'd, *Numb.* 14. 9. *Their defence is departed from them*; ſpeaking to the *Iſraelites*, that they ſhould not be afraid of the *Canaanites*, for their *Defence* is departed from them. God is no longer *Patient* to them, ſince their ſins be full and ripe. *Patience*, as long as it laſts, is a temporary Defence to thoſe that are under the wing of it; but to the Believer it is a ſingular *Comfort*: And God is called the *God of Patience and Conſolation* in one breath, *Rom.* 15. 5. *The God of Patience and Conſolation grant you to be like-minded*: All Interpreters underſtand it *effectively*. The God that inſpires you with *Patience*, and chears you with *Comfort*, grant this to you. Why may it not be underſtood *formally*, of the *Patience* belonging to the Nature of God? and though it be expreſt in the way of Petition, yet it might alſo be propoſed as a Pattern for Imitation, and ſo ſuits very well to the Exhortation laid down, *ver.* 1. which was, to *bear with the infirmities of the weak*, which He preſſeth them to, *ver.* 3. *by the example of Chriſt*; and *ver.* 5. *by the Patience of God to them*, and ſo they are very well link'd together. God of *Patience and Conſolation* may well be joyned, ſince *Patience* is the firſt ſtep of *Comfort* to the poor Creature. If it did not adminiſter ſome comfortable hopes to *Adam*, in the interval between his Fall, and God's coming to examine him, I am ſure it was the firſt diſcovery of any Comfort to the Creature, after the ſweeping the deſtroying Deluge out of the World, *Gen.* 9. 21. After the *ſavour of Noah's ſacrifice*, repreſenting the great Sacrifice which was to be in the World, had aſcended up to God, the return from Him is a publication of his *forbearing to puniſh* any more in ſuch a manner: And though He found Man no better than he was before, and the Imaginations of Mens Hearts as evil as before the Deluge, that He would not again ſmite every Living Thing as He had done. This was the firſt expreſſion of *Comfort to Noah*, after his *exit* from the Ark; and declares nothing elſe but the *continuance of Patience* to the New World, above what He had ſhewn to the Old.

1. *'Tis a comfort in that 'tis an argument of his Grace to his People.* If He hath ſo rich a *Patience* to exerciſe towards his Enemies, He hath a greater Treaſure to beſtow upon his Friends. *Patience* is the firſt Attribute, which ſteps in for our Salvation, and therefore called *Salvation*, 2 Pet. 3. 15. Something elſe is therefore built upon it, and intended by it to thoſe that believe. Thoſe two Letters of his Name, *a God keeping Mercy for thouſands, and forgiving iniquity, tranſgreſſions and ſin*, follows the other Letter of his *long-ſuffering*, in the Proclamation, *Exod.* 34. 6, 7. *He is ſlow to anger*, that He may be Merciful, that Men may ſeek and receive their Pardon. If He be *long-ſuffering*, in order to be a Pardoning God, He will not be wanting in Pardoning thoſe who anſwer the deſign of his Forbearance of them. You would not have had ſparing Mercy to improve, if God would have deny'd you ſaving Mercy upon the Improvement of his ſparing Goodneſs. If He hath ſo much reſpect to his Enemies that provoke Him, as to endure them with much *long-ſuffering*, He will ſurely be very kind to thoſe that obey Him, and conform to his Will. If He hath much *long-ſuffering* to thoſe that are *fitted for deſtruction*, Rom. 9. 22. He will have a *muchneſs of Mercy* for thoſe that are prepared for Glory by Faith and Repentance. 'Tis but a natural Concluſion a gracious Soul may make, if God had not a mind to be appeaſed towards me, He would not have had a mind to forbear me; but ſince He hath forborn me, and given me a Heart to ſee, and anſwer the true end of that forbearance, I need not queſtion, but that *ſparing* Mercy will end in *ſaving*, ſince it finds that Repentance ſpringing up in me, which that *Patience* conducted me to.

2. *His Patience is a ground to truſt in his Promiſe.* If his *ſlowneſs to anger* be ſo great, when his Precept is ſlighted, his readineſs to give what He hath promiſed will be as great, when his Promiſe is believed. If the Provocations of Men meet with ſuch an unwillingneſs to puniſh them, Faith in him will meet with the choiceſt embraces from Him. He was more ready to make the Promiſe of Redemption after Man's Apoſtacy, than to execute the threatning of the Law. He doth ſtill witneſs a greater unwillingneſs to give forth the Fruits of the Promiſe, than to pour out the Vials of his Curſes. His ſlowneſs to anger is an evidence ſtill, that He hath the ſame diſpoſition, which is no ſlight Cordial to Faith in his Word.

3. *'Tis a Comfort in Infirmities.* If He were not Patient, He could not bear with ſo many peeviſhneſſes and weakneſſes in the Hearts of his own. If He be Patient to the groſſer Sins of his Enemies, He will be no leſs to the lighter Infirmities of his People. When the Soul is as a bruiſed Reed, that can emit no Sound at all, or one very harſh and ungrateful, He doth not break it in pieces, and fling it away in diſdain, but waits to ſee whether it will fully anſwer his pains, and be brought to a better Frame, and ſweeter Note. He brings them not to account for every ſlip, but *as a father ſpares his ſon that ſerves him*, Mal. 3. 17. 'Tis a *Comfort* to us in our diſtracted ſervices; for were it not for this ſlowneſs to anger, He would ſtifle us in the midſt of our Prayers, wherein there are as many fooliſh Thoughts to diſguſt Him, as there are Petitions to implore Him. *The patienteſt Angels* would hardly be able to bear with the follies of good Men in acts of Worſhip.

3. *The third Use is for Exhortation.*

1. *Meditate often on the Patience of God.* The Devil labours for nothing more, than to deface in us the conſideration and memory of this Perfection. He is an envious Creature, and ſince it hath reached out it ſelf to us, and not to him, he envies God the Glory of it, and Man the advantage of it. But God loves to have the Volumes of it ſtudied, and daily turn'd over by us. We cannot without an inexcuſable wilfulneſs miſs the thoughts of it, ſince

ſince it is viſible in every bit of Bread, and Breath of Air in our ſelves, and all about us.

1. *The frequent conſideration of his Patience would render God highly amiable to us.* 'Tis a more endearing Argument than his meer Goodneſs: His Goodneſs to us as Creatures, endowing us with ſuch excellent Faculties, furniſhing us with ſuch a Commodious World, and beſtowing upon us ſo many Attendants for our pleaſure and ſervice, and giving us a Lordſhip over his other Works, deſerves our Affection. But his Patience to us as Sinners, after we have merited the greateſt wrath, ſhews him to be of a ſweeter diſpoſition, than creating Goodneſs to unoffending Creatures; and conſequently ſpeaks a greater Love in Him, and beſpeaks a greater Affection from us. His Creating Goodneſs diſcovered the Majeſty of his Being, and the Greatneſs of his Mind, but this the Sweetneſs and Tenderneſs of his Nature. In this Patience He exceeds the Mildneſs of all Creatures to us; and therefore ſhould be enthroned in our Affections above all other Creatures. The conſideration of this would make us affect Him for his Nature, as well as for his Benefits.

2. *The conſideration of his Patience would make us frequent and ſerious in the exerciſe of Repentance.* In its nature it *leads to* it, and the conſideration of it would *engage* us to it, and melt us in the exerciſe of it. Could we deeply think of it, without being touched with a Senſe of the kindneſs of our for-bearing Creditor and Governour? Could we gaze upon it; nay, could we glance upon it without relenting at our offending One of ſo mild a nature, without being ſenſibly affected, that He hath preſerved us ſo long from being loaded with thoſe Chains of Darkneſs under which the Devils groan? This *forbearance* hath good reaſon to make Sin and Sinners aſham'd. That you are in being, is not for want of advantages enough in his Hand againſt you, many a forfeiture you have made, and many an engagement you have broke; He hath ſcarce met with any other dealing from us, than what had treachery in it. Whatſoever our Sincerity is, we have no reaſon to boaſt of it, when we conſider what mixtures there are in it, and what ſwarms of baſe motions taint it. Hath He not lain preſſed and groaning under our Sins, as a *Cart is preſſed with ſheaves*, Amos 2. 13. when one ſhake of Himſelf, as *Sampſon*, might have rid Him of the burthen, and diſmiſt us in his fury into Hell? If we ſhould often ask our Conſciences, why have we done thus and thus againſt ſo mild a God? Would not the reflection on it, put us to the bluſh? If Men would conſider, that ſuch a time they provoked God to his face, and yet have not felt his Sword; ſuch a time they blaſphemed Him, and made a Reproach of his Name, and his Thunder did not ſtop their motion; ſuch a time they fell into an abominable Brutiſhneſs, yet He kept the puniſhment of Devils, the unclean Spirits from reaching them; ſuch a time He bore an open affront from them, when they ſcoft at his Word, and He did not ſend a deſtruction, and laugh at it. Would not ſuch a Meditation work ſome ſtrange kind of Relentings in Men? What if we ſhould conſider, that we cannot do a ſinful act without the ſupport of his concurring Providence? We cannot ſee, hear, move, without his concourſe. All Creatures we uſe for our neceſſity or pleaſure, are ſupported by Him in the very act of aſſiſting to pleaſure us; and when we abuſe thoſe Creatures againſt Him, which He ſupports for our uſe, how great is his *Patience* to bear with us, that He doth not annihilate thoſe Creatures, or at leaſt imbitter their uſe? What Iſſue could reaſonably be expected from this conſideration, but, *Oh wretched man that I am, to ſerve my ſelf of God's power, to affront Him, and of his long-ſuffering to abuſe him? Oh Infinite Patience*, to employ that Power to preſerve me, that might have been uſed to puniſh me! He is my Creator, I could not have a Being without Him, and yet I offend Him. He is my Preſerver, I cannot maintain my Being without Him, and yet I affront Him. Is this a worthy requital of God? Deut. 32. 6. *Do you thus requite the Lord?* would be the heart-breaking Reflection. How would it give Men a ful'er proſpect of the depravation of their nature, than any thing elſe; that their corruption ſhould be ſo deep and ſtrong, that ſo *much Patience* could not overcome it? It would certainly make a Man aſham'd of his Nature as well as his Actions.

3. *The conſideration of his Patience, would make us reſent more the injuries done by others to God.* A *Patient Sufferer*, though a deſerving Sufferer, attracts the Pity of Men that have a value for any Vertue, though clouded with a heap of Vice. How much more ſhould we have a concern for God, who ſuffers ſo many abuſes from others? and be grieved that ſo admirable a *Patience* ſhould be ſlighted by Men, who ſolely live by, and under the daily influence of it? The Impreſſion of this would make us take God's part, as it is uſual with Men, to take the part of good Diſpoſitions that lie under Oppreſſion.

4. *It would make us Patient under God's hand.* His *ſlowneſs to anger*, and his *forbearance* is viſible, in the very ſtrokes we feel in this Life. We have no reaſon to murmur againſt Him who gives us ſo little cauſe, and in the greateſt afflictions gives us more occaſion of thankfulneſs than of repining. Did not ſlowneſs to the extreameſt Anger moderate every Affliction, it had been a Scorpion inſtead of a Rod. We have reaſon to bleſs Him, who from his *long-ſuffering* ſends temporal ſufferings, where Eternal are juſtly due. Ezra 9. 13. *Thou haſt puniſhed us leſs than our iniquities do deſerve.* His Indulgences towards us have been more than our Corrections, and the length of his *Patience* hath exceeded the ſharpneſs of his Rod. Upon the account of his *long-ſuffering*, our Mutinies againſt God have as little to excuſe them, as our ſins againſt Him have to deſerve his forbearance.

The Conſideration of this would ſhew us more reaſon to repine at our own Repinings, than at any of his ſmarter Dealings. And the Conſideration of this, would make us ſubmiſſive under the Judgments we expect. His *undeſerved Patience* hath been more than our merited Judgments can poſſibly be thought to be. If we fear the removal of the Goſpel for a ſeaſon, as we have reaſon to do, we ſhould rather bleſs Him, that by his waiting *Patience* He hath continued it ſo long, than murmur, that He threatens to take it away ſo late. He hath born with us many a Year, ſince the light of it was re-kindled, when our Anceſtors had but *Six Years of Patience* between the riſe of *Edward* the Sixth, and the Aſcent of Queen *Mary* to the Crown.

2. Exhortation is, *To admire and ſtand aſtoniſh'd at his Patience, and bleſs Him for it.* If you ſhould have defil'd your Neighbour's Bed, or ſullied his Reputation, or rifled his Goods, would he have with-held his Vengeance, unleſs he had been too weak to execute it? We have done worſe to God, than we can do to Man, and yet He draws not that Sword of Wrath out of the Scabbard of his *Patience*, to ſheath it in our Hearts. 'Tis not ſo much a wonder, that any Judgments are ſent, as that there are

are no more and ſharper. That the World ſhall be fired at laſt, is not a thing ſo ſtrange, as that fire doth not come down every Day upon ſome part of it. Had the Diſciples, (that ſaw ſuch excellent Patterns of Mildneſs from their Maſter, and were ſo often urg'd to learn of Him that was lowly and meek) the Government of the World, it had been long ſince turn'd into Aſhes, ſince they were too forward to deſire Him to open his Magazine of Judgments, and kindle a Fire to conſume a *Samaritan Village*, for a ſlight affront, in compariſon of what He received from others, and afterwards from themſelves in their forſaking of Him, *Luke* 9. 52, 53, 54. We ſhould admire, and praiſe that here, which ſhall be prais'd in Heaven; though *Patience* ſhall ceaſe, as to its exerciſe, after the Conſummation of the World, it ſhall not ceaſe from receiving the acknowledgments of what it did when it travers'd the Stage of this Earth. If the *Name* of God be glorified and acknowledged in Heaven, no queſtion but this will alſo; ſince *Long-ſuffering* is one of his ~~Divine~~ Titles, a Letter in his Name, as well as *Merciful and Gracious, abundant in Goodneſs and Truth.* And there is good reaſon to think, that the *Patience* exerciſed towards ſome, before Converting Grace was ordered to ſeize upon them, will bear a great part in the *Anthems* of Heaven. The greater his *long-ſuffering* hath been to Men, that lay covered with their own dung, a long time before they were freed by Grace from their filth; the more admiringly and loudly they will cry up his Mercy to them, after they have paſt the Gulf, and ſee a deſerv'd Hell at a diſtance from them, and many in that place of Torments, who never had the Taſt of ſo much *forbearance*. If Mercy will be prais'd there, that which began the Alphabet of it, cannot be forgot. If *Paul* ſpeak ſo highly of it in a damping World, and under the pullbacks of a *body of death*, as he doth, 1 *Tim.* 1. 16, 17. *For this cauſe I obtained mercy, that Chriſt might ſhew forth all long-ſuffering. Now unto the King Eternal, Immortal, Inviſible, the Only Wiſe God, be Honour and Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.* No doubt but he will have a higher Note for it, when he is ſurrounded with a Heavenly Flame, and freed from all remains of dullneſs, ſhall it be praiſed above, and have we no Notes for it here below? Admire Chriſt too, who Sued out your Reprieve upon the account of his Merit. As Mercy acts not upon any but in Chriſt, ſo neither had *Patience* born with any but in Chriſt. The Pronouncing the *Arreſt of Judgment*, Gen. 8. 21. was when God *ſmell'd a ſweet ſavour from Noah's Sacrifice*, not from the Beaſts offer'd, but the *Anti-typical Sacrifice* repreſeuted.

That we may be raiſed to bleſs God for it, let us *conſider*,

1. *The multitude of our Provocations.* Though ſome have blacker Guilt than others, and deeper Stains, yet let none wipe his Mouth, and imagine himſelf to have but little reaſon to bleſs it. Are not all our Offences as many, as there have been Minutes in our Lives? All the Moments of our continuance in the World, have been Moments of his *Patience* and our Ingratitude. *Adam* was puniſhed for one Sin. *Moſes* excluded *Canaan* for a paſſionate unbelieving Word. *Ananias* and *Saphira* loſt their lives for one Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt. *One Sin* fullied the beauty of the World, defaced the Works of God, had crack'd Heaven and Earth in pieces, had not Infinite Satisfaction been propoſed to the provoked Juſtice by the Redeemer; And not one Sin committed, but is of the ſame venomous Nature; How *many of thoſe contradictions againſt Himſelf* hath He born with? Had we been only unprofitable to Him, his *forbearance* of us had been miraculous; But how much doth it exceed a Miracle, and lift it ſelf above the meanneſs of a Conjunction with ſuch an Epithet, ſince we have been provoking? Had there been no more than our impudent or careleſs ruſhings into His Preſence in Worſhip. Had they been only Sins of Omiſſion, and Sins of Ignorance, it had been enough to have put a ſtand to any further Operations of this Perfection towards us. But add to thoſe, Sins of Commiſſion, Sins againſt Knowledge, Sins againſt ſpiritual Motions, Sins againſt repeated Reſolutions, and preſſing Admonitions, the neglects of all the opportunities of Repentance; put them *all together*, and we can as little recount them, as the Sands on the Sea-ſhore. But what do I only ſpeak of particular Men? view the whole World, and if our own Iniquities render it an *amazing Patience*, what a mighty ſupply will be made to it in all the numerous and weighty Provocations under which He hath continued the World for ſo many Revolutions of Years and Ages? Have not all thoſe preſſed into his Preſence with a loud cry, and demanded a Sentence from Juſtice? yet hath not the Judge been overcome by the importunity of our Sins? * Were the Devils puniſhed for *one* Sin, a *proud thought*, and that not committed againſt the Blood of Chriſt, as we have done numberleſs times? yet hath not God made us partakers in their puniſhment, though we have exceeded them in the quality of their Sin? Oh admirable *Patience!* that would bear with me under ſo *many*, while He would not bear with the ſinning Angels for *one*. *Pom. par. 1. 24.

2. *Conſider how mean things we are, who have provoked Him.* What is Man but a vile thing, that a God abounding with all Riches ſhould take care of ſo abject a thing, much more to bear ſo many affronts from ſuch a drop of Matter, ſuch a nothing Creature! That He that hath Anger at his Command, as well as Pity, ſhould endure ſuch a deteſtable, deformed Creature by ſin, to fly in his Face. *What is man, that thou art mindful of him,* Pſal. 8. אנוש miſerable, incurable Man, derived from a Word that ſignifies to be incurably ſick. Man is *Adam*, Earth from his Earthly Original, and *Enoſh* incurable from his corruption. Is it not worthy to be admired, that a God of Infinite Glory ſhould wait on ſuch *Adams*, Worms of Earth, and be as it were a Servant and Attendant to ſuch *Enoſhes*, ſickly and peeviſh Creatures?

3. *Conſider who it is that is thus Patient.* He it is that with one Breath could turn Heaven and Earth, and all the Inhabitants of both into nothing; That could by one Thunder-bolt have razed up the Foundations of a curſed World. He that wants not Inſtruments without to ruine us, that can arm our own Conſciences againſt us, and can drown us in our own Phlegm. And by taking out one Pin from our Bodies, cauſe the whole Frame to fall aſunder. Beſides, 'tis a *God*, that while He ſuffers the Sinner, hates the Sin, more than all the Holy Men upon Earth, or Angels in Heaven can do; So that his *Patience* for a Minute, tranſcends the *Patience* of all Creatures, from the Creation to the Diſſolution of the World: becauſe it is the *Patience* of a God infinitely more ſenſible of the curſed quality of Sin, and infinitely more deteſting it.

4. *Conſider how long He hath forborn his anger.* A Reprieve for a *Week*, or a *Month*, is accounted a great favour in Civil States; The Civil Law enacts, * That *if the Emperor commanded a Man to be* *Cod. Lib. 9. Titul. 47. 6. 20.

be condemned, the Execution was to be deferred thirty days: becauſe in that time the Princes anger might be appeaſed. But how great a favour is it to be Reprieved *thirty Years* for many Offences, every one of which deſerves Death more at the Hands of God, than any Offence can at the Hands of Man? *Paul*, was according to the common account, but about *thirty Years* old at his Converſion, and how much doth he elevate Divine *Long-ſuffering?* Certainly there are many who have more reaſon, as having larger quantities of *Patience* cut out to them, who have lived to ſee their own grey Hairs in a Rebellious Poſture againſt God, before Grace brought them to a ſurrender. We were all condemn'd in the Womb, our Lives were forfeited the firſt Moment of our Breath, but *Patience* hath ſtopp'd the Arreſt; The merciful Creditor deſerves to have acknowledgment from us, who hath laid by his Bond ſo many Years, without putting it in Suit againſt us. Many of your Companions in Sin have perhaps been ſurprized long ago, and haled to an Eternal Priſon; nothing remaining of them but their Duſt, and the time is not yet come for your Funeral. Let it be conſidered, That that God, that would not wait upon the Fallen Angels *one inſtant* after their Sin, nor give them a Moments ſpace of Repentance, hath prolonged the Life of many a Sinner in the World to innumerable Moments, to 420000 *Minutes* in the ſpace of a *Year*, to *eight Millions* and 400000 *Minutes* in the ſpace of *twenty Years*. The damned in Hell would think it a great kindneſs to have but a Years, Months, nay Days reſpite, as a ſpace to Repent in.

5. *Conſider alſo, how many have been taken away under ſhorter meaſures of Patience.* Some have been ſtruck into a Hell of Miſery, while thou remaineſt upon an Earth of *forbearance*. In a Plague, the deſtroying Angel hath hew'd down others, and paſt by us; the Arrows have flew about our Heads, paſt over us, and ſtuck in the Heart of a Neighbour. How many rich Men, how many of our Friends and Familiars have been ſiez'd by Death, ſince the beginning of the Year, when they leaſt thought of it, and imagin'd it far from them? Have you not known ſome of your Acquaintance ſnatch'd away in the height of a Crime? Was not the ſame Wrath due to you as well as to them? And had it not been as dreadful for you to be ſo ſurpriz'd by Him, as it was for them? Why ſhould He take a *leſs ſturdy Sinner* out of thy Company, and let thee remain ſtill upon the Earth? If God had dealt ſo with you, how had you been cut off, not only from the enjoyment of this Life, but the hopes of a better? And if God hath made ſuch a Providence beneficial for Reclaiming you, how much reaſon have you to acknowledge Him? He that hath had leaſt Patience, hath cauſe to admire, but thoſe that have more, ought to exceed others in Bleſſing Him for it. If God had put an end to your Natural Life, before you had made Proviſion for Eternal, how deplorable would your condition have been?

Conſider alſo, whoever have been Sinners formerly of a deeper Note, might not God have ſtruck a Man in the embraces of his Harlots, and choaked him in the moment of his exceſſive and intemperate Healths, or on the ſudden have ſpurted Fire and Brimſtone into a Blaſphemers Mouth? What if God had ſnatch'd you away, when you had been ſleeping in ſome great Iniquity, or ſent you, while burning in Luſt, to the Fire it merited? Might He not have crack'd the String that link'd your Souls to your Bodies, in the laſt Sickneſs you had? And what then had become of you? What could have been expected to ſucceed your impenitent ſtate in this World, but howlings in another? But He repriev'd you upon your Petitions, or the Sollicitations of your Friends; and have you not broke your Word with Him? Have your Hearts been ſtedfaſt, hath He not yet waited, expecting when you would put your Vows and Reſolutions into Execution? What need had He to cry out to any ſo loud and ſo long, Oh you Fools, *how long will you love fooliſhneſs?* Prov. 1. 22. when He might have ceaſed his crying to you, and have by your Death prevented your many neglects of Him? Did He do all this, that any of us might add new Sins to our old, or rather, that we ſhould bleſs Him for his *forbearance*, comply with the end of it, in reforming our Lives, and having recourſe to his Mercy?

3. Exhortation. *Therefore preſume not upon his Patience.* The exerciſe of it is *not Eternal*; you are at preſent under his *Patience*, yet while you are unconverted, you are alſo under his anger; *Pſal.* 7. 11. *God is angry with the wicked every day.* You know not how ſoon his Anger may turn his *Patience* aſide, and ſtep before it. It may be his Sword is drawn out of his Scabbard, his Arrows may be ſettled in his Bow; and perhaps there is but a little time, before you may feel the edge of the one, or the point of the other; and then there will be no more time for *Patience* in God to us, or Petition from us to Him. If we repent here, He will pardon us. If we defer Repentance, and Die without it, He will have no longer Mercy to Pardon, nor *Patience* to bear.

What is there in our power but the preſent? the future Time we cannot command, the paſt time we cannot re-cal, ſquander not then the Preſent away. The time will come, when *Time ſhall be no more*, and then *long-ſuffering* ſhall be no more. Will you neglect the time, wherein *Patience* acts, and vainly hope for a Time beyond the reſolves of *Patience*. Will you ſpend that in vain, which Goodneſs hath allotted you for other purpoſes? What an eſtimate will you make of a little forbearance to reſpite Death, when you are gaſping under the ſtroke of its Arrows? How much would you value ſome few Days, of thoſe many Years you now trifle away? Can any think God will be always at an expence with them in vain, that He will have ſuch Riches trampled under their Feet, and ſo many Editions of his *Patience* be made waſte Paper? Do you know how few Sands are yet to run in your Glaſs? Are you ſure that He that waits to Day, will wait as well to Morrow? How can you tell, but that God that is *ſlow to anger* to Day, may be *ſwift* to it the next? *Jeruſalem* had but a *Day* of Peace, and the moſt careleſs Sinner hath no more. When their Day was done, they were deſtroyed by Famine, Peſtilence, or Sword, or led into a doleful Captivity. Did God make our Lives ſo uncertain, and the duration of his Forbearance unknown to us, that we ſhould live in a lazy neglect of his Glory, and our own Happineſs? If you ſhould have more *Patience* in regard of your Lives, do you know whether you ſhall have the effectual Offers of Grace? As your Lives depend upon his Will, ſo your Converſion depends ſolely upon his Grace. There have been many Examples of thoſe miſerable Wretches, that have been left to a Reprobate Senſe, after they have a long time abus'd Divine Forbearance. Though He waits, yet He *binds up ſin*, *Hoſ.* 13. 12. *The ſin of Ephraim is bound up*, as bonds are bound up by a Creditor till a fit opportunity; when God comes to put the Bond in Suit, it will be

be too late to wiſh for that *Patience* we have ſo ſcornfully deſpiſed. Conſider therefore the *End of Patience.* The *Patience of God* conſidered in it ſelf, without that which it tends to, affords very little Comfort, 'tis but a ſtep to pardoning Mercy, and it may be without it, and often is. Many have been reprieved, that were never forgiven; Hell is full of thoſe, that had *Patience* as well as we, but not one that accepted pardoning Grace, went within the Gates of it. *Patience* leaves Men, when their Sins have ripen'd them for Hell; but pardoning Grace never leaves Men, till it hath conducted them to Heaven. His *Patience* ſpeaks him placable, but doth not aſſure us, that he is actually appeas'd. Men may hope that *long-ſuffering* tends to a Pardon, but cannot be aſſured of a Pardon, but by ſomething elſe above meer *long-ſuffering.* Reſt not then upon bare *Patience*, but conſider the *End* of it; 'tis not that any ſhould Sin more freely, but Repent more meltingly; 'tis not to Spirit Rebellion, but give a merciful ſtop to it. Why ſhould any be ſo ambitious of their Ruine, as to conſtrain God to Ruine them againſt the Inclinations of his ſweet Diſpoſition?

4. *The Fourth Exhortation is, Let us imitate God's Patience in our own to others.* He is unlike God, that is hurried with an unruly *impetus*, to Puniſh others for wronging him. The Conſideration of *Divine Patience* ſhould make us ſquare *our ſelves* according to that Pattern. God hath exerciſed a *long-ſuffering* from the fall of *Adam* to this Minute on innumerable Subjects, and ſhall we be tranſported with deſire of Revenge upon a ſingle Injury? If God were not *ſlow to Wrath*, a ſinful World had been long ago torn up from the Foundation. And if Revenge ſhould be exerciſed by all Men againſt their Enemies, what Man ſhould have been alive, ſince there is not a Man without an Enemy? If every Man were like *Saul*, breathing out Threatnings, the World would not only be an *Aceldama*, but a Deſert. How diſtant are they from the *Nature of God*, who are in a Flame upon every ſlight Provocation from a Sence of ſome feeble and imaginary Honour, that muſt bloody their Sword for a trifle, and write their Revenge in Wounds and Death? When God hath his Glory every Day beſpattered, yet he keeps his Sword in his Sheath: What a Wo would it be to the World, if he drew it upon every Affront? This is to be like Brutes, Dogs or Tygers, that ſnarl, bite, and devour upon every ſlight occaſion: But to be *Patient*, is to be Divine, and to ſhew our ſelves acquainted with the Diſpoſition of God. *Be you therefore perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect*, Matth. 5. 48. *i. e.* Be you perfect, and good; for he had been exhorting them, to bleſs them that curs'd them, and to do good to them that hated them, and that from the Example God had ſet them, in cauſing his Sun to riſe upon the Evil as well as the good. *Be you therefore perfect.* To Conclude, as *Patience* is God's Perfection, ſo it is the Accompliſhment of the Soul. And as his *ſlowneſs to Anger* argues the greatneſs of his Power over himſelf, ſo an unwillingneſs to Revenge, is a ſign of a Power over our ſelves, which is more noble than to be a Monarch over others.

A

TREATISE

OF

Divine Providence:

I. In GENERAL,
II. In PARTICULAR.

As Relating to the

CHURCH of GOD

IN THE

WORLD.

By that late Eminent Miniſter of Chriſt, Mr. *STEPHEN CHARNOCKE*, B. D. and ſometimes *Fellow* of *New-Colledge* in *OXON.*

PSAL. 103. 19. *His Kingdom Ruleth over All.*

LONDON:

Printed for Bennet Griffin in the *Old Baily*, John Lawrence, at the *Angel* in the *Poultry*, John Harris, at the *Harrow* in *Little Britain*, John Nicholſon, at the *Kings Arms* in *Little Britain*, and Thomas Cockerill in *Pater-Noſter-Row*, 1699.

A

TREATISE

OF

Divine Providence:

§. I. In GENERAL.

¶. II. In PARTICULAR.

As Relating to the

CHURCH of GOD

IN THE

WORLD.

By that late Eminent Minister of Christ, Mr. JOHN HUNTINGTON, B. D. and Fourteen Years Fellow of New-College in OXON.

PSAL. 103. 19. The LORD hath prepared his Throne in the Heavens; and his Kingdom ruleth over all.

LONDON:

Printed for Dorman Newman in the Old Bailey, John Lawrence, at the Angel in the Poultry, John Harris, at the Harrow in Little Britain, John Sprint, at the Bell in Little Britain, and Thomas Cockerill in Amen-Corner, 1699.

TO THE
READER.

Reader,

THOU art here Presented with a little Piece, of a Great Man; Great indeed, if great Piety, great Parts, great Learning, and great Wisdom, may be admitted to claim that Title: And we verily believe that none well acquainted with him, will deny him his right: however Malevolent Persons may grudge him the Honour. It hath been expected and desired by many, that some account of his Life might be given to the World; But we are not willing to offer Violence to his Ashes, by making him so Publick now he is dead, who so much affected Privacy while he lived. Thou art therefore desired to rest satisfied with this brief Account of him; That being very Young he went to Cambridge, where in Immanuel Colledge, he was brought up under the Tuition of the present Arch B. of Canterbury: What Gracious Workings and Evidences of the New-Birth appeared in him while there, hath already been spoken of by * one who was at that time his Fellow-Collegiate and Intimate. Some time he afterward spent in a private Family, and a little more in the exercise of his Ministery in Southwark, then removed to New-Colledge in Oxon, where he was Fellow, and spent several Years; being then taken notice of for his singular Gifts, and had in Reputation by the most Learned and Godly in that University, and upon that account the more frequently put upon Publick Work. Being thence (the Year after he had been Proctor) called over into Ireland to a constant publick Employment, he exercised his Ministry for about four or five Years, not with the Approbation only, but to the Admiration of the most Wise and Judicious Christians, and with the concurrent Applause of such as were of very different Sentiments from him in the things of Religion; Nay, even those that never loved his Piety, yet would commend his Learning and Gifts, as being beyond Exception, if not above Compare. About the Year 1660. being discharged from the publick Exercise of his Ministry, he returned back into England, and in and about London spent the greatest part of fifteen Years, without any Call to his old Work in a settled way; but for about these five Years last past hath been more known by his constant Preaching, of which we need not speak, but let them that heard him, speak for him; or, if they should be silent, his Works will do it. He was a Person of excellent Parts, strong Reason, great Judgment, and (which do not often go together) curious Phancy, of high Improvements, and general Learning, as having been all his Days a most Diligent and Methodical Student, and a great Redeemer of Time, rescuing not only his restless Hours in the Night, but his very walking time in the Streets, from those Impertinencies and fruitless Vanities which do so customarily fill up Mens Minds, and steal away their Hearts from those better and more Noble Objects, which do so justly challenge their greatest Regards: This he did by not only carefully watching (as every good Christian should do) but constantly writing down his Thoughts, whereby he both Govern'd them better, and furnished himself with many Materials for his most Elaborate Discourses. His chief Talent was his Preaching-Gift, in which, to speak modestly, he had few Equals. To this therefore, as that for which his Lord and Master had best fitted him (neglecting the Practice of Physick, in which he had arrived at a considerable measure of Knowledge) he did especially addict himself, and direct his Studies, and even when Providence denied him opportunities, yet he was still laying in more Stock, and preparing for work against he might be called to it. When he was in Imployment, none that heard him, could justly blame his Retiredness, he being even when most Private, continually at work for the Publick; and had he been less in his Study, he would have been less liked in the Pulpit. His Library, furnished (though not with a numerous, yet) a Curious Collection of Books, was his Work-house, in which he laboured hard all the Week, and on the Lord's Day made it appear, he had not been Idle; and that though he consulted his Privacy, yet he did not indulge his Sloth. He was somewhat reserved where he was not well acquainted, otherwise very free, affable and communicative, where he understood and liked his Company. He affected not much Acquaintance, because he would escape Visitants, well knowing how much the ordinary sort of Friends were apt to take up of his time, which he could ill spare from his beloved Studies, meeting with few that could give him better Entertainment with their Company, than he could give himself alone: They had need be very good, and very learned, by whose Converse he could gain more than by his own Thoughts and Books. He was a True Son of the Church of England, in that sound Doctrine laid down in the Articles of Religion, and Taught by our most Famous Ancient Divines and Reformers; and a real Follower of their Piety, as well as a strenuous Maintainer of the Truth they professed. His Preaching was mostly Practical, yet Rational and Argumentative, to his Hearers Understandings, as well as Affections; and where Controver-

* Mr Johnson, in his Sermon on occasion of Mr. Charnock's death.

sies

ſies came in his way, he ſhewed great Acuteneſs and Judgment in diſcuſſing and determining them, and no leſs Skill in applying them to practice: So that he was indeed a Workman that needed not be aſhamed, being able by Sound Doctrine both to exhort and convince Gain-ſayers. *Some have thought his Preaching too high for Vulgar Hearers; and it cannot be denied but his Gifts were ſuited to the more intelligent ſort of Chriſtians; yet it muſt withal be ſaid, that if he were ſometimes deep, he was never Abſtruſe; he handled the great Myſteries of the Goſpel with much clearneſs and perſpicuity; ſo that if in his Preaching he were above moſt, it was only becauſe moſt were below him. Several conſiderable Treatiſes on ſome of the moſt Important Points of Religion, he finiſhed in his ordinary Courſe, which he hath left behind him, in the ſame Form he uſually Writ them for the Pulpit. This comes out firſt as a* Prodromus *to ſeveral others deſigned to be made Publick, as ſoon as they can be with conveniency Tranſcribed, which (if the Lord will, and ſpare Life) ſhall be atteſted with our Hands; and whatever any elſe ſhall Publiſh, can be but imperfect Notes (his own Copies being under our Reviſal at the Requeſt of his Friends) taken from him in the Pulpit; in which, what miſtakes do often happen, every one knows, and we have found by experience in the caſe of this very Author more than once. This was thought fit to be ſaid to ſecure the Reputation of the Dead, and prevent the Abuſe of the Living. Theſe Sermons might have come out with the Solemn Ceremony of large Recommendations, the Author's worth being ſo well known to, and his Preaching ſo highly eſteemed by the moſt eminent Miniſters about this City; but it was judged needleſs, his own* Works *being ſufficient to* Praiſe *him.*

One thing more is be to added, That ſuch as he is here, ſuch he is in his other Pieces; ſo that thou haſt here, Reader, *a Specimen of the Strain and Spirit of this Holy Man, this being his familiar and ordinary way of Preaching, and theſe Sermons coming out firſt, not as if they were the non-ſuch of what he left behind him, but becauſe they could ſooneſt be diſpatched; and to obviate the Injuries might elſe be done by Spurious Treatiſes, both to him and thee; and likewiſe by this little Taſte to gratifie the Appetites of ſuch who having been his Auditors, did long even with greedineſs, to Feaſt themſelves again upon thoſe excellent Truths, which in the Delivery were ſo ſweet to them; Perhaps too it may quicken their Appetites who never heard him, it may be never yet heard of him. If thou like this Cluſter, fear not but the Vintage will be anſwerable: If this little Earneſt be good Metal, the whole Sum will be no leſs Currant. That a Bleſſing from Heaven may be upon this Work, and upon thee in reading and ſtudying the Nature, and Beauty, and Ends of Divine Providence, and that the Lord of the Harveſt (eſpecially when ſo many are daily called home) would ſend forth more and more* ſuch *Labourers into the Harveſt, is the hearty Prayer of*

Thine in the Lord,

RICHARD ADAMS.
EDWARD VEAL.

A DISCOURSE OF Divine Providence.

II CHRON. XVI. ix.

For the Eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole Earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose Heart is perfect towards him.

IN the beginning of the Chapter you find *Baasha* King of *Israel* raising Walls about, and Fortifying *Ramah*, a Place about twelve Miles from *Jerusalem*, the Metropolis of *Judah*, intending by that means to block *Asa* up, because *Ramah* lay just upon the Road between *Jerusalem* and *Samaria*, the Seats of the two Kings, *ver.* 1.

Baasha was probably afraid of the Revolt of *Israel* to *Judah*, upon that Reformation of Relgion wrought by *Asa*, and therefore would Fortifie that Place to be a hindrance, and to intercept any that should pass upon that account. And to this purpose makes great Preparation, as appears *ver.* 6. for with the Provision *Baasha* had made for the Fortification of *Ramah*; *Asa*, after the seizing of these Materials, builds two Towns, *Gaba* and *Mispah*.

Asa seeing *Baasha* so busie about this Design, and fearing the consequence of it, hath recourse to carnal Policy rather than to God: And therefore enters into League with *Benhadad*, a Neighbour, though an Idolatrous Prince, and purchaseth his Assistance with the Sacrilegious Price of the Treasure of the Temple, *ver.* 2, 3. And hereby engageth him to invade the King of *Israels* Territories, that he might thereby find Work for *Baasha* in another Part, and so divert him from that Design upon which he was so bent, *ver.* 3. *Go, break thy League with Baasha, that he may depart from me.*

Benhadad is easily perswaded by the quantity of Gold, *&c.* to break his League, and make an Inroad, and proves Victorious, and takes many Cities where the Magazines and Stores were laid up, *ver.* 4.

Baasha now to save his Countrey, and make Head against his Enemies, is forced to leave *Ramah*; whereupon *Asa*, who watched his Opportunity, seizeth the materials he had left for the fortifying of *Ramah*, and puts them to another use, *ver.* 5, 6.

Hanani the Seer is presently sent by God with a threatning of War, because he applies himself to a Heathen Prince, rather than to the Lord of Hosts, *ver.* 7. his Sin is aggravated by Gods former kindness to him, and experience he had given him of his miraculous Providence in his Success against that vast Army of the *Ethiopians* and *Lubims*, or *Lybians*, and that upon his recourse to, or reliance on God. And that he should afterwards have recourse to the Arm of Flesh, was a disparagement to God's providential Kindness, *ver.* 8. He further aggravates his Sin by the Consideration of Gods general providential Care of his Creatures, and the particular End of it, and of all his Providences, *viz.* The good of his Church and People, *ver.* 9. *For the Eyes of the Lord*, &c. *Eyes of the Lord*, in Scripture, signifie,

1. *His Knowledge*, Job 34. 21. *For his Eyes are upon all the ways of Man, and he sees all his goings.* Heb. 4. 13. *All things are naked and opened unto the Eyes of him with whom we have to do* *.

2. *His Providence.*

1. *For good*, so it notes his Grace and good Will; so his Eyes and his Heart are joyned together, 1 *Kings* 6. 3. *Mine Eyes and my Heart shall be there perpetually, viz.* in his Temple, the Place which he had hallowed to put his Name there for ever, *Psalm* 32. 8. I will guide him *with mine Eye*, that is, I will Counsel him, and direct him in a gracious and a favourable way. Therefore to be cut off from *the Eye* of the Lord, is to be deprived of his Favour, *Psalm* 31. 22. for none can be cut off from a simple Knowledge of God: So *Zach.* 3. 9. *Seven Eyes upon one Stone*, that is, the Providence of God was in an especial Manner with Christ in the midst of his Passion.

2. *For Evil*, so it notes *His* anger and vindictive Justice. *Isa.* 3. 8. *Their doings are against the Lord, to provoke the Eyes of his Glory.* Kindness and Anger appear first in the Eye, one by its pleasantness, the other by its redness.

(*Run*) that notes Diligence and Care, an industrious Inspection into all things, *Psalm* 119. 32. *I will run the Ways of thy Commandments*; noting Speed and Diligence.

In the Verse, we have

I. *A Description of Gods Providence.*

II. *The End of it.*

I. *The Description of Gods Providence.*

1. *The immediateness of it*, [*his Eyes*] his own Eyes, not anothers. Not like Princes, who see by their Servants Eyes more than by their own, what is done in their Kingdoms; his Care is immediate. Though Angels are Ministers of his Providence, the

* τεχνικὸς ἐμφιλοχωρεῖ *Vulcat spinam dorsi, & in mastatis animalibus per spinam omnia apparent interiora, ita ut nihil latere potest.* Glassius, *Vol.* 3. 1. 106.

the Guardians and Watchers of the World, yet God is their Captain, and is always himſelf upon the Watch.

2. *Quickneſs and Speed* of Providence [*run*] His Eyes do not only walk, but run the Round; they are not ſlumbring Eyes, nor drowzy eye-lids, their Motion is quick and nimble.

3. *Extent of Providence* [*the whole Earth*] all Things in the Earth, all the Hairs on the Heads of theſe Men: The meaneſt Worm as well as the mightieſt Prince, the loweſt Shrub as well as the talleſt Cedar, every cranny, corner or Chink of the Earth.

4. *Diligence of Providence* [*to and fro*] His Care is repeated, he looks this way, and that way, again and again, his Eyes are not confin'd to one Place, fixed on one Object, but are always rouling about from one Place to another.

5. *The Efficacy of his Providence*; His Care doth engage his Strength; he doth not only diſcover Dangers, but prevent them; he hath Eyes to ſee, and Power to Order all things according to his Pleaſure; Wiſe to ſee, and ſtrong to ſave.

II. *The End of Providence* [*to ſhew himſelf ſtrong*, &c.]

1. *Finis cujus*, [*to ſhew himſelf ſtrong.*] Heb. *to* make himſelf ſtrong, but beſt Tranſlated, *to ſhew himſelf ſtrong.* It is not an Addition of Strength, but an Exerciſe of Strength that is here meant.

2. *Finis cui, or the Perſons for whom, thoſe that are perfect in Heart.*

Doctrines.

Doct. 1. *There is a Providence exerciſed by God in the World.*

2. *All Gods Providences in the World, are in order to the good of his People.*

3. *Sincerity in Gods way gives a Man an Intereſt in all Gods Providences, and the good of them.*

Doct. 1. For the Firſt, *There is a Providential Inſpection and Government of all Things in the World by God:* 'Tis not a bare ſight of things that is here meant by Gods Eye, but a ſight and Knowledge in order to the Governing and diſpoſing of them. View this Doctrine at your Leiſure, Preached by God himſelf, with an inconceivable Elegancy, and three whole Chapters ſpent in the Sermon, and † by the *Pſalmiſt* *.

† Job 38. 39, 40. * Pſalm 147. 148.

Some obſerve, that the Society of Angels and Heavenly Creatures is repreſented *Ezek.* 1. by a quaternarian Number, becauſe the World is divided into four Dimenſions, *Eaſt*, *Weſt*, *North*, and *South*, as intimating the Extention of Gods Providence over all Parts ||.

|| Hudſons *Divine right of Government*, chap 6. pag. 3.

Things are not ordered in the World *cæco impetu*; not by blind Fortune, but an All-ſeeing Deity, who hath the management of all ſublunary affairs. Τὸ μεγαλη δύναμις τῆς προνοίας * πάντα ὑπ' αὐτὴν ἔχει, was the Theological Maxim of the Stoicks.

* *Clemens ad Corinth*, pag. 34.

Before I come particularly to explain the Providence of God, I ſhall lay down ſome Propoſitions as the Fondations of this Doctrine.

1. *God hath an indiſputable and peculiar Right to the Government of the World:* None ever queſtioned Gods Right, no nor his Act, but thoſe that were ſwelled with an unreaſonable Ambition, ſuch as *Nebuchadnezzar*, who for this Cauſe underwent the Puniſhment of a ſeven Years Baniſhment from the Society of Men †.

† *Dan.* 4. 17.

None indeed that acknowledge a God, did or can queſtion Gods Right, though they may queſtion his Will and actual Exerciſe of his Right. He is the Creator, and therefore is the Soveraign Lord and Ruler. The World is his Family, and as a Maſter, he hath an undoubted Right to govern his own Family; He gave all Creatures their beings, and therefore hath a Right to enact their Laws, appoint their Stations, and fix their Ends. 'Tis as much his Property and Prerogative to Rule, as it is to Create. Creation is ſo peculiarly proper to God, that it is not communicable to any Creature, no not to Angels, though of a vaſt Capacity in other things, and that becauſe they are Creatures themſelves. 'Tis as impoſſible for one Creature, or all, to govern the World, and manage all the boyſterous Paſſions of Men to juſt and glorious Ends, as to Create them. 'Tis true, God uſeth Inſtruments in the executive Part of his Providence; but he doth not [illegible]ign the Government of the World only by Inſtruments. He uſeth them not for Neceſſity, but Ornament. He Created the World without them, and therefore can govern the World without them.

Virtus Creativa eſt fundamentum Providentiæ & argumentum ad Providentiam. This Right is founded upon that of Creation as he is the efficient Cauſe of it. This right is alſo founded upon the Excellency of his Being. That which is excellent having a right to Rule in the way of that Excellency, that which is Inferiour; every Man hath a natural right to rule another in his own Art and Skill wherein he excels him: If it be the right of a chief Magiſtrate to manage the concerns of his Kingdom, with what Reaſon can we deny that right to God?

2. *God only is qualified for the univerſal Government of the World.* All Creatures, as they were unable to Create themſelves, ſo are unable to manage themſelves without the Direction of a Superiour Power, much more unable to manage the vaſt Body of the World. God is only fit in regard of,

1. *Power: Conſervation* is *continuata Creatio*; that Power which is fit to Create, is only fit to preſerve. A continued Creation belongs as much to Omnipotency as the firſt Creation.

The Government of it requires no leſs Power, both in regard of the numerouſneſs of the Objects, and the ſtrange Contrariety of Paſſions in rational Creatures, and qualities in irrational; Conſervation is but one continued Act with Creation, following one from an inſtant to Duration, as a Line from its Mathematical Point ||.

|| Tailors *exemplar*, *Preface*, 6. 31.

2. *Holineſs and Righteouſneſs.* If *he that hates Right* is not fit to govern, *Job* 34. 17. Then he that is infinitely Righteous, and hath an infinite Love to Righteouſneſs, is the fitteſt to undertake that task; without Righteouſneſs there would be nothing but Confuſion in the whole Creation. Diſorder is the Effect of Unrighteouſneſs, as order is the Effect of Juſtice. The juſteſt Man is fitteſt for ſubordinate Government among Men, and the infinite Juſt God is fitteſt for the univerſal Government of the World.

3. *Knowledge.* An infinite Knowledge to deſcry all the contrivances and various Labyrinths of the Hearts of Men, their ſecret Intentions and Aims, is neceſſary. The Government of the World conſiſts more in ordering the inward Faculties of Men touching the Hearts, and tuning them to play what Notes he pleaſes, than in external Things. No Creature hath the skill or power to Work immediately upon the Will of Man; neither Angels nor Devils can do it immediately, but by propoſing Objects, and working upon the Fancy, which is not always ſucceſsful. He that Created the Heart, knows all the wards of it, and hath only the skill

to

to turn it, and incline it as he pleases; he must needs know all the Inclinations of the Creatures, and their proper Activities, since He alone conferred all those several Principles and Qualities upon them. * *Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world, viz.* the particular Natures, Inclinations, inward Motions, which no Creature fully understands; He needs no Deputy to inform Him of what is done, He is every where, and sees all things: Worldly Governors cannot be every where essentially present.

* Acts 15. 8.

God is so perfect in his Knowledge of all things, that He cannot be imposed upon by the evil Suggestions and Flatteries of Men or Angels.

In Nature it is so, the Eye guides the Body, because that is the chief Organ of Sensitive Knowledge; the Mind, which is the Seat of Wisdom, guides the whole.

4. *Patience.* Infinite Patience is requisite to the Preservation and Government of the World in the Circumstances wherein it hath stood ever since the Fall: What Angel, though the meekest, or can all the Angels in Heaven be Masters of so much Patience as is needful for this Work of Governing the World, though for the space of one Day? Could they bear with all those Evils which are committed in the World in the space of twenty four Hours? Might we not reasonably conceive, that they would be so tired with the obliquities, disorders, deformities which they would see in the Acts of Men, (besides all the Evil which is in the Hearts of Men, which lie without the verge of their Knowledge) that they would rather call for Fire from Heaven to burn the World to Ashes.

* Trap *in* Exod. 34.

* *Averroes* thought, That because of God's slowness to anger, He meddled not with sublunary concerns: This rather fits Him for it, because He can bear with the Injuries of wicked Men, otherwise the World would not continue a Moment.

Angels, though powerful, holy, wise and patient Creatures, yet being Creatures, they want the infiniteness of all these Qualifications which are necessary to this Government: Though they are knowing, yet they know not Mens Hearts; though they are wise, yet they may be charged with a Folly uncapable of this; though holy, yet not able in this respect to manage it to the ends and designs of an infinite Holiness; though nimble, yet cannot be in all parts of the World at every turn: but the Providence of God is infallible, because of his infinite Wisdom; indefatigable, because of his Omnipotency; and Righteous, because of his Goodness.

3. *There can be no reason rendered why God should not actually govern the World,* since He only hath a right and fitness. If God doth not actually govern it, it is either because He cannot, or because He will not.

1. *Not because He cannot*; this inability must be either for want of Knowledge, or want of Power. The one if asserted, would deny his Omnipotence, the other his Omniscience; the one would make Him a weak God, the other an ignorant God, and consequently no God.

2. *Not because He will not*; If He can and will not, it is, say some, a testimony of Envy, that He maligns the good of his Creatures: But not to insist upon this; this must be either because of the

1. *Difficulty.* This cannot be: What difficulty can there be in a single Word, or one Act of his Will, which can be done by God without any Molestation, were there Millions of Worlds as well as this? For still they would be finite, and so governable by an infinite Superior. May we not more reasonably think the forming such a Mass would require more *Pains* than the Government of it? The right stringing an Instrument is more trouble to a skilful Musician, than the tripping over the Strings afterwards to make an Harmony. What difficulty can it be to Omnipotence? Is it a greater labour to preserve and govern, than it was to Create? Doth not the Soul order every part of the Body, and all its Functions, without any pain to it? And shall not the God that made that Soul so indefatigable, much more manage the Concernments of the World without labour to Himself? Is it not as easie with God to guide all these things by one single Act of his Will, as for me by an Act of my Soul to do many things without a distinct Act of Cogitation or Consideration before? Can it be more laborious to Him, to govern the World, than it is to know all things in the World? He sees all things in an instant by one Act of his Understanding, and He orders all Creatures in a Moment by one Act of his Will. Can one Act of his Will be more painful, than one Act of his Understanding? Can He with a Word make this great Ball, and can He not with as much ease order all to conform to the Law of his own Righteous Will? Can a continual eruption of Goodness be a difficulty to an Infinite Being, which we find natural to the Sun, to the Fountains, to the Sea, to many Works of that Omnipotent Goodness? Or,

2. *Disparagement.* Denial of God's Providence over the lesser things of the World, did arise from the consideration of the State of Monarchs, who thought it an abridgment of their Felicity and Dignity, to stoop to such low Considerations as the *minutula* of their Estates might exact from them, but left them to their Vicegerents. But they consider not that the Felicity of God, as it respects the Creature, is to Communicate his Goodness to as many Subjects as he hath made capable of his care. If it were his Glory to create the World, can it be his dishonour to Govern it? The glorifying his Wisdom is as honourable to him as the magnifying his power; though both are eminent in Creation and Providence, yet his Wisdom is more signal in the Governing, as his power was in framing of the World.

Why was it not as much a disparagement to God to *Create* things contemptible in our Eyes, as since He hath Created them to take care of them, and marshal them for his own glorious ends? The Sun in the Heavens is a shadow of God, which doth not disdain to communicate its natural Goodness, and emit its Beams to the meanest Creatures, and let the little Flies sport themselves in them, as well as the greatest Princes: and transmits its Influences upon things obscure, and at a distance from it, whereby it manifests an universal regard to all. And would it not be a disparagement to an Infinite Goodness to be out-stript by a Creature, which He hath set up for a natural Communication of Goodness to the rest of the World? The very consideration of the *Sun*, and the nature of it, gives us as much an account of God, as any inanimate Being whatsoever: 'Tis as much the Sun's honour to produce a small Insect, as the growth of the greatest Plant.

* Have not all Creatures a natural Affection in them to preserve and provide for their own? hath not God much more, who endued all Creatures with that disposition? Whatsoever is a natural Perfection in Creatures, is eminently an Infinite Perfection in God. If it be therefore a Praise to

* *Mornæ de Veritate Religionis Christianæ.* Chap. 11.

you to preſerve your own, can it be a diſgrace to God? You may as well ſay, it is as much a diſhonour to Him to be good, as to have a tender regard to his Creatures. Cenſure Him, as well you may, for Creating them for your Delight, as preſerving and governing them for the ſame end. They are all good, for He pronounced them ſo; and being ſo, a God of Goodneſs will not account them unworthy of his Care. Are they now the Products of his Omnipotent Wiſdom, and ſhall not they be the Objects of his directing Wiſdom? If they are not unworthy of God to Create, how can they be unworthy of God to govern them? It would be as much below Him to make them, as to rule them when they were made.

Fourthly. 4. Therefore, *God doth actually preſerve and govern the World*; though Angels are in Miniſtry in ſome particular works of his Providence, yet God is the Steers-Man, who gives out his particular orders to them.

Jacob's Ladder had the top in Heaven, where God ſtood to keep it firm: Its foot on Earth, and the Angels going up and down upon ſeveral Errands at their Maſters beck.

As God made all things for Himſelf, ſo he orders the ends of all things made by Him, for his own Glory. For being the moſt excellent and intelligent Agent, He doth reduce all the motions of his Creatures to that end for which He made them.

This actual Government of the World by God, brancheth it ſelf out in three things.

1. *Nothing is acted in the World without God's Knowledge.* The Viſion of the *Wheels* in *Ezekiel*, preſents us with an excellent Portraiture of Providence, there are Eyes round about the Wheels *. The Eye of God is upon the whole Circle of the Creatures motion. In all the Revolutions in the World, there is the Eye of God's Omniſcience to ſee them, and the Arm of his Omnipotence to guide them. Not the moſt retired Corner, or the darkeſt Cell, not the deepeſt Cavern, or moſt inward Project, nor the moſt ſecret Wickedneſs, not the cloſeſt Goodneſs, but the Eye of the Lord beholds it. * *Prov.* 15. 3. *The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.* He hears the Words, ſees the Actions, knows the Thoughts, regiſters the gracious Diſcourſes, bottles up the Penitent Tears, and conſiders all the ways of Men; not a whiſpered Oath, not an Atheiſtical Thought, though but only peeping upon the Heart, and ſinking down again in that Maſs of Corruption; not a diſorderly Word, but He knows and marks it. The Soul hath a particular Knowledge of every Act, becauſe it is the Spring of every Act in any Member; and nothing is done in this little World, but the Soul knows it. Surely then there is not an act done in the World, nor the motion of any Creature, but as God doth concur to it, He muſt needs know what He doth concur to. The Knowledge and Ordaining every thing, is far leſs to the Infinite Being of God, than the knowledge and ordaining every motion of the Body is to a Finite Soul.

*Ezek. 18 *their wings were full of eyes, &c.*

*Prov. 15. 3.

Or, Suppoſe a Soul cloathed with a Body of as big a Proportion as the Matter of the whole Creation, it would actuate this Body, though of a greater Bulk, and know every Motion of it. How much more God, who hath Infinity, and Excellency, and Strength of all Angels and Souls, muſt needs actuate this World, and know every motion of it? There is nothing done in the World, but ſome Creature or other knows it; he that acts it doth at leaſt know it: If God did not know it, the Creatures then in that particular Knowledge would be Superiour to God, and know ſomething more than God knows; can this be poſſible?

2. *Nothing is acted in the World without the Will of God.* His Will either commands it, or permits it. * *Pſal.* 135. 6. *Whatſoever the Lord pleaſed, that did He in Heaven and in Earth.* *Eph. 1. 11 *He works all things after the Counſel of his own will.*

Even the Sins of the World, his will permits them, his power aſſiſts in the act, and his Wiſdom orders the ſinfulneſs of the act for holy ends. The Four Chariots in *Zech.* 6. 2, 3, 4, 5. by which ſome underſtand *Angels*, are ſent upon Commiſſion into the ſeveral parts of the World, and compared to Chariots, both for their Strength, their Swiftneſs, their Employment in a Military way to ſecure the Church. Theſe are ſaid to come * out of the two Mountains of Braſs, which ſignifie the irreverſible Decrees of God, which the Angels are to execute. He alarms up the Winds, when He would have *Jonah* arreſted in his flight. He ſounds a retreat to them, and locks them up in their Chambers *. Bread hath a natural vertue in it to nouriſh, but it muſt be accompanied with his ſecret Bleſſing, *Mat.* 4. 4.

* ver. 1.

Reynolds.

**Pſal.* 107. 25, 29.

Virtute primi actus, agunt agentia omnia quicquid agunt.

3. *Nothing doth ſubſiſt without God's care and power.* His eyes running to and fro, implies not only Knowledge, but Care. He doth not careleſly behold what is done in the World, but like a skilful *Pilot*, He ſits at the Helm, and ſteers the World in what courſe it ſhould ſail. Our Being we owe to his Power, our Well-being to his Care, our motion and exerting of every Faculty, to his merciful Providence and Concurrence; *In Him we live and move, and have our being* *. He frames our Being, preſerves our Lives, concurs with our Motion. This is an *Idea* that bears date in the Minds of Men, with the very Notion of a God. Why elſe did the Heathen in all their Straits fly to their Altars, and fill their Temples with Cries and Sacrifices? To what purpoſe was this, if they had not acknowledged God's Superintendency, his taking notice of their Cauſe, hearing their Prayers, conſidering their Cries? Why ſhould they do this, if they thought that God did not regard Humane Affairs, but ſtood untouched with a Senſe of their miſeries?

**Acts* 17. 28.

If all things were done by chance, there could be no Predictions of Future Things, which we frequently find in Scripture, and by what ways accompliſhed. Impoſſible it is that any thing can be continued without his care. If God ſhould in the leaſt moment with-hold the Influence of his Providence, we ſhould melt into nothing, as the impreſſion of a Seal upon the Water vaniſhes, as ſoon as the Seal is removed; or as the Reflection of the Face in the Glaſs diſappears upon the firſt inſtant of our removal from it. The Light in the Air is by participation of the Light of the Sun; the Light in the Air with-draws upon the departure of the Sun. The Phyſical and Moral Goodneſs the Creature would vaniſh upon the removal of God from it, who is the Fountain of both.

What an Artificer doth work, may continue, though the Work-man dies, becauſe what he doth is materially, as to the Matter of it, ready to his hands; he creates not the Matter, but only ſets Materials together, and diſpoſeth them into ſuch a Form and Figure: But God gives a being to the Matter and Form of all Things, and therefore the Continuance of that being depends upon his preſerving Influence *. God upholds the World, and Cauſes all thoſe Laws which he hath impreſſed

**Stillingfl. Orig. ſacræ. lib. 3. cap. 3 Sect. 3.*

ſed upon every Creature, to be put in Execution; not as a Man that makes a Watch, and winds it up, and then ſuffers it to go of it ſelf; or that turns a River into another Channel, and lets it alone to run in the Graff he hath made for it; but there is continual Concurrence of God to this goodly Frame. For they do not only live, but move in him, or by him; His living and Omnipotent Power runs through every Vein of the Creation, giving it Life and Motion, and ordering the Acts of every Part of this great Body. All the Motions of ſecond Cauſes are ultimately reſolved into the Providence of God, who holds the firſt link of them in his Hands †. More particularly, the Nature of Providence may be explained by Two Propoſitions.

† Hoſ. 2. 21, 22.

First Propoſition. *The Univerſality of it.* His Eyes run to and fro throughout the whole Earth.

'Tis over all Creatures, 1. *The higheſt.* 2. *The loweſt.*

Firſt. 1. *The higheſt and moſt magnificent Pieces of the Creation.*

1. *Over Jeſus Chriſt*, the firſt-born of every Creature. Gods Providence was in an eſpecial Manner converſant about him, and fixed upon him. It was by the *determinate Counſel of God*, that he was delivered up ‖. His Providence was diligently exerciſed about him in his whole courſe. Chriſt anſwers his Mothers ſolicitouſneſs with the Care his Father took of him *. Do you not know that I am about thoſe Things my Father takes Care of †? This Expoſition beſt agrees with his Reproof, who blames them for Creating ſo much trouble to themſelves upon their miſſing him in the Town. 'Tis not, why do you interrupt me in my Diſpute with the *Jewiſh* Doctors? But [how is it that you ſought me? Do you think I am not under the Care of my Father?] It was particularly exerciſed on him in the midſt of his Paſſion ‖. *Seven Eyes* were *upon* the *Stone*; Seven, a number of Perfection, a perfect and peculiar Care of God attended him.

‖ Acts 2. 23.

* Luke 2. 49. *Wiſt you not that I muſt be about my Fathers Buſineſs?*

† ἐν τοῖς τοῦ πατρός Hammon. *in loc.*

‖ Zach. 3. 9

2. *Over Angels and Men.* The Soul of the leaſt Animal, and the ſmalleſt plant, is formed and preſerved by God, but the breath of Mankind is more particularly in his Hand: *Job* 12. 10. *In whoſe Hand is the Soul of every Living Thing, and the breath of all Mankind.*

1. *Over good Angels and Men.* He charges his Angels with Folly and Weakneſs. They cannot direct themſelves without his Wiſdom, nor preſerve themſelves without his Power. God hath a Book of Providence, wherein he writes down who ſhall be preſerved, and this Book *Moſes* underſtands, *Exod.* 32. 33. *Whoſoever hath ſinned againſt me, him will I blot out of my Book*; not the Book of Election, no Names Written there are blotted out; but out of the Book of Providence As it is underſtood, *Iſa.* 4. 3. [Every one that is written among the Living in *Jeruſalem*,] *i. e.* every one whom God deſigns to Preſervation and Deliverance *. That God, ſurely, that hath a Care of the mean Animals, will not be careleſs of his affectionate Worſhippers. He that feeds the Ravens, will not ſtarve his Doves. He that ſatisfies the Ravening Wolf, will not famiſh his gentle Lambs and harmleſs Sheep. He ſhelters † *Jacob* from *Labans* Fury, and † Tutors him how he ſhould carry himſelf towards the good Man. He brought *Haman* out of Favour, and ſet *Mordecai* in his Place for the Deliverance of the *Jews* which were deſign'd for ſlaughter.

* Hortons *Sermon.* Pſalm 87. p. 56.

† Gen. 2. 9.

2. *Over evil Angels and Men.* Gods Power preſerves them, his Patience ſuffers them, his Wiſdom Orders them, and their evil Purpoſes and Performances to his own Glory. The Devil cannot arreſt *Job*, nor touch a Lamb of his Flock, nor a Hair of his Head, without a Commiſſion from God. He cannot enter into one filthy Swine in the *Gadarenes* herd, without asking our Saviour leave. Whatever he doth, he hath a Grant or Permiſſion from Heaven for it. Gods ſpecial Providence is over his People, but his general Providence over all Kingdoms and Countreys.

He takes Care of *Syria*, as well as of *Judea*; and ſends *Eliſha* to anoint *Hazael* King of *Syria*, as well as *Jehu* King of *Iſrael* ‖. Though *Iſhmael* had mocks for *Iſaac*, yet the God of *Iſaac* provided for the wants of *Iſhmael* *. *He cauſeth his Sun to ſhine upon the unjuſt*, as well as the *juſt*, to produce Fruits and Plants for their Preſervation.

‖ 1 Kings 19. 13.

* Gen. 25. 16, 17, 18.

II. *Over the meaneſt Creatures.* As the Suns Light, ſo Gods Providenc diſdains not the meaneſt Worms. 'Tis obſerved, that in the Enumeration of the Works of Creation †, only the Great Whales and ſmall creeping Things are mentioned, and not the intermediate Creatures; to ſhew, that the leaſt as well as the greateſt are under his Care. 'Tis one of his Titles to be the preſerver of Beaſts as well as *Men* ‖. He is the great Caterer for all Creatures *. *The young Lyons ſeek their Meat from God.* They attend him for their daily Portion, and what they gather and meet with in their purſuit, is Gods gift to them, *Verſe* 27, 28. He liſtens to the Cries of the young Ravens, though they are Birds of Prey. *He gives to the Beaſt his Food, and to the young Ravens which cry* †. In *Pſalm* 104. *David* throughout the whole reads a particular Lecture of this Doctrine, wherein you may take a Proſpect of Gods Providence all over the World. He Acts them by a Commandment and imprinted Law upon their Natures, and makes them obſerve exactly thoſe Statutes he enacts for the guidance of them in their proper Operations. *Pſalm* 147. 15. [*He ſendeth forth his Commandment upon Earth, and his Word runs very ſwiftly*] *viz.* his word of Providence. God keeps them in the Obſervation of their firſt Ordinance ‖. They obſerve their Stations, the Law God hath ſet them, as if they had a rational Knowledge of their Duty in their particular Motions, *Pſalm* 104. 19. *The Sun knoweth his going down.* Sometimes he makes them Inſtruments of his Miniſtry to us; ſometimes Executioners of his Judgments. Lice and Frogs arm themſelves at his command to puniſh *Egypt*. He makes a Whale to attend *Jonas* dropping into the Sea, to be an Inſtrument both to puniſh and preſerve him? Yea, and which is more wonderful, the multitude of the very Cattel is brought among others as a Reaſon of a Peoples Preſervation from Deſtruction, *Jonah* 4 11. The Multitude of the Cattel are joyned with the Multitude of the Infants, as an Argument to ſpare *Nineveh*. He remembers *Noah*'s Cattel as well as his Sons, *Gen.* 8. 1. God remembred *Noah* and every living thing, and all the Cattel that were with him in * the Ark. He numbers the very Hairs of our Heads, that not one falls without his Will. Not only the immortal Soul, but the decaying Body; not only the vital Parts of that Body, but the inconſiderable Hairs of the Head, are under his Care.

† Gen. 1. 21.

‖ Neh. 9. 6

* Pſa. 104. 21.

† Pſa. 147 9.

‖ Pſal. 119. 91. *They continue this day according to thine Ordinances, for all are thy Servants, i. e. The Earth and what is upon it.*

* *A particular Act of remembrance is exercis'd by God for the very Baſtel.*

I. *This is no diſhonour to God, to take care of the meaneſt Creatures.* 'Tis as honourable for his Power to preſerve them, and his Wiſdom to Govern them, as for both to Create them. 'Tis one Part of a Mans Righteouſneſs to be merciful to his Beaſts which he never made; and is it not a Part of Gods Righteouſneſs, as the Rector of the World, to take Care of thoſe Creatures which he did not diſdain to give a Being to?

II. *It rather conduceth to his Honour.*

1. *The Honour of his Goodneſs.* It ſhews the comprehenſiveneſs of his Goodneſs, which embraceth in the Arms of his Providence, the loweſt Worm, as well as the higheſt Angel. Shall Infinite Goodneſs frame a thing, and make no Proviſion for its Subſiſtence? At the firſt Creation he acknowledged whatever he had Created, good in his kind, good in themſelves, good in order to the End for which he Created them; 'tis therefore an honourable thing for his goodneſs to Conduct them to that End which in their Creation he deſign'd them for; and not leave them wild diſorders, unſuitable to the End of that goodneſs which firſt called them into being. If he grow out of Love with the Operations of his Hands, he would ſeem to grow out of Love with his own Goodneſs that formed them.

2. *The Honour of his Power and Wiſdom.* The Power of God is as much ſeen in making an Inſect full of Life and Spirit in all the Parts of it, to perform all the Actions ſuitable to its Life and Nature, as in making Creatures of a greater Bulk; and is it not for the Honour of his Power to preſerve them, and the Honour of his Wiſdom to direct theſe little Animals to the End he intended in their Creation; for as little as they ſeem to be, an End they have, and glorious too, for *natura nihil facit fruſtra.* It ſeems not to conſiſt with his Wiſdom to neglect that which he hath vouchſafed to Create. And though the Apoſtle ſeems to deny Gods Care of Brutes, 1 *Cor.* 9. *Doth God take care for Oxen?* 'Tis true, God did not in that Law only take Care of *Oxen*, *i. e.* with a legiſlative Care, as making a Law only for them, though with a Providential Care he doth; but the Apoſtle there doth not deny Gods Care for Oxen, but makes an Argument *a minori ad majus.*

2. *Providence extends to all the Actions and Motions of the Creature.* Every *ſecond* Cauſe implies a dependance upon a *firſt* Cauſe in its Operation. If God did not extend his Providence over the Actions of Creatures, he would not every where, and in all Things and Beings be the firſt Cauſe.

1. *To natural Actions.* What an orderly Motion is there in the natural Actions of Creatures, which evidenceth a guidance by an higher Reaſon, ſince they have none of their own? How do Fiſh ſerve ſeveral Coaſts at ſeveral Seaſons, as if ſent upon a particular Meſſage by God? This cannot be by any other faculty than the inſtinct their Maker hath put into them. Plants that grow between a barren and fruitful Soil, ſhoot all their Roots towards the moiſt and fruitful Ground; by what other Cauſe than a ſecret Direction of Providential Wiſdom *? There is a Law impreſt upon them and their Motions, that are ſo orderly, as if they were acted according to a Covenant and Agreement between them and their Creator, and therefore called the *Covenant* of the *Day* and *Night* †. What avails the Toyl and Labour of Man in Plowing, Trading, Watching, unleſs God influence, unleſs he bleſs, unleſs he keep the City? The proceed of all Things depends upon his goodneſs in Bleſſing, and his Power in Preſerving. God ſignified this, when he gave the Law from Mount *Sinai*, promiſing the People, that if they kept his Commandments, he would give them Rain in due Seaſon, and that the Earth ſhould bring forth her Fruit ‖. Evidencing thereby, that thoſe natural Cauſes can produce nothing without his Bleſſing; that though they have natural Principles to produce ſuch Fruits according to their Natures, yet he can put a ſtop to their Operations, and make all their Fruits abortive. He weighs the Waters, how much ſhall be poured out in Showers of Rain upon the parched Earth. He makes a Decree for the Rain, and gives the Clouds Commiſſion to diſſolve themſelves ſo much and no more *. Yea, he doth Order the Conduct of them by Counſel, as imploying his Wiſdom about theſe Things which are of concern to the World. *Job* 37. 11, 12. *He ſcattereth his bright Cloud, and it is turned round about by his Counſels, that they may do whatſoever he Commands them upon the Face of the World in the Earth.*

2. *To Civil Actions.* Counſels of Men are ordered by him to other Ends than what they aim at, and which their Wiſdom cannot diſcover. God ſtirred up *Sennacherib* to be the Executioner of his Juſtiee upon the *Jews*, and afterwards upon the *Egyptians*, when that great King deſigned only the Satisfaction of his Ambition in the enlarging his Kingdom, and ſupporting his greatneſs, *Iſa.* 10. 6, 7. *I will ſend him againſt an Hypocritical Nation, and againſt the People of my Wrath: Howbeit he means not ſo, neither doth his Heart think ſo,* [He Deſigns not to be an Inſtrument of my Juſtice] *but it is in his Heart to deſtroy and cut off Nations, not a few.* His Thoughts and Aims were far different from Gods Thoughts. The Hearts of Kings are in his Hands, as wax in the Hands of a Man, which he can Work into what form and ſhape he pleaſes. He hath the Soveraignty over, and the ordering the Hearts of Magiſtrates, *Pſalm* 47. 9. *The Shields of the Earth belong unto God.* Counſels of Men for the good of his People, are his Act. The Princes adviſed *Jeremiah* and *Baruch*, *Jer.* 36. 19. To hide themſelves, which they did, yet *ver.* 26. it is ſaid the Lord hid them. Though they followed the Advice of their Court-friends, yet they could not have been ſecured, had not God ſtep't in by his Providential Care, and covered them with his Hand. It was the Courtiers Counſel, but God challenges the Honour of the Succeſs.

Military Actions are ordered by him. Marſhal Employments are ordered by his Providence. He is the great General of Armies: 'Tis obſerved that in the two Prophets, *Iſaiah* and *Jeremiah*, God is called the Lord of Hoſts no leſs than a Hundred and Thirty Times †.

3. *To preternatural Actions.* God doth command Creatures to do thoſe things which are no way ſuitable to their Inclinations, and gives them ſometimes for his own Service, a writ of Eaſe from the performance of the natural Law He hath impreſſed upon them. A devouring Raven is made by the Providence of God the Prophet's Caterer in time of Famine *. God inſtructs a Ravenous Bird in a Leſſon of Abſtinence for *Elijah*'s ſafety, and makes it both a Cook and a Serving-man to the Prophet. The Whale that delights to play about the deepeſt part of the Ocean, approaches to the Shore, and attends upon *Jonah* to tranſport him to the dry Land *. The Fire * was ſlacked by God, that it ſhould not ſinge the leaſt Hair of the three Childrens Heads, but was let looſe to conſume the * Officers of the Court. The Mouths of the Ravenous Lyons which had been kept with an empty Stomach, were muzled by God, that they ſhould not prey upon *Daniel* in a whole Nights ſpace. God taught them an Heroical Temperance with ſo dainty a Diſh at their Mouths, and yet they tore the Accuſers in a trice.

4. *To all ſupernatural and miraculous Actions* of the Creatures which are as ſo many new Creations. As when the Sun went back-ward in *Hezekiah*'s Time; when it ſtood ſtill in the Valley of *Ajalon*, that *Joſhua* might compleat his Victory on the *Canaanites*. The boiſterous Waves ſtood on a heap like Walls to ſecure the *Iſraelites* Paſſage; but returning

* Andrews *Catechiſtical Doctrine*. p. 60

† Jer. 33. 20.

‖ Lev. 26. 3, 4. *Then will I give you Rain, and the Land ſhall yield her increaſe, and the trees of the field ſhall yield their Fruit.*

* Job 28. 23, 24, 25, 26.

† Arrowſmith *Chain of Principles Exercit.* 1. Sect. 1.

* 1 Kings 17. 4.

* Jonah 2. 10.

* Dan. 3.

turning to their natural Motion, were the *Ægyptians* Sepulchre. When Creatures have ſtept out of their natural Courſe, it could not be the act of the Creature, it being ſo much againſt and above their natures, but it muſt be by the order of ſome Superiour Power.

5. *To all fortuitous Actions.* What is caſual to us, is ordained by God; as Effects ſtand related to the Second Cauſe, they are many times contingent, but as they ſtand related to the Firſt Cauſe, they are Acts of his Counſel, and directed by his Wiſdom. God never left Second Cauſes to ſtraggle and operate in a vagabond way; though the effect ſeem to us to be a looſe Act of the Creature, yet it is directed by a Superiour Cauſe to a higher end than we can preſently imagine. The whole diſpoſing of the Lot which is caſt into the Lap, is from the Lord *. A Souldier ſhoots an Arrow at random, and God guides it to be the Executioner of *Ahab* for his Sin *; which Death was fore-told by *Micaiah*, *v.* 17, 28. God gives us a certain Rule to judge of ſuch Contingencies, *Exod.* 21. 13. And *if a man lie not in wait, but God deliver him into his hand*; A Man accidentally kills another, but it is done by a Secret Commiſſion from God. [*God delivered him into his hands.*] Providence is the great Clock, keeping time and order, not only hourly, but inſtantly, to its own honour *.

*Pro. 16. 33.

* 1 Kings 22. 34.

* Fuller *Eccl. Hiſt. Cent. 6. b. 2 p. 1.*

6. *To all voluntary Actions.*

1. *To good Actions.* Not by compelling, but ſweetly inclining, determining the Will, ſo that it doth that willingly, which by an unknown and unſeen neceſſity cannot be omitted. It conſtrains not a Man to Good againſt his Will, but powerfully moves the Will to do that by conſent, which God hath determined ſhall be done. *The way of man is not in himſelf*; the Motion is Mans, the Action is Mans, but the direction of his ſteps is from God. *Jer.* 10. 23. *'Tis not in man that walketh, to direct his ſteps.*

2. *To evil Actions.*

1. *In permitting them to be done.* Idolatries and Follies of the Heathen were permitted by God. He checked them not in their Courſe, but laid the Reins upon their Necks, and ſuffered them to run what Race they pleaſed, *Acts* 14. 16. *Who in times paſt ſuffered all nations to walk in their own ways.* Not the moſt execrable Villany that ever was committed in the World, could have been done without his permiſſion. Sin is not *amabile propter ſe*, and therefore the permiſſion of it is not deſirable in it ſelf, but the permiſſion of it is only deſirable, and *honeſtatur ex fine*. God is good and wiſe, and righteous in all his acts: ſo likewiſe in this act of permitting Sin; and therefore He wills it out of ſome good and righteous end, which belongs to the manifeſtation of his glory, which is *that* He intends in all the acts of his will; of which this is one. Wicked Men are ſaid to be a Staff in God's hand; as a Man manages a Staff which is in his own power, ſo doth God manage wicked Men for his own holy purpoſes, and they can go no further than God gives them Licenſe.

2. *In ordering them.* God governs them by his own unſearchable Wiſdom and Goodneſs, and directs them to the beſt and holieſt ends. Contrary to the natures of the Sins, and the intentions of the Sinner. *Joſeph*'s Brothers ſold him to gratifie their Revenge, and God ordered it for their Preſervation in a time of Famine. *Pharaoh*'s hardneſs is ordered by God for his own glory, and that King's deſtruction: God decrees the delivering up Chriſt to Death, and *Herod*, *Pilate*, the Phariſees, and common rout of People, in ſatisfying their own Paſſion, do but execute what God had before ordained, *Acts* 4. 28. *For to do whatſoever thy hand and thy Counſel determined before to be done.* *Judas* his Covetouſneſs, and the Devils malice, are ordered by God to execute his Decree for the Redemption of the World. *Titus* the Emperor, his Ambition led him to *Jeruſalem*, but God's end is the fulfilling of his Threatnings, and the taking revenge upon the *Jews*, for their murdering of Chriſt. The aim of the Phyſician is the Patient's Health, when the intent of the Leeches is only to ſuck the Blood. God hath holy ends in permitting Sin, while Man hath unworthy ends in committing it. The Rain which makes the Earth fruitful, is exhaled out of the Salt Waters, which would of themſelves ſpoil the ground, and make it unfruitful. *The deceiver and the deceived* are his, *Job* 12. 16. Both the Action of the Devil the Seducer, and of wicked Men the Seduced, are reſtrained by God within due bounds, in ſubſerviency to his Righteous Will. [*For with him is ſtrength and wiſdom.*]

2. *As Providence is Univerſal, ſo it is Myſterious.* Second Propoſition. Who can trace the motions of God's Eyes in their race? He makes the *Clouds his Chariot* * in his motions about the Earth, and his Throne is in the dark. He walks upon the wings of the Wind. His providential ſpeed makes it too quick for our Underſtanding. His ways are myſterious, and put the Reaſon and Wiſdom of Men to a ſtand. The cleareſt ſighted Servants of God do not ſee the bottom of his works, the motion of God's Eyes is too quick for ours.

Pſal. 194. 3.

John Baptiſt is ſo aſtoniſh'd at the ſtrange Condeſcenſion of his Saviour to be Baptiſed of him, that he forbids it *; Man is a weak Creature, and cannot trace or ſet out the Wiſdom of God.

*Mat. 3.

But this myſteriouſneſs and darkneſs of Providence adds a luſtre to it. As Stones ſet in Ebony, though the grounds be dark, make the beauty and ſparkling the clearer.

1. *His ways are above humane Methods.* Dark Providences are often the ground-work of ſome excellent Piece He is about to diſcover to the World. His Methods are like a plaited Picture, which on the one ſide repreſents a Negro, on the other a Beauty. He lets *Sarahs* Womb be dead, and then brings out the root of a numerous Progeny. He makes *Jacob* a Cripple, and then a Prince to prevail with God; he gives him a wound, and then a Bleſſing. He ſends not the Goſpel till Reaſon was nonpluſt, and that the World in that higheſt Wiſdom it had at that Time attained unto, was not able to arrive to the Knowledge of God; 1 *Cor.* 1. 21. *After that the World by Wiſdom knew not God, it pleaſed God by the fooliſhneſs of Preaching to ſave them that believe.*

2. *His Ends are of a higher ſtrain than the aims of Men.* Who would have thought that the Forces *Cyrus* raiſed againſt *Babylon* to ſatisfie his own Ambition, ſhould be a means to deliver the *Iſraelites*, and reſtore the Worſhip of God in the Temple? God had this End, which *Iſaiah* Prophecyed of, and *Cyrus* never dreamt of, *Iſa.* 44. 28. *That ſaith of* Cyrus, *thou art my Shepherd, and ſhalt perform all my Pleaſure, even ſaying, that* Jeruſalem *ſhall be built*, &c. * And this a long Time before *Cyrus* was Born: *Pharaoh* ſent *Iſrael* a way in the very Night, at the end of the four hundred and thirty Years, the Time perfixt by God; he could not keep them longer becauſe Gods Promiſe, he could not keep them longer becauſe Gods Promiſe, he would not becauſe of Gods Plagues. God aims at the glorifying his Truth, in keeping touch with his Word. *Pharaoh* Deſigns not the accompliſhing Gods Will, but his Delverance from Gods Judgment.

*Iſa. 45. 1.

There

There is an observable Consideration to this Purpose, How Gods Ends are far different from Mans, *Luke* 2. 1, 4. In the Taxing the whole World by *Augustus*. *Augustus* out of Pride to see what a numerous People he was Prince of, would Tax the whole World: Some tell us he had appointed the enrolling the whole *Empire* Twenty Seven Years before the Birth of our Saviour, and had proclaimed it at *Tarracon* in *Spain*: But soon after this Proclamation, *Augustus* found a breaking out of some stirs, and thereupon deferred his Resolution to some other fit Time, which was the very Time of the Birth of Christ. See now Gods wise disposal of Things, in changing *Augustus*'s Resolution, and deferring it till the Forty Fourth Year of his Reign, when Christ was ready to come into the World! And by this giving occasion, yea, necessitating *Mary* to come from *Nazareth*, where *Joseph* and *Mary* dwelt, who perhaps being big with Child, without this necessity laid upon her by the Emperors Edict, would not have ventured upon the Journey to *Bethlehem*: There she falls in Travel, that so Christ, the Seed of *David*, being conceived in *Nazareth* should be born at *Bethlehem*, where *Jesse* lived, and *David* was Born. How wisely doth God order the Ambition and Pride of Men to fulfil his own Predictions, and to publish the Truth of Christs Birth of the Seed of *David*, for the Names of *Joseph* and *Mary* were found in the Records of *Rome* in *Tertullians* Time?

3. *God hath several Ends in the same Action.* *Jacob* is oppresst with Famine, *Pharaoh* enricht with Plenty, but *Joseph's* Imprisonment is in Order to his Fathers Relief, and *Pharaohs* wealth; his Mistresses Anger flings him into a Prison. *Joseph* is wronged, and hath Captivity for a Reward of his Chastity. God makes it a step to his Advancement, and by this way brings him from a Captive to be a Favourite. What is Gods End? Not only to preserve the *Ægyptian* Nation, but old *Jacob* and his *Family*. Was this all that God aimed at? No, He hath a further Design, and lays the Foundation of something to be acted in the Future Age. By this means *Jacob* is brought into *Ægypt*, leaves his Posterity there, makes way for that Glory in the working of the Future Miracles for their Deliverance, such an Action that the World should continually ring of, and which should be a Type of the spiritual Deliverance by Christ.

4. *God has more remote Ends than short sighted Souls are able to espy.* God doth not Eye the present Advantage of himself and his Creature, but hath an Eye to his own Glory in all, yea, in the very last Ages of the World. In small things, there are often great Designs laid by God, and Mysteries in the least of his Acts. *Isaac* was delivered from his Fathers Sword, when he was intentionally Dead, to set forth to the World a Type of Christs Resurrection, and a Ram is conducted thither by God, and entangled in the Thickets, and appointed to sacrifice, whereby God sets forth a Type of Christs Death. † He useth the Captivities of the People, to enlarge the bounds of the Gospel.

† Halls *Contempl.* P. 796.

The wise Men were guided by a Star to Christ as King of the *Jews*, and come to pay homage to him in his Infancy; when was the Foundation of this remarkable Event laid? Probably, in *Balaams* Prophecy, *Numb.* 24. 17. *I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh. There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of* Israel, *&c.* transmitted by Tradition to those wise Men, and perhaps renewed by *Sibilla Chaldæa*, and confirm'd in their Minds by the *Jews*, whilst in the *Babylonish* Captivity they Conversed with them. Thus God many Ages before in this Prophecy had an End in promoting the readier Entertainment of Christ among this People, when he should be Born; what the Wise Mens end was, the Scripture doth not acquaint us; but however, their Gifts were a means to preserve our Saviour, *Joseph* and *Mary*, from the Rage of a Tyrant, and affording them where-withal to support them in *Ægypt*, whither they were ordered by God to fly for Security. So ‖ God threatens by the Prophet the Noble-man for his scoffing unbelief, that though he should see the Plenty, that he should not taste of it. See how God doth order Second Causes, naturally to bring about his own Decree! The King gives this Person charge of the Gate; whilst the People croud for Provision to satisfie their hunger, they accomplish the Threatning which they had no Intentions to do, and trod him to Death. Now I come to shew, That there is a Providence.

‖ 2 Kings 7. 1, 2, 17.

1. *The Wisdom of God would not be so perspicuous were there not a Providence in the World.* 'Tis eminent in the Creation, but more illustrious in the Government of the Creatures. A Musician discovers more skill in the touching an Instrument, and ordering the Strings, to sound what Notes he pleaseth, than he doth in the first framing and making of it. * All Gods Providences are but his touch of the Strings of this great Instrument of the World. And all his Works are excellent, because they are the Fruit of his wonderful Counsel, and unsearchable Wisdom, which is most seen in his Providence, as in reading the Verses before. His Power is glorified in creating and upholding this Fabrick: How shall his Wisdom be glorified but in his Government of it? Surely God will be no less intent upon the Honour of his Wisdom, than upon that of his Power. For if any Attribute may be said to excel another, it is his Wisdom and Holiness, because those are Perfections which God hath stampt upon the nobler Part of his Creation. Inferiour Creatures have more Power and Strength than Man, but Wisdom is the Perfection of a rational Creature. Now it is Gods Wisdom to direct all Things to their proper End, as well as to appoint them their Ends, which Direction must be by a particular Providence, especially in those Things which know not their End, and have no Reason to guide them; we know in the World it is not a Part of Wisdom to leave Things to chance, but to state our ends, and lay a Plat-form of those means which direct to an attaining of them. And Wisdom is most seen in drawing all things together, and making them subservient to the End he hath fixed to himself; and therefore one of the great Things that shall be admired at last, next to the great Work of Redemption, will be the Harmony and Consent of those Things which seemed contrary, how they did all conspire for the bringing about that End which God aimed at.

* Isa. 28. 29. *This also comes from the Lord of Hosts, which is wonderful in Counsel, and excellent in working.*

2. *The means whereby God acts, discover a Providence.* He Acts. *Secondly.*

I. *By small Means.* The considerable Actions in the World have usually very small beginnings. As of a few Letters, how many Thousand words are made? Of Ten Figures, how many Thousand Numbers? And a Point is the beginning of all Geometry. A little Stone flung into a Pond, makes a little Circle, then a greater, till it inlargeth it self to both the sides. So from small beginnings, God doth cause an efflux through the whole World.

1. *He useth small means in his ordinary Works.* The common Works of Nature spring from small begin-

beginnings. Great Plants are formed from ſmall Seeds. The Clouds which Water the great Garden of the World, are but a Collection of Vapours. The nobleſt Operations of the Soul are wrought in an Organ, *viz.* The Brain, compoſed of coagulated Phlegm. Who would imagine that *Saul* in ſeeking his Fathers Aſſes, ſhould find a Kingdom?

2. *In his extraordinary Works he uſeth ſmall means.* *Eliſha* that waited upon *Elijah*, and poured Water upon his Hands, ſhall do greater Miracles then his Maſter. And the Apoſtles ſhall do greater
* Joh. 14. 12. Works than Chriſt *; that the World may know that God is not tyed to any means that Men count excellent; that all Creatures are his, and Act not of themſelves, but by his Spirit and Power.

In his extraordinary Works of *Juſtice*. He makes a Rod in the Hand of *Moſes* to confound the skill of the *Ægyptian* Magicians: He commiſſioned Frogs and Flyes to countercheck a powerful and mighty People; when *Benhadad* was ſo proud as to ſay, the Duſt of *Samaria* ſhould not ſuffice for handfuls for his Army, God ſcattered
† 1 Kings 20. 14. *The young Men of the Princes of the Provinces.* his Army by the Lacquies of the Princes † about two hundred thirty two, *ver.* 15. The little ſling in the Hand of *David* a Youth, guided by Gods Eye and Hand, is a match fit enough for a blaſphemous Gyant, and defeats the Strength of a Weavers beam.

In his extraordinary Works of *Mercy*.

1. *In the Deliverance of a People or Perſon.* A Dream was the occaſion of *Joſephs* greatneſs, and *Joſephs* Preſervation. He uſed the Cacklings of Geeſe to ſave the *Roman* Capitol from a ſurprize by the *Gauls*. He picks out *Gideon* to be a Gene-
|| Judg. 6. 15. ral, who was leaſt in his Fathers eſteem ||; and what did his Army conſiſt of, but few, and thoſe
* Judg. 7. 6, 7. fearful *; thoſe that took Water with their Hands, (which as *Joſephus* ſaith, is a natural Sign of fear) did God chooſe out to overthrow the *Midianites* who had over-ſpread the Land as Graſhoppers, to ſhew that he can make the moſt fearful Men to be ſufficient Inſtruments againſt the greateſt Powers, when the Concernments of his Church and People lye at Stake.

God ſo delights in thus baffling the Pride of Men, that *Aſa* uſes it as an Argument to move God to deliver him in the ſtrait he was in, when *Zerah* the *Æthiopian* came againſt him with a great Multitude, when he was but a ſmall Point and Center in
† 2 Chro. 14. 11. *Lord, it is nothing with thee to help with many or with few.* the midſt of a wide Circumference †. Hereby God ſets off his own Power, and evidenceth his ſuperintendent Care of his People. It was more ſignally the Arm of God for *Moſes* to confound *Pharaoh* with his Lice and Frogs, than if he had beaten him in a plain Field with his Six Hundred Thouſand *Iſraelites*.

2. *In the Salvation of the Soul.* Our Saviour himſelf, though God, the great Redeemer of the World, was ſo mean in the Eyes of the World,
|| Pſal. 22. 6. that he calls himſelf a *Worm*, and no *Man* ||. He picks out many Times the moſt unlikely Perſons to accompliſh the greateſt Purpoſes for Mens Souls. He lodgeth the Treaſures of Wiſdom in Veſſels of Earth; he choſe not the Cedars of *Lebanon*, but the Shrubs of the Valley; not the learned *Phariſees* of *Jeruſalem*, but the poor Men of *Galilee*; *out of the Mouths of Babes and Sucklings, he ordains Praiſe to himſelf.*

The Apoſtles breeding was not capable of ennobling their Minds, and fitting them for ſuch great Actions as Chriſt employed them in. But after he had new-moulded and enflamed their Spirits, he made them of Fiſhermen, greater Conquerors of the World, than the moſt magnified Grandees could pretend to.

Thus Salvation is wrought by a crucified Chriſt; and that God who made the World by Wiſdom, would ſave it by the fooliſhneſs of Preaching. And make *Paul*, the leaſt of the Apoſtles as he Terms himſelf, more ſucceſsful than thoſe who had been inſtructed at the Feet of Chriſt *. * 2 Cor. 15. 9, 10.

2. *By contrary Means.* God by his Providence makes contrary Things contribute to his Glory, as contrary Colours in a Picture do to the Beauty of the Piece. Nature is Gods Inſtrument to do whatſoever he pleaſes; and therefore nothing ſo contrary, but he may bring to his own Ends. As in ſome Engines you ſhall ſee Wheels have contrary Motions, and yet all in order to one and the ſame End. God cured thoſe by a Brazen Serpent, which were ſtung by the fiery ones; whereas Braſs is naturally hurtful to thoſe that are bit by Serpents †. † Grotius *Mat.* 20. 16. *Æs naturaliter nocet τοῖς ὑπὸ ὀφέων δήκτοις.*

1. *Afflictions.* *Joſeph* is ſold for a Slave, and God ſends him as a Harbinger; his Brothers ſold him to deſtroy him, and God ſends him to ſave them. *Pauls* Bonds in the opinion of ſome might have ſtifled the Goſpel; but he tells us, that they had fallen out to the furtherance of the Goſpel, *Phil.* 1. 12.

2. *Sins.* || God doth often Effect his juſt *Will* by our weakneſs; neither thereby juſtifying our Infirmities, nor blemiſhing his own Action: *Jacob* gets the Bleſſing by unlawful means, telling no leſs than two lies to attain it; [I am *Eſau*, and this is Veniſon] but hereby God brings about the performance of his Promiſe, which *Iſaac*'s natural Affection to *Eſau* would have hindred *Jacob* of. || Hall *contempl. Book* 3. p. 806, 807.

The Breach of the firſt Covenant was an occaſion of introducing a better. Mans ſinning away his firſt Stock, was an occaſion to God to enrich him with a Surer. The loſs of his Original Righteouſneſs made way for a clearer and more durable. The Folly of Man made way for the Evidence of Gods Wiſdom; and the Sin of Man for the Manifeſtation of his Grace; and by the wiſe diſpoſal of God, open a way for the Honour of thoſe Attributes, which would not elſe have been experimentally known by the Sons of Men.

3. *Caſual Means.* The Viper which leapt upon *Pauls* Hand out of the bundle of Sticks, was a caſual Act, but deſigned by the Providence of God for the Propagation of the Goſpel. *Pharaoh*'s Daughter comes caſually to waſh her ſelf in the River, but indeed conducted by the ſecret Influence of God upon her, to reſcue *Moſes*, expoſed to a forlorn Condition, and breed him up in the *Ægyptian* Learning, that he might be the fitter to be his kindreds Deliverer. *Saul* had been hunting *David*, and at laſt had lodged him in a Place whence he could not well eſcape, and being ready to ſeize upon him in that very inſtant of time, a Poſt comes to *Saul*, and brings the News that the *Philiſtines* had invaded the Land, which cut out other Work for him, and *David* for that Time eſcapes *. * 1 Sam. 23, 26, 27, 28.

3. Reaſon. *Such Actions and Events of Things are in the World, which cannot rationally be aſcribed to any other Cauſe than a ſupream Providence.* 'Tis ſo in common Things. Men have the ſame Parts, the ſame outward Advantages, the ſame Induſtry, and yet proſper not alike. One labours much, and gets little; another uſes not altogether ſuch endeavours, and hath Riches flowing in upon him. Men lay their Projects deep, and queſtion not the Accompliſhment of them, and are diſappointed by ſome ſtrange and unforeſeen accident. And ſometimes Men attain what they deſire in a different Way, and many Times contrary to the Method they had Projected. This is evidenced, *Thirdly.*

1. *By*

1. *By the Reſtraints upon the Paſſions of Men.* The Waves of the Sea, and the Tumults of the People, are much of the ſame impetuous Natures, and are quelled by the ſame power. * Tumults of the People could no more be ſtilled by the force of a Man, than the Waves of the Sea by a puff of Breath. How ſtrangely did God qualifie the Hearts of the *Egyptians* willingly to ſubmit to the Sale of their Land, when they might have riſen in a tumult, broke open the Granaries, and ſupplied their wants *. Indeed, if the World were left to the conduct of Chance and Fortune, what work would the Savage Luſts and Paſſions of Men make among us? How is it poſſible that any but an Almighty Power can temper ſo many jarring Principles, and rank ſo many quarrelſom and turbulent Spirits in a due order? If thoſe bruitiſh Paſſions which boil in the Hearts of Men, were let looſe by that Infinite Power that bridles them, how ſoon would the World be run head-long into unconceivable Confuſions, and be rent in pieces by its own diſorders?

* *Pſal.* 65. 7. *which ſtilleth the noiſe of the Sea, and tumult of the People.*

* *Gen.* 47. 19, 21.

2. *By the ſudden changes which are made upon the Spirits of Men for the preſervation of others.* God takes off the Spirit of ſome, as He did the Wheels from the *Egyptian* Chariots, in the very act of their rage. *Paul* was ſtruck down, and changed while he was yet breathing out threatnings, *&c.* God ſees all the workings of Men's Hearts, all thoſe cruel Intentions in *Eſau* againſt his Brother *Jacob*; but God on a ſudden turns away that torrent of Hatred, and diſpoſeth *Eſau* for a friendly Meeting *. And he who had before an exaſperated malice, by reaſon of the loſs of his Birthright and Bleſſing, was in a moment a changed Man. Thus was *Saul's* heart changed towards *David*, and from a Perſecutor, turns a Juſtifier of him, confeſſeth *David's* Innocence, and his own Guilt, 1 *Sam.* 24. 17, 18. *Thou art more righteous than I, for thou haſt rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil*, &c. What reaſon can be rendred for ſo ſudden a change in *Saul's* revengeful Spirit, which had all the force of Intereſt to ſupport it, and conſidered by him at that very time? For *ver.* 24. he takes ſpecial notice that his Family ſhould be diſinherited, and *David* be his Succeſſor in the Throne. How ſuddenly did God turn the Edge of the Sword, and the Heart of an Enemy from *Jehoſaphat*, 2 *Chron.* 18. 31. *Jehoſaphat* cried out, and the Lord helped him, and God moved them to depart from him. The Holy Ghoſt emphatically aſcribes it to God's motion of their wills, by twice expreſſing it: But ſtranger is the preſervation of the *Jews* from *Haman's* bloody Deſigns, after the Decree was gone out againſt them. *Mordecai* the *Jew* is made *Ahaſuerus's* Favourite by a ſtrange wheeling of *Providence*. Firſt, the King's Eyes are held waking, and he is inclined to paſs away the Solitarineſs of the Night with a Book, rather than a Game, or ſome other Court Paſt-time; no Book did he fix on but the Records of that Empire, no place in that voluminous Book, but the Chronicle of *Mordecai's* Service * in the diſcovery of a Treaſon againſt the King's Life; he doth not careleſly paſs it over, but enquires what Recompence had been beſtowed on *Mordecai* for ſo conſiderable a Service, and this juſt before *Mordecai* ſhould have been deſtroyed; had *Ahaſuerus* ſlept, *Mordecai*, and all his Country-men had been Sacrificed, notwithſtanding all his Loyalty. Could this be a caſt of blind Chance, which had ſuch a Concatenation of Evidences in it for a Superiour Power?

* *Gen.* 33. 4.

* *Eſther* 6. 1, 2.

3. *In cauſing Enemies to do things for others which are contrary to all rules of Policy.* 'Tis wonderful, that the *Jews*, a People known to be of a ſtubborn Nature, and tenacious of their Laws, wherein they differed from all the Nations, ſhould in the worſt of their Captivities be ſo often befriended by their Conquerors, not only to Re-build their City, and Re-edifie their Temple, but at the Charge of their Conquerors too. The very Enemies that had captivated the *Jews*, though they knew them to be a People apt to Rebel: That the People whoſe Temple they helped to build, would keep up a diſtinct Worſhip, and difference in Religion, which is uſually attended with the greateſt Animoſities. And when they knew it to be ſo ſtrong in Situation, as to be a Fort as well as a place of Worſhip. That for this, their Enemies ſhould furniſh them with Materials, when they were not in a condition to procure any for themſelves, and give them Money out of the Publick Exchequer, and Timber out of the King's Foreſt, as we read *. And all this they look'd upon as the Hand of God. *Ezra* 6. 22. [*The Lord had turned the heart of the King of Aſſyria unto them, to ſtrengthen their hands in the work of the houſe of God.* And the Heathen *Artaxerxes* takes notice of it. *Cicero* tells us, That in his time Gold was carried out of *Italy* for the Ornament of the Temple. They had their Rites in Religion preſerved intire under the *Roman* Government, tho' more different from the *Roman* Cuſtoms than any Nation ſubdued by them. *Dion*, and *Seneca*, and others, obſerve, That where-ever they were tranſplanted, they proſper'd and gave Laws to the Victors. And this was ſo generally acknowledged, that *Haman's* Cabinet-Council (who were ſurely none of the meaneſt States-men) gave him no hopes of ſucceſs, when he appeared againſt *Mordecai*, becauſe he was of the Race of the *Jews* *; ſo much did God own them by his Gracious Providence: They were alſo ſo intire in all their Captivities, before their Crucifying of our Lord and Saviour, that they count their Genealogies.

* *Exra* 1. 1, 2, 4, 7. *Ezra* 4. 12 15, 19. *Ezra* 6. 4, 5, 8, 9, 11. *Neh.* 2. 8.

* *Eſt.* 6. 13.

4. *In Infatuating the Counſels of Men.* God ſets a ſtamp of Folly upon the Wiſdom of Men, *Iſa.* 44. 25. *That turns the wiſe men back-ward, and makes their knowledge fooliſhneſs. And makes their Counſels as chaff and ſtubble.* Iſa. 33. 11. [*Ye ſhall conceive chaff, and ſhall bring forth ſtubble.*] *Herod* was a crafty Perſon, inſomuch that Chriſt calls him Fox. How fooliſh was he in managing his Project of deſtroying Chriſt, his ſuppoſed Competitor in the Kingdom, when the wiſe Men came to *Jeruſalem*, and brought the News of the Birth of a King of the *Jews?* He calls a *Synod* of the ableſt Men among the *Jews*. The reſult of it is to manifeſt the Truth of God's Perdiction in the place of our Saviours Birth, and to direct the wiſe Men in their way to him. *Herod* had no reſolutions, but bloody, concerning Chriſt *. God blinds his mind in the midſt of all his craft, that he ſees not thoſe rational ways, which he might make uſe of for the deſtruction of that which he feared; he ſends thoſe wiſe Men, meer Strangers to him, and intruſts them with ſo great a concern; he goes not himſelf, nor ſends any of his Guard with them, to cut him off immediately upon the diſcovery, but leaves the whole Conduct of the Buſineſs to thoſe he had no acquaintance with, and of whoſe Faithfulneſs he could have no aſſurance. God croſſes the Intentions of Men. *Joab* ſlew *Amaſa*, becauſe he thought him his Rival in *David's* Favour, and then imagined he had rid his hands of all that could ſtand in his way; yet God raiſed up *Benajah*, who drew *Joab* from the Horns of the *Altar*, and cut him in pieces at *Solomon's* command. God doth ſo order it many times, that when the moſt rational Counſel is given to Men, they have not Hearts

* *Mat.* 2. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

Hearts to follow it. *Achitophel* gave as ſuitable Counſel for *Abſolom*'s deſign, as the beſt Stateſman in the World could give *; To ſurprize *David* while he was amus'd at his Son's Rebellion, and dejected with Grief at ſo unnatural an Action, and whilſt his Forces had not yet made their Rendezvouz, and thoſe that were with him were tired in their march. Speed was beſt in attempts of this nature. *David*, in all probability, had been cut off, and the Hearts of the People would have melted at the fall of their Soveraign. But *Abſolom* inclines rather to *Huſhai*'s Counſel, which was not ſo proper for the buſineſs he had engaged in, *ver.* the 7th. to *ver.* 14. Now this was from God. *For the Lord had appointed to defeat the good Counſel of Achitophel, to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Abſolom.* So fooliſh were the *Egyptians* againſt Reaſon, in entring into the *Red Sea* after the *Iſraelites*; for could they poſſibly think that that God who had by a ſtrong Hand, and an Army of Prodigies brought *Iſrael* out of their Captivity, and conducted them thus far, and now by a Miracle opened the *Red Sea*, and gave them paſſage through the Bowels of it, ſhould give their Enemies the ſame ſecurity in purſuing them, and unravel all that Web he had been ſo long a working?

* 2 *Sam.* 17. 1, 2.

5. *In making the Counſels of Men ſubſervient to the very ends they deſign againſt.* God brings a Cloud upon Mens Underſtandings, and makes them the Contrivers of their own Ruine, wherein they intend their own ſafety, and gains Honour to himſelf by out-witting the Creature. The *Babel*-Projectors fearing to be ſcattered abroad, would erect a Power to prevent, and this proved the occaſion of diſperſing them over the World in ſuch a confuſion, that they could not underſtand one another *. God ordered *Pharaoh*'s Policies to accompliſh the end againſt which they were directed. He is afraid *Iſrael* ſhould grow too mighty, and ſo wreſt the Kingdom out of his hands, and therefore he would oppreſs them to hinder their increaſe, which made them both ſtronger, and more numerous. [Exerciſe ſtrengthens Men, and Luxury ſoftens the Spirit.] The *Jews* fear, if they ſuffered Chriſt to make a farther progreſs in his Doctrine and Miracles, they ſhould loſe *Cæſar*'s Favour, and expoſe their Countrey as a Prey to a *Roman* Army; this cauſed their Deſtruction by thoſe Enemies they thought by this means to prevent; God ordering it ſo, that a *Roman* Army was poured in upon them, which ſwept them into all corners of the Earth. Prieſts and Phariſees ſit cloſe together in Counſel, how to hinder Mens Believing in Chriſt, and the reſult of their Conſultation was to put Him to death, and no Man then would believe in a dead Perſon, not capable of working any Miracles *, for the amuſing of the People, and by this means there were a greater number of Believers on Him, than in the time of his Life, according to his own Prediction, *John* 12. 32. *And I, if I be lifted up from the Earth, will draw all men unto me.*

* *Gen.* 11. 4. 8.

* *Joh.* 11. 47, 48, 49.

6. *In making the Fancies of Men ſubſervient to their own ruine.* God brings about ſtrange Events by the meer Imaginations and Conceits of Men, which are contrary to common and natural Obſervation, and the ordinary courſe of Rational Conſequences *. The Army of the *Moabites* which had invaded *Iſrael*, thought the two Kings of *Judah* and *Iſrael* had turned their Swords againſt one another, becauſe the riſing Sun had coloured thoſe unexpected Waters, and made them look red, which they took for the Blood of their Enemies, and ſo diſorderly run without Examination of the Truth of their Conceit; but inſtead of dividing the Spoil, they left their Lives upon the Points of the *Iſraelites* Swords. So the *Syrian* Army are ſcared with a panick Fear, and ſcatter themſelves upon an empty ſound *. Thus a Dream ſtruck a terror into the *Midianites*, and the noiſe of the broken Pot-ſheards made them fear ſome Treaſon in their Camp, and cauſed them to turn their Swords into one anothers bowels, *Judg.* 7. 19, 22. *The Lord ſet every Man's Sword againſt his fellow.*

* 2 *Kings* 3, 22, 23.

* 2 *Kings* 7. 6.

Firſt *Queſtion.* If God's Providence orders all things in the World, and concurs to every thing, *How will you free God from being the Author of Sin?* *Queſt.*

Anſwer in ſeveral Propoſitions.

1. *'Tis certain, God hath a Hand about all the ſinful Actions in the World.* The Selling *Joſeph* to the *Iſhmaelites* was the act of his Brethren; the ſending him into *Egypt* was the act of God *, *Gen.* 45. 8. *It was not you that ſent me hither, but God*; where *Joſeph* aſcribes it more to God than to them. Their wicked Intention was to be rid of him, that he might tell no more Tales of them to his Father: God's gracious Intention was to advance him for his Honour, and their Good; and to bring about this gracious purpoſe, He makes uſe of their ſinful practice. God's end was righteous, when theirs was wicked. 'Tis ſaid, God moved *David* to number the People, 2 *Sam.* 24. 1. *The anger of the Lord was kindled againſt Iſrael, and He moved David againſt them to ſay, Go number Iſrael and Judah.* Yet Satan is ſaid to provoke *David* to number the People, 1 *Chron.* 21. 1. *And Satan ſtood up againſt Iſrael, and provoked David to number Iſrael.* Here are two Agents; but the Text mentions God's hand in it out of Juſtice to puniſh *Iſrael*; Satan's end, no queſtion, was out of Malice to deſtroy. Satan wills it as a Sin. God as a Puniſhment. God, ſay ſome, *Permiſſive*, Satan *Efficaciter*. In the moſt villanous and unrighteous Action that ever was done, God is ſaid to have an Influence on it. God is ſaid to deliver up Chriſt, *Acts* 2. 23. *Him, being delivered by the determinate Counſel and fore Knowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and ſlain.* Acts 4. 28. *For to do whatſoever thy hand and thy counſel determined before to be done.* Not barely as an act of his Preſcience, but his Counſel, and that determinate, *i. e.* ſtable and irreverſible. He makes a diſtinction between thoſe two Acts. In God it was an act of Counſel, in them an act of wickedneſs [*by wicked hands*;] there was God's Counſel about it, an actual Tradition. *Rom.* 8. 32. *He that ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.* All the Agents had ſeveral ends. God in that act aimed at the Redemption of the World; Satan at the preventing it; *Judas* to ſatisfie his Covetouſneſs; the *Jews* to preſerve themſelves from the *Roman* Invaſion, and out of Malice to Him for ſo ſharply reproving them. God had a gracious Principle of Love to Mankind, and acted for the Salvation of the World in it; the Inſtruments had baſe Principles and Ends, and moved freely in Obedience to them. So in the Affliction of *Job*, both God and Satan had an hand in it. *Job.* 1. 12. *The Lord ſaid unto Satan, behold, all that he hath is in thy power*, ver. 11. *Touch all that he hath, and he will curſe thee to thy face*; their ends were different, the one Righteous for Tryal, the other Malicious againſt God, that he might be curſed, againſt *Job* that he might be damned. God's end was the brightning of his Grace, and the Devil's end was the ruine of his Integrity, aad diſpoiling him of God's Favour.

Anſw.

* *Pſa.* 105. 17. *He ſent a man before them, even Joſeph, who was ſold for a Servant.*

2. *In all God's acts about ſin, there is no ſtain to God's Holineſs* *. In Second Cauſes, one and the ſame Action proceeding from divers Cauſes, in reſpect of one Cauſe, may be ſinful; in reſpect of the other, righteous. As when two Judges condemn a guilty Perſon, one condemns him out of Love to Juſtice, becauſe he is guilty; the other condemns him out of a private hatred and ſpleen: One reſpects him as a Malefactor only, the other as a private Enemy chiefly. Here is the ſame action with two concurring Cauſes, one being wicked in it, the other righteous. Much more may we conceive it in the concurrence of the Creator, with the action of the Creature.

* *Senguer. Metaph. lib. 2. cap. 15. Sect. 5.*

1. *God moves every thing in his ordinary Providence according to their particular Natures.* God moves every thing ordinarily, according to the nature He finds it in. Had we ſtood in Innocency, we had been moved according to that originally righteous Nature; but ſince our Fall we are moved according to that Nature introduced by us with the expulſion of the other. Our firſt Corruption was our own act, not God's work; we owe our Creation to God, our Corruption to our ſelves. Now, ſince God will govern his Creature, I do not ſee how it can be otherwiſe, than according to the preſent Nature of the Creature, unleſs God be pleaſed to alter that Nature. God forces no Man againſt his Nature; He doth not force the Will in Converſion, but graciouſly and powerfully inclines it. He doth never force nor incline the Will to Sin, but leaves it to the corrupt Habits it hath ſettled in it ſelf. *Pſal.* 81. 12. *So I gave them up to their own hearts luſts, and they walked in their own counſels:* Counſels of their own framing, not of God's. He moves the Will, which is *ſponte mala*, according to its own Nature and Counſels. As a Man flings ſeveral things out of his Hand, which are of ſeveral Figures, ſome Spherical, Tetragons, Cylinders, Conicks, ſome round, and ſome ſquare; though the Motion be from the Agent, yet the variety of their Motions is from their own Figure and Frame; and if any will hold his Hand upon a Ball in its motion, regularly it will move according to his nature and figure; and a Man by caſting a Bowl out of his hand, is the cauſe of the motion, but the bad Biaſs is the cauſe of its irregular motion. The power of Action is from God, but the viciouſneſs of that Action from our own Nature. As when a Clock or Watch hath ſome fault in any of the Wheels, the Man that winds it up, or putting his Hand upon the Wheels, moves them, he is the cauſe of the motion, but it is the flaw in it, or deficiency of ſomething is the cauſe of its erroneous motion; that error was not from the Perſon that made it, or the Perſon that winds it up, and ſets it on going, but from ſome other cauſe; yet till it be mended it will not go otherwiſe, ſo long as it is ſet upon motion. Our Motion is from God. [*Acts* 17. 28. *In Him we move,*] but not the diſorder of that Motion. 'Tis the foulneſs of a Man's Stomach at Sea, is the cauſe of his Sickneſs, and not the Pilot's government of the Ship.

2. *God doth not infuſe the Luſt, or excite it*, though he doth preſent the Object, about which the Luſt is exerciſed. God delivered up Chriſt to the *Jews*, he preſented him to them: But never commanded them to crucifie him, nor infuſed that Malice into them, nor quickned it; but he ſeeing ſuch a frame, with-drew his reſtraining Grace, and left them to the conduct of their own vitiated Wills. All the Corruption in the World ariſeth from Luſt in us, not from the Object which God in his Providence preſents to us, 2 *Pet.* 1. 4. *the corruption that is in the World through luſt.* The Creature is from God, but the abuſe of it from Corruption. God Created the Grape, and filled the Vine with a ſprightlineſs; but He doth never infuſe a drunken frame into a Man, or excite it. Providence preſents us with the Wine, but the Precept is to uſe it ſoberly. Can God be blamed, if that which is good in it ſelf, be turned into Poiſon by others? No more than the Flower can be called a Criminal, becauſe the Spiders nature turns that into Venome, which is ſweet in it ſelf. Man hath ſuch a Nature not from Creation, wherein God is poſitive; but from corruption, wherein God is permiſſive. Providence brings a Man into ſuch a condition of Poverty, but it doth not encourage his ſtubbornneſs and impatience. There is no neceſſity upon thee from God to exerciſe thy Sin under affliction, when others under the ſame exerciſe their Graces. The Rod makes the Child ſmart, but it is its own ſtubbornneſs makes it curſe. In ſhort, though it be by God's permiſſion that we *can* do evil, yet it is not by his Inſpiration that we *will* to do evil; that is wholly from our ſelves.

3. *God ſupports the Faculties wherewith a Man ſinneth, and ſupports a Man in that act wherein he ſinneth, but concurs not to the ſinfulneſs of that act.* No Sin doth properly conſiſt in the act it ſelf, as an act, but in the deficiency of that act from the rule. No action wherein there is ſin, but may be done as an action, though not as an irregular action. Killing a Man is not in it ſelf unlawful, for then no Magiſtrate ſhould Execute a Malefactor for murdering another, and Juſtice would ceaſe in the World; Man alſo muſt diveſt himſelf of all thoughts of preſerving his Life againſt an Invader; but to kill a Man without juſt cauſe, without authority, without rule, contrary to rule, out of revenge, is unlawful. So that it is not the act, as an act, is the Sin, but the ſwerving of that act from the rule, makes it a ſinful act: So ſpeaking, as ſpeaking, is not a ſin, for it is a power and act God hath endued us with; but ſpeaking irreverently and diſhonouarbly of God, or falſly and ſlandrouſly of Man, or any otherwiſe irregularly, therein the Sin lies. So that it is eaſie to conceive that an act and the viciouſneſs of it are ſeparable. That act which is the ſame in kind with another, may be laudable, and the other baſe and vile in reſpect of its circumſtances. The Mind wherewith a Man doth this or that act, and the irregularity of it, makes a Man a Criminal. There is a concurrence of God to the act wherein we ſin, but the ſinfulneſs of that act is purely from the inherent corruption of the Creature. As the power and act of ſeeing is communicated to the Eye by the Soul, but the ſeeing doubly or dimly, is from the viciouſneſs of the Organ, the Eye. God hath no manner of immediate Efficiency in producing Sin; as the Sun is not the efficient cauſe of Darkneſs, though the Darkneſs immediately ſucceeds the ſetting of the Sun, but it is the deficient cauſe. So God with-draws his Grace, and leaves us to that Luſt which is in our wills. *Acts* 14. 16. *Who in times paſt ſuffered all Nations to walk in their own ways.* He beſtowed no Grace upon them, but left them to themſelves. As a Man who lets a Glaſs fall out of his hand is not the efficient cauſe that the Glaſs breaks, but its own brittle Nature; yet he is the deficient Cauſe, becauſe he with-draws his ſupport from it. God is not obliged to give us Grace, becauſe we have made a total forfeiture of it. He is not a Debtor to any Man by way of Merit, of any thing but puniſhment. He is indeed in ſome Senſe a Debtor to thoſe that are in Chriſt upon the account of Chriſt's purchaſe, and his own promiſe, but not by any merits of theirs.

4. *God's*

4. *Gods Providence is conversant about Sin, as a Punishment, yet in a very righteous Manner.* God did not will the first Sin of *Adam* as a Punishment, because there was no Punishment due to him before he sinned, but he willed the Continuance of it as a Punishment to the Nature, *sub ratione boni*. This being a judicial Act of God, is therefore righteously willed by him. Punishment is a moral good. 'Tis also a Righteous Thing to suit the Punishment to the Nature of the Offence, and what can be more righteous than to punish a Man by that wherein he offends? Hence God is said to give up Men to Sin, *Rom.* 2. 26, 27. *For this Cause God gave them up unto vile Affections. And to send strong Delusions, that they may believe a lye.* And the Reason is rendred, 2 *Thess.* 2. 12. *That they all might be damned, who believed not the Truth, but had Pleasure in unrighteousness* *. What more Righteous than to make those vile Affections, and that unrighteousness their Punishment, which they made their Pleasure, and to leave them to pursue their own sinful Inclinations, and make them (as the Psalmist speaks) *Psalm* 5. 10. *Fall by their own Counsels?* A Drunkards Beastliness is his Punishment as well as his Sin. Thus God delivers up some to their own Lusts as a Punishment both to themselves and others. As he hardened *Pharaohs* Heart for the Destruction both of himself and his People.

* 2 Thess. 2. 11.

5. *God by his Providence draws Glory to himself, and good out of Sin.* 'Tis the highest Excellency to draw Good out of Evil, and it is Gods right to manifest his Excellency when he pleases, and to direct that to his Honour, which is acted against his Law. The Holiness of God could never intend Sin as Sin. But the Wisdom of God foreseeing it, and decreeing to permit it, intended the making it subservient to his own Honour. He would not permit it but for some Good, because he is infinitely good, and could not by Reason of that goodness, suffer that which is purely Evil, if by his Wisdom he could not raise Good out of it: 'Tis purely Evil as it is contrary to Law; it is good, *ratione finis*, as God Orders it by his Providence; yet that goodness flows not from the Nature of Sin, but from the wise disposal of God.

As God at the Creation framed a beautiful World out of a *Chaos*, out of Matter without form, and void. So by his Infinite Wisdom he extracts Honour to himself, out of the Sins of Men. As Sin had dishonoured him at its entrance in defacing his Works, and depraving his Creature: So he would make use of the Sins of Men in repairing his Honour, and restoring the Creature.

'Tis not conceivable by us, what way there could be more congruous to the Wisdom and Holiness of God, as the State of the World then stood, to bring about the Death of Christ, which in his Decree was necessary to the satisfaction of his Justice, without ordering the Evil of some Mens Hearts to serve his gracious Purpose. If we could suppose that Christ could commit some capital Crime for which he should deserve Death, which was impossible by Reason of the Hypostatical Union, the whole Design of God for Redemption had sunk to the ground. Therefore God doth restrain or let out the Fury of Mens Passions, and the corrupt Habits of their Wills to such a Degree as should answer directly to the full Point of his most gracious Will, and no further. He lets out their Malice so far as was conducing to the grand Design of his Death, and restrains it from every thing that might impair the Truth of any Prediction, as in the parting his Garments, or breaking his Bones. If God hath put him to Death by some Thunder or otherwise, and after raised him, how could the voluntariness of Christ appear, which was necessary to make him a perfect Oblation? How would his Innocency have appeared? The strangeness of the Judgment would have made all Men believe him some great and notorious Sinner. How then could the Gospel have been propagated? Who would have entertained the Doctrine of one, whose Innocency could not be cleared? If it be said, *God might raise him again*, what Evidences would have been had that he had been really Dead? But as the Case was, his Enemies confess him Dead really, and many Witnesses there were of his Resurrection.

1. *God orders the Sins of Men to the Glory of his Grace.* As a foil serves to make the Lustre of a Diamond more conspicuous; so doth God make use of the Deformities of Men to make his own Grace more illustrious, and convey it with a more pleasing relish to them. Never doth Grace appear more amiable, never is God entertained with so high Admirations, as by those who of the worst of Sinners are made the choicest of Saints; *Paul* often takes occasion from the greatness of his Sin, to admire the unsearchable Riches of that Grace which pardoned him.

2. *God Orders them to bring forth Temporal Mercies.* In Providence there are two Things considerable. *First, Mans Will. Secondly, Gods Purpose.* What Mans will intends as a harm in Sin, God in his secret Purpose Orders to some eminent Advantage. In the Selling of *Joseph*, his Brothers intend the Execution of their Revenge; and God orders it for the advancement of himself, and the Preservation of his unrighteous Enemies, who might otherwise have starved. His Brothers sent him to frustrate his Dream, and God to fulfil it. Our Reformation and return from under the yoke of Antichrist, was by the wise disposal of God occasioned by the three great Idols of the World, the Lust of the Eye, the Lust of the Flesh, and the Pride of Life; Lust, Covetousness and Ambition, three Vices notoriously eminent in *Henry* the Eighth, the first Instrument in that Work. What he did for the satisfaction of his Lust is ordered by God for the Glory of his Mercy to us. And though the Papists upon that account reflect upon our Reformation, they may as well reflect upon the glorious Work of Redemption, because it was in the Wisdom of God brought about by *Judas* his Covetousness, and the *Jews* Malice.

3. *God orders them for the Glory of his Justice upon others.* *Nathan* had threatned *David*, that one in his House should lye with his Wives in the sight of the Sun †. *Achitophel* adviseth *Absolom* to do so, not with any Design to fulfil Gods threatning, but secure his own Stake, by making the quarrel between the Father and the Son irreconcileable, because he might well fear that upon a Peace between *David* and *Absolom* he might be offered up as a Sacrifice to *Davids* Justice. God orders *Achitophels* Counsel, and *Absoloms* Sin to the Glory of his Justice in *Davids* Punishment.

† 2 Sam. 12. 11.

The Ambition of *Vespasian* and *Titus* was only to reduce *Judea* to the *Roman* Province after the revolt of it: But God orders hereby the Execution of his righteous Will in the Punishment of the *Jews* for their rejecting Christ, and the Accomplishment of Christs Prediction, *Luke* 19. 43. *For the Days shall come that thy Enemies shall cast a Trench about thee*, &c. To conclude, if we deny God the Government of Sin in the course of his Providence, we must necessarily deny him the Government of the World, because there is not an

Luke 19. 43.

Action of any Mans in the World, which is under the Government of God, but is either a sinful Action, or an Action mixt with Sin.

*Vid. Ovid. Amor. lib. 3. Eleg. 3. v. 1. and v. 27.

God therefore in his Government doth advance his Power in the weakness, his Wisdom in the Follies, his Holiness in the Sins, his Mercy in the Unkindness, and his Justice in the Unrighteousness of Men; yet God is not defiled with the impurities of Men, but rather draws forth a Glory to himself, as a Rose doth a greater Beauty and Sweetness from the strong smell of the Garlick set near it.

Boetius de Conso. lib. 1

Quest. 2.

Second *Question*, *If there be a Providence, how comes those unequal Distributions to happen in the World?* How is it so bad with good Men as if they were the greatest Enemies to God; and so well with the Wicked, as if they were the most affectionate Friends? Doth not Vertue languish away in obscurity, whiles wickedness struts about the World? What is the Reason that splendid Vertue is oppress by Injustice, and notorious Vices Triumph in Prosperity? It would make Men believe that the World was governed rather by a blind and unrighteous, than by a wise, good and just Governour, when they see things in such disorder as if the Devil had, as he pretends, the whole Power of the World delivered to him*: And God had left all Care of it to his Will.

* Luke 4. 6.

See instances in Jackson. vol. 1. 8. chap. 4. Sect. 5.

Ans. This Consideration has heightned the Minds of many against a Providence. It was the Notion of many *Heathens*, when they saw many who had acted with much gallantry for their Countreys afflicted, they questioned *whether there were a superintendent Power over the World.* This hath also been the stumbling-block of many taught in a higher School than that of Nature, the *Jews*, *Mal.* 2. 17. *Ye say every one that doth Evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them, and where is the God of Judgment?* Yea, and the Observation of the outward Felicities of *Vice*, and the Oppressions of *goodness*, have caused fretting Commotions in the Hearts of Gods People, the 73. *Psalm* is wholly designed to answer this Case. *Jeremy*, though fixed in the acknowledgment of Gods Righteousness, would debate the Reason of it with God, *Jer.* 12. 1. *Righteous art thou, oh Lord, yet let me talk with thee of thy Judgment: Wherefore doth the way of the Wicked prosper? Wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously? Thou hast planted them, yea, they have taken Root, they grow, yea, they bring forth Fruit.* He perceiving it a universal Case [*wherefore are all they Happy*, &c.] did not know how to reconcile it with the Righteousness of God. Nor *Habakkuk* with the Holiness of God. *Hab.* 1. 14. *Thou art of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity, wherefore holdest thou thy Tongue, when the Wicked devoureth the Man that is more Righteous than he?* In Point of Gods goodness too, *Job* expostulates the Case with God, *Job* 10. 3. *Is it good unto thee that thou shouldest oppress, that thou shouldest despise the Work of thy Hands, and shine upon the Counsel of the Wicked?* You see upon the account of Holiness, Righteousness, Goodness, the three great Attributes of God, it hath been questioned by good Men, and upon the account of his Wisdom by the Wicked *Jews*.

Answ 1.

1. Answer in general, *Is it not a high Presumption for Ignorance to judge Gods Proceedings?* In the course of Providence such things are done that Men could not imagine could be done without Injustice; yet when the whole Connexion of their end is unravelled, they appear highly beautiful, and discover a glorious Wisdom and Righteousness. If it had entred into the Heart of Man to think that God should send his Son in a very low Estate to Dye for Sinners, would it not have been judged an unjust and unreasonable Act, to deliver up his Son for Rebels, the Innocent for the Criminals, to spare the Offender and punish the Observer of his Law? Yet when the Design is revealed and acted, what an admirable Connexion is there of Justice, Wisdom, Mercy, and Holiness? Which Men could not conceive of. It will be known to be so at last in Gods dealing with all his Members. We are incompetent Judges of the Righteousness and Wisdom of God, unless we were infinitely righteous and wise our selves; we must be Gods, or in another State, before we can understand the Reason of all Gods Actions. We judge according to the Law of sense and self, which are Inferiour to the Rules whereby God Works. *Judge nothing then before the Time*. It is not a Time for us to pass a Judgment upon Things. A false Judgment is easily made, when neither the Counsels of Mens Hearts, nor the particular Laws of Gods Actions are known to us. In general it is certain, God doth righteously order his Providences; he may see some inward Corruptions in good Men to be demolished by Afflictions, and some good moral Affections, some useful Designs, or some services he employs wicked Men in to be Rewarded in this Life.

* 1 Cor. 4. 5.

Secondly,

2. *God is Soveraign of the World.* He is *sui juris*, *The Earth* is his, *and the fulness thereof*, may he not do what he will with his own? † Who shall take upon them to controul God, and prescribe Laws to him how to deal with his Creatures? Why should a finite Understanding prescribe measures and methods to an infinite Majesty?

† Mat. 15.

Thirdly,

3. *God is wise and just, and knows how to distribute.* If we question his Providence, we question his Wisdom. Is it fit for us who are but of Yesterday, and know nothing, to say to an infinite Wisdom, what dost thou? And to direct the only wise God to a method of his Actions? His own Wisdom will best direct him to the Time when to punish the insolence of the Wicked, and relieve the Miseries of his People: We see the present Dispensations, but are we able to understand the internal Motives? May there not be some Sins of Righteous Mens Parents that he will visit upon their Children? Some virtues of their Ancestors, that he will Reward even in their wicked Posterity? He may use wicked Men as Instruments in some Service. 'Tis part of his distributive Justice to reward them. They aim at these things in their service, and he gratifies them according to their Desires. Let not then his Righteousness be an Argument against his Providence; 'tis righteous with God not to be in Arrears with them. Sometimes God gives them not to them as Rewards of any Moral Virtue, but puts Power into their Hands, that they may be Instruments of his Justice upon some Offenders against him, *Isa.* 10. 5. The Staff in the *Assyrians* Hand was Gods Indignation.

Fourthly.

4. *There is a Necessity for some seeming inequality at least in Order to the good Government of the World.* Can all in any Community of Men be of an equal height? A House hath not Beams and Rafters of an equal bigness, some are greater, and some less. The World is Gods Family. 'Tis here as in a Family, all cannot have the same Office, but they are divided according to the Capacities of some Persons, and the Necessities of others: Providence would not be so apparent in the Beauty of the World, if all Men were alike in their Stations. Where would the Beauty of the Body be, if all the Members had one Office, and one immediate End? Man would cease to be Man, if every Member

ber had not some distinct Work, and a universal Agreement in the common Profit of the Body. All Mankind is but one great Body constituted of several Members, which have distinct Offices, but all ordered to the good of the whole; the Apostle argues this excellently in a parallel Case of the diversities of Gifts in the Church, 1 *Cor.* 12. 19. *If all were one Member, where were the Body?* ver. 23. *Those Members of the Body which we think to be less honourable, upon those we bestow more abundant honour*, ver. 24. *God hath tempered the Body together, having given more abundant Honour to that Part which lackt.* What harmony could there be, if all the Voices and Sounds were exactly the same in a Consort? Who can be delighted with a Picture that hath no Shadows? The Afflictions of good Men are a foyl to set off the Beauty of Gods Providence in the World.

Fifthly, 5. *Unequal Dispensations do not argue carelessness.* A Father may give one Child a gayer Coat than he gives another, yet he extends his fatherly Care and Tenderness over all: According to the several imployments he puts his Children upon, he is at greater Expence, and yet Loves one as well as another, and makes Provision for all. As the Soul take Care of the lowest Member, and communicates Spirits to every Part for their Motions: So though God place some in a higher, some in a lower Condition, yet he takes care of all, *God divides to every Man as he will* *. Every Man hath a several share according to Gods Pleasure, of a goodness in the World, as well as of Gifts in the Church.

* 1 Cor. 12. 11.

Sixthly, 6. *Yet upon due Consideration the inequality will not appear so great as the complaint of it.* If the wants of one, and the enjoyments of another were weighed in the Ballance, the Scales might not appear so uneven; we see such a Mans wealth, but do you understand his Cares? A running sore may lye under a Purple Robe. Health, *the Salt of Blessing*, as one calls it, is bestowed upon a Labourer, when many that wallow in abundance, have those torturing Diseases which imbitter their Pleasures. If some want those worldly Ornaments which others have, may they not have more Wisdom than those that injoy them (the noblest Perfection of a rational Creature)? *Prov.* 3. 13, 14. *The Merchandize of it is better than the Merchandize of Silver, and the gain thereof than fine Gold.* Prov. 15. 16. *Better is a little with the fear of the Lord, than great Treasure, and trouble therewith.* As some are stript of Wealth and Power, so they are stript of their Incumbrances they bring with them. One hath that serenity and tranquillity of Mind, which the Cares and Fears of others will not suffer them to injoy, and a grain of Contentment is better than many Pounds of Wealth. 'Tis not a desireable Thing to be a great Prince attended with as many Cares and Fears as he hath Subjects in his Empire. He made a true estimate of his greatness, that said he would not stoop to take up a Crown if it lay at his Feet. But more particularly to the Parts of the Case.

Prov. 15. 16.

I. *It is not well with bad Men here.*

1. *Is it well with them who are tortured by their own Lusts?* What Peace can worldly things bestow upon a Soul filled with Impurity? in 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. Sin is called filthiness, can it be well with them that have nasty Souls? Is it well with them who are rackt by Pride, stung with Cares, gnawn with Envy, distracted by unsatiable Desires, and torn in pieces by their own Fears? Can it be well with such who have a multitude of Vipers in their Breasts, sticking all their stings into them, though the Sun-shine, and the Showers drop upon them? You are Spectators of their Felicity, but do you understand their inward Gripes? *Prov.* 14. 13. *Even in Laughter the Heart is sorrowful.* Can silken Curtains or purple Clothes confer a happiness upon those who have a mortal Plague-sore poysoning their Bodies, and are ready to expire? Sin is their Plague, whatever is their Happiness *. Their insolent Lusts are a far greater Misery than the Possession of all the Kingdoms in the World can be a Happiness.

* 1 Kings 8. 38. *Sin is called the Plague of the Heart.*

II. *Is it well with them who have so great an account to make, and know not how to make it?* Those that enjoy much, are more in Gods debt, and therefore more accountable. The account of wicked Men is the greater, because of their abundance; and their unfitness to make that account is the greater, because of their abuse. Would any reckon themselves Happy to be called upon to give an account of their Stewardship for Talents, and know not how to give good account of one Farthing? *Luke* 16. 2. *Give an account of thy Stewardship.*

III. *Is it well with them who are the worse for what they have?* Is it a happiness to command others, and be more Slaves to the worst of Creatures, than any can be to them? The wicked Mans well-spread Table sometimes proves his Snare, † and his Destruction is bound up in his very Prosperity: *Prov.* 1. 32. And the *Prosperity of Fools shall destroy them.* Prosperity falling upon an unregenerate Heart, like the Sun and Rain upon bad ground, draws forth nothing but Weeds and Vermin. Would you think it your happiness to be Masters of their Concerns, and Slaves to their Pride? Is a stubbornness against God so desirable a Thing, which is strengthened by those Things in the Hands of the Wicked?

† Psalm 69. 22.

IV. *Is it well with them who in the midst of their Prosperity are reserved for Justice?* Can that Traytor be accounted happy that is fed in Prison by the Prince with better Dishes than many a loyal Subject hath at his Table, but only to keep him alive for his Tryal, and a publick Example of Justice? God raises some for greater falls; Miserwas the Felicity of *Pharaoh*, to be raised up by God for a Subject to shew in him the Power of his Wrath. || 'Tis but a little Time before they shall be *cut down as Grass, and wither as the Green Herb*, Psalm 37. 2. None would value the Condition of that Souldier who leaping into a River to save a Kings Crown, and putting it upon his own Head, that he might be enabled to swim out with it, was rewarded for saving it, and executed for wearing it. God Rewards wicked Men for their Service, and punishes them for their Insolence.

|| Exod. 9. 16.

Secondly, 2. *Neither is it bad here with good Men, if all be well considered.* Other Mens Judgment of a good Man is frivolous, they cannot rightly judge of his State and Concerns, but he can make a Judgment of theirs. 1 *Cor.* 2. 15. *A spiritual Man judgeth all things, but he himself is judged of no Man.* No Man can make a sound Judgment and estimate of a righteous Mans State in any Condition, unless he hath had Experience of the like in all the Circumstances, the inward Comforts as well as the outward Crosses. For,

I. *Adversity cannot be called absolutely an evil, as Prosperity cannot be called absolutely a good.* They are rather indifferent things, because they may be used either for the honour or dishonour of God. As they are used for his honour they are good, and as used for his dishonour they are evil. The only absolutely bad thing in the World is Sin, which cannot be in its own nature, but a dishonour to God. The only absolutely good thing in the

World

World is Holiness, and a likeness to God, which cannot be in its own nature, but for his Glory. As for all other things, I know no true Satisfaction can be in them, but as they are subservient to God's honour, and give us an advantage for imitating some one or other of his Perfections. Crosses in the Scripture are not excluded from those things we have a right to by Christ, when they may conduce to our Good, 1 *Cor.* 3. 22. *Life and Death*, things *present*, and things *to come*, are yours, and you are Christs. Since the Revelation of the Gospel, I do not remember that any such complaint against the Providence of God fell from any Holy Man in the New Testament; for our Saviour had given them another prospect of those things. The Holy Men in the Old Testament comforted themselves against this Objection by the end of the Wicked which should happen, and the Rod cease *. In the New Testament we are more comforted by the certain Operation of Crosses to our good and spiritual Advantage. Our Saviour did not promise Wealth and Honour to his Followers, nor did he think it worth his pains of coming and dying, to bestow such Gifts upon his Children: He made Heaven their Happiness, and the Earth their Hell; the Cross was their Badge here, and the Crown their Reward hereafter; they seemed not to be a Purchase congruous to so great a Price of Blood. Was God's Providence to Christ the more to be questioned because He was poor? Had He the less love to Him because He was *a man of sorrows*, even while He was a God of Glory? Such groundless Conceits should never enter into Christians, who can never seriously take up Christ's Yoke without a *proviso* of Afflictions, who can never be God's Sons, without expecting his Corrections.

* *Psal.* 73. *Rom.* 8.

2. *God never leaves good men so bare, but He provides for their necessity*, Psal. 84. 11. *The Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.* If any thing be good, an upright Man may expect it from God's Providence; if it be not good, he should not desire it: Howsoever Grace, which is necessary for preparing thee for Happiness and Glory, which is necessary for fixing thee in it, He will be sure to give, we have *David*'s Experience for it * in the whole course of his Life.

* *Psal* 37. 5

3. *The little good Men have, is better than the highest enjoyments of wicked men.* Psal. 37. 16. *A little that a righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked*, not better than many riches of the wicked, but better than the riches of many wicked, better than all the Treasures of the whole Mass of the wicked World; others have them in a providential way, good Men in a gracious way. *Prov.* 16. 8. *Better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right*, without a Covenant Right. Wicked Prosperity is like a shadow that glides away in a Moment; whereas a righteous Man's little is a part of Christ's Purchase, and part of that Inheritance which shall endure for ever, *Psal.* 37. 18. *Their Inheritance shall be for ever, i. e.* God regards the state of the Righteous, whether good or evil, all that befals them. God doth all with a respect to his Everlasting Inheritance. No Man hath worldly things without their Wings. And though the Righteous have worldly things with their wings, yet that love whereby they have them, hath no Wings ever to fly away from them; how can those things be good to a Man that can never taste them, nor God in them?

4. *No righteous Man would in his sober wits be willing to make an exchange of his smartest afflictions for a wicked Man's prosperity, with all the circumstances attending it.* It cannot therefore be bad with the righteous in the worst condition: Would any Man be ambitious of Snares, that knows the deceit of them? Can any but a mad Man exchange Medicines for Poison? Is it not more desirable to be upon a Dunghil with an intimate Converse with God, then upon a Throne without it? They gain a World in prosperity, a righteous Man gains his Soul by afflictions, and possesses it in Patience; is the exchange of a valuable consideration? God strips good Men of the enjoyment of the World, that He may wean them from the love of it; keeps them from Idolatry, by removing the fuel of it; sends Afflictions that He may not lose them, nor they their Souls. Would any Man exchange a great Goodness laid up for him that fears God, for a lesser Goodness laid out upon them that are Enemies to him *? Who would exchange a few outward Comforts with God's Promise, inward Comforts with assurance of Heaven, Godliness with Contentment, a sweet and spiritual Life, Soveraignty over himself and lusts, though attended with sufferings, for the Government of the whole World?

* *Psal.* 31. 19.

5. *It is not ill with the righteous in afflictions, because they have high advantages by them. That cannot be absolutely evil, which conduceth to a greater good.*

As, First, *Sensible Experiments of the tender Providence of God over them.* If the Righteous had not Afflictions in this life, God would lose the Glory of his Providence, and they the sweetness in a gracious deliverance from them in ways which makes the Affliction the sweeter, as well as the Mercy; they would lose the comfort of them in not having such sensible Evidences of God's gracious care.

The Sweetness of the Promises made for times of Trouble would never be wasted. *Psal.* 37. 19. *They shall not be ashamed in the evil time*; that is, they shall be mightily encouraged and supported. God's People do best understand God's strength, when they feel the smart of Mens malice. 2 *Tim.* 4. 17. [*the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me.*] he had never felt so much of God's strength, if he had not tasted much of Man's wickedness in forsaking him, *Psal.* 37. 39. [*he is their strength,*] when in times of trouble they experiment more of his care in preserving them, and his strength in supporting them, than at other times. Abundance of Consolations are manifested in abundance of Sufferings *. A greater Sense of *Joy* and *Glory* lights upon them in a Storm of Persecutions. Men see the Sufferings of the Godly, but they do not behold that inward Peace which composeth and delights their Souls, worth the whole Mass of the Worlds Goodness, and pleasures of the Unrighteous.

* 2 *Cor.* 1. 5. 1 *Pet.* 4. 13, 14.

2. *Inward Improvements.* Opportunities to manifest more Love to God, more dependance on him, the Perfection of the Soul. 1 *Tim.* 5. 5. Now *she that is a Widow indeed, and desolate, trusts in God, and continues in Supplications and Prayers night and day*; there is a ground of more exercise of trust in God, and Supplication to Him. The Poor and Desolate have an advantage for the actual exercise of those Graces, which a prosperous condition wants: God changeth the Metal by it; what was Lead and Iron, He makes come forth as Gold. *Job* 23. 10. *When He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.* Crosses and Sufferings which fit good Men for special Service here, and Eternal Happiness hereafter, can no more be said to be evil, than the Fire which Refines the Gold, and prepares it for a Prince's use. If there were not such Evils, what ground could you have to exercise Patience? what

Heroick

Heroick Acts of Faith could you put forth without Difficulties? How could you believe againſt Hope, if you had not ſometimes ſomething to contradict your Hopes? And if a good Man ſhould have a confluence of that which the ignorant and pedantical World calls Happineſs, he might undervalue the Pleaſures of a better Life, deface the Beauty of his own Soul, and with-draw his Love from the moſt gratifying, as well as the moſt glorious Object, unto that which is not worth the leaſt Grain of his Affection.

3. *Future Glory.* The great Enquiry at the Day of Chriſt's Appearing will be, How good Men bear their Sufferings, what Improvements they had; and the greater their Purity by them, the greater will be their Praiſe and Honour. 1 *Pet.* 1. 7. *That the tryal of your faith* [viz. by manifold Temptations] *may be found to praiſe, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jeſus Chriſt.* For a good Improvement by them, they will have a publick Praiſe from God's mouth, and a Crown of Honour ſet upon their Heads. Providence ſends even light Afflictions as ſo many Artificers, to make the Crown more Maſſie and more Bright, 2 *Cor.* 4. 17. [*works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* They are at work about a good Man's Crown, while they make him ſmart. They prepare him for Heaven, and make it more grateful to him when he comes to poſſeſs it. A Chriſtian carriage in them prepares for greater degrees of Glory. Every ſtroke doth but more beautifie the Crown.

6. *Sufferings of good Men for the Truth highly glorifies the Providence of God.* This is a matter of Glory and Honour, 1 *Pet.* 4. 16. *If any man ſuffer as a Chriſtian, let him not be aſhamed, but let him glorifie God on this behalf.* They thereby bear a Teſtimony to the higheſt Act of Providence that God ever exerciſed, even the Redemption of the World by the Blood of his Son. And the Church which is the higheſt Object of his Providence in the World, takes the deeper root, and ſprings up the higher; the Foundation of it was laid in the Blood of Chriſt, and the growth of it is furthered by the Blood of Martyrs. The carriage of the Righteous in them, makes the Truth they profeſs more valued. It enhanceth the Excellency of Religion, and manifeſts it to be more amiable for its Beauty than for its Dowry; ſince they ſee it deſirable by the Sufferers, not only without worldly Enjoyments, but with the ſharpeſt Miſeries. This conſideration hath wrought upon many to embrace the Religion of the Sufferers. If it reaches as far as Death, they are but diſpatched to their Father's Houſe, and the Day of their Death is the Day of their Coronation; and what evil is there in all this?

To conclude, this Argument is ſtronger (upon the Infallible Righteouſneſs of God's Nature) for a Day of Reckoning after this Life, than againſt Providence. 'Tis a more rational concluſion, That God will have a time to juſtifie the Righteouſneſs and Wiſdom of his Providential Government, and repair the Honour of the Righteous, oppreſſed by the Injuſtice of the Wicked. And indeed, unleſs there be a Retribution in another World, the queſtion is unanſwerable, and all the reaſon in the World knows not how to ſalve the Holineſs and Righteouſneſs of God in his Providential Diſpenſations in this Life; ſince we ſee here Goodneſs unrewarded, and debaſed to the Dunghil, Vice glorying in impunity, and ranting to the Firmament. We cannot ſee how it can conſiſt with the nature of God's Wiſdom, Righteouſneſs and Holineſs, if there were not another Life wherein God will manifeſt his Righteouſneſs in the puniſhing Sin, and rewarding Goodneſs: For it is impoſſible that a God of Infinite Juſtice ſhould leave Sin unpuniſhed, and Grace unrewarded here or hereafter. The Scripture gives us ſo full an account of a Future State, that may ſatisfie all Chriſtians in this buſineſs.

The wicked Rich Man is in his Purple, and *Lazarus* in his Rags, yet *Abraham*'s Boſom is prepared for the one, and an endleſs Hell for the other. *Jeremy* reſolves the Caſe in his Diſpute with God about it, *Jer.* 12. 3. *Pull them out like ſheep to the ſlaughter, and prepare them for the day of ſlaughter.* They are but fattening for the Knife of Juſtice, and the Day will come when they ſhall be conſum'd, like the Fat of Lambs in the Sacrifice, which ſhall wholly evaporate into ſmoke; ſo the Pſalmiſt reſolves it in *Pſal.* 37. 20. a Pſalm written for the preſent Caſe. God laughs at their Security in a way of mockery, *Pſal.* 37. 13. *The Lord ſhall laugh at him, for He ſees that his day is coming.* God's Day for the Juſtification of his proceedings in the World, and the wicked Man's Day for his own Deſtruction, wherein they ſhall all be deſtroyed together, *Pſal.* 37. 38. the whole Maſs of them in one Bundle. Who then will charge God with unequal Diſtributions at that Day, which is appointed for the clearing up of his Righteouſneſs, which is here mask'd in the World? Who can be fond of the State of the wicked? Who would be fond of a dead Man's condition, becauſe he lies in State, whoſe Soul may be condemned, whilſt his Body with a pompous Solemnity is carried to the Grave, and both Body and Soul joyned together at the Reſurrection, adjudged to Eternal Miſery?

Qu. 2. What hath been ſaid in this, will alſo anſwer another Queſtion, *Why God doth not immediately puniſh notorious Offenders*; ſince the beſt Governments in the World are ſuch as call the violaters of the Law to a ſpeedy account, to keep up the Honour of Juſtice? Thus the *Epicures* charge God with neglects of Providence, becauſe if He doth puniſh wicked Men, it is later than is fit and juſt; *becauſe ſentence againſt an evil work is not executed ſpeedily, therefore the heart of the ſons of men is fully ſet in them to do evil.* Eccle. 8. 11. Delay of Juſtice is an encouragement to Sin.

Anſw. 1. *This is an argument for God's Patience, none againſt his Providence.* Should He make ſuch quick work, what would become of the World? Could it have held out to this Day? If God had inſtantly taken Revenge upon thoſe that thus diſparage his Providence, the frame of ſuch an Objection had not been alive. No Man is ſo perfectly good, but he might fall under the revenging ſtroke of his Sword, if He pleaſed to draw it. Suffer God to evidence his Patience here, ſince after the winding up of the World, He will have no time to manifeſt it. God doth indeed ſometimes ſend the ſharp Arrow of ſome Judgment upon a notorious Offender, to let him underſtand that He hath not forgotten how to govern; but He doth not always do ſo, that his Patience may be glorified in bearing with his rebellious Creature.

2. *God is juſt in that wherein the queſtion ſuppoſeth him unjuſt*; he ſuffers wicked Men to continue to be the Plagues of the Places where they live, and the Executioners of his Juſtice upon Offenders againſt him, *Pſalm* 17. 13. The wicked are God's *Sword*, *Jeremiah* 47. 6. Thoſe that God would ſtir up againſt the *Philiſtines*, are called the *Sword* of the Lord, *Iſa.* 10. 5. *Aſſur* is ſaid to be the *Rod* of his Anger; would it conſiſt with his Wiſdom to drop the Inſtruments out of his Hand, as ſoon as he

he begins to uſe them? To caſt his Rods out of his Hand as ſoon as he takes them up? The Rules of Juſtice are as much unknown to us, as the Communications of his goodneſs to his People are unknown to the World.

3. Let me ask ſuch a one, *whether he never injur'd another Man, and whether he would not think it very ſevere, if not unjuſt, that the offended Perſon ſhould preſently take Revenge of him?* If every Man ſhould do the like, how ſoon would Mankind be diſpatcht, and the World become a ſhambles, Men running furiouſly to one anothers Deſtruction for the Injuries they have mutually received? Do we Praiſe the Lenity of Parents to their Children, and diſpraiſe the Mercy of God, becauſe he doth not preſently uſe his Right? Is then forbearance of Revenge accounted a Virtue in a Man, and ſhall it be an Imperfection in God? With what Reaſon can we thus blame the eminent Patience of God, which we have Reaſon to adore, and which every one of us are Monuments of? The Uſe is.

Uſe 1. Of *Information.*

1. *How unworthy and abſurd a Thing is it to deny Providence?* Some of the *Heathens* fancied, that God walked his Circuit in Heaven, or ſat with folded Arms there, taking no Cognizance of what was done in the World; ſome indeed upon ſome great Emergencies have acknowledged the Mercies and Juſtice of God, which are the two Arms of his Providence. The *Barbarians*, *his Juſtice*, when they ſaw a Viper leap upon *Paul*'s Hand, *Acts* 28. 4. They ſay among themſelves, *no doubt this Man is a Murderer, whom though he hath eſcapt the Sea, yet Vengeance ſuffers not to live.* The Mariners in *Jonah* implored *his Mercy* in their Diſtreſs at Sea, yet they generally attributed Affairs to blind Chance, and worſhipped Fortune as a Deity: For this vain Conceit, the Pſalmiſt calls the Atheiſt Fool, *Pſalm* 14. 1. *The Fool hath ſaid in his Heart, there is no God. Potiphar* acknowledged it, he ſaw that the Lord was with *Joſeph*, and favoured his Deſigns, *Gen.* 39. 3. *And his Maſter ſaw that the Lord was with him, and that the Lord made all all things that he did to proſper in his Hand.*

It will not be amiſs to conſider this, for the root of denial of Providence is in the Hearts of the beſt Men, eſpecially under Affliction. *Aſa* was a Holy Man, *Pſalm* 73. 13. ſaith he, Verily *I have cleanſed my Heart in vain, and waſhed my Hands in Innocency.* He had taken much Pains with his Heart, and had been under much Affliction. *Ver.* 14. *All the Day long have I been plagued and chaſtened every Morning.* And the Conſideration of this, that he ſhould have ſo much Affliction with ſo much Holineſs, ſo ſtrangely puzled him, that he utters that dreadful Speech, as if he had a mind to caſt off all Cares about the Worſhip of God, and ſanctifying his Heart, and repent of all that he had done in that he had done in that buſineſs, as much as to ſay, had I been as very a Villain as ſuch, or ſuch a Man, I might have proſpered as well as they, but I was a Fool to have any fear of God.

Therefore we will conſider,

1. *The evil of denying Providence.*

2. *The grounds of the denial of it by the Heathen*, which we ſhall find in our own Hearts.

3. *The various ways wherein Men practically deny Providence.*

1. *The evil of denying it.*

Firſt. 1. *It gives a Liberty to all Sin.* It gives an occaſion for an unbounded Licentiouſneſs; for what may not be done, where there is no Government? The *Jews* tell us, that the Diſpute between *Cain* and *Abel* was this: *Cain* ſaid, becauſe his Sacrifice was not accepted, that there was no Judge, no reward of good Works, or Puniſhment of bad, which when *Abel* oppoſed, *Cain* ſlew him; they ground it upon the Diſcourſe of God with *Cain*, *ver.* 7. which had been about his Providence and Acceptation of Men, if they did well, and Puniſhment of Men if they did ill; whence they gather, the Diſcourſe, *ver.* 8. *Cain* had with his Brother, was about the ſame Subject, for *Cain* talked with *Abel*, and upon that Diſcourſe roſe up againſt him, and ſlew him. And his Diſcourſe afterwards with God, *ver.* 9. ſeems to favour it, *Am I my Brothers keeper?* Thou doſt ſay, thou art the Governour of the World, it is not my concern to look after him. Their Conjectur is not improbable. If it were ſo, we ſee how early this Opinion began in the World, and what was the horrid Effect of it, the firſt Sin, the firſt Murder that we read of after the Sin of *Adam.* And what Confuſion would grow upon the Entertainment of ſuch a Notion. Gen. 4. 7, 8.

Indeed the Scripture every where Places Sin upon this Root. *Pſalm* 10. 11. * [*God hath forgotten, he hides his Face, he will never ſee it.*] He hath turned his back upon the World. This was the ground of the Oppreſſion of the Poor by the wicked which he mentions, *ver.* 9, 10. So *Iſa.* 26. 10. The Wicked *will not learn Righteouſneſs*, he will deal *unjuſtly*; the Reaſon is, he will not *behold the Majeſty of the Lord*; he will not regard God's Government of the World, though *his Hand be lifted up to ſtrike.* There is no Sin, but receives both its Birth and Nouriſhment from this bitter Root. Let the notion of Providence be once thrown out, or the belief of it faint, how will Ambition, Covetouſneſs, neglect of God, diſtruſt, impatience and all other bitter gourds grow up in a night? 'Tis from this Topick all Iniquity will draw Arguments to encourage it ſelf; for nothing doth ſo much diſcountenance thoſe riſing Corruptions, and put them out of Heart, as an actuated belief, that God takes care of Humane Affairs. Upon the want of this actuated Knowledge, God charges all the Sin of *Ephraim*, Hoſea 7. 2. *They conſider* † *not in their Hearts that I remember all their Wickedneſs.* As if God were blind and did not ſee, or ſtupid and did not concern himſelf, or of a very frail Memory ſoon to forget. * Pſalm 10. 11. † Heb. *They ſpeak not to their Hearts.*

2. *It deſtroys all Religion.* The firſt Foundation of all Religion is, firſt the Being, ſecondly the Goodneſs of God in the Government of the World, *Heb.* 11. 6. *He that comes to God, muſt believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him.* He is the Object of Religion, as he is the Governour of the World. This denial would ſhut up Bibles and Temples, and bring irreligious diſorder into all Societies.

1. *All Worſhip.* He that hath no deſign to govern, is ſuppoſed to expect no Homage; if he regards not his Creatures, he cares for no Worſhip from them. How is it poſſible to perſuade Men to regard him for God, who takes no Care of them? Who will adore him, who regards no Adoration?

2. *Prayer.* To what purpoſe ſhould they beg his Directions, implore his Aſſiſtance in their Calamities, if he had no regard at all to his Creatures? What Favour can we expect from him who is regardleſs of diſpenſing any?

3. *Praiſe.* Who would make acknowledgments to one, from whom they never received any Favour, and hath no mind to receive any acknowledgments from them, becauſe he takes no Care of them? If the Deity have no Relation to us, how can we have Relation to him? To what purpoſe will it be either to call upon him, or praiſe him, which are the prime pieces of Religion, if he concern not himſelf with us?

4. *De-*

* *Targum Hieroſolymit Mercer in* Gen. 4. 7.

4. *Dependance, Truſt and Hope.* What reaſon have we to commit our Concerns to Him, and to depend upon Him for Relief? Hence the Apoſtle ſaith, *Epheſ.* 2. 12. The Gentiles were *without hope*, and *without God in the World.* The Reaſon they were without Hope, was becauſe they were without God, they denied a ſettled Providence, and acknowledged a blind Chance, and therefore could have no ſound Hope; ſo ſome underſtand it of Denial of God's Government. It might well give occaſion to People to utter *Pharaoh*'s Speech, *Exod.* 5. 2. *Who is the Lord that I ſhould obey his voice to let Iſrael go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Iſrael go.* What is God that I ſhould ſerve Him? I have no ſuch Notion of a God that Governs the World. The regardleſneſs of his Creator diſobligeth the Creature from any ſervice to Him.

3. *It is a high diſparagement of God.* To believe an impotent, ignorant, negligent God, without care of his Works, is as bad or worſe than to believe no God at all. The denial of his Providence is made equal with the denial of God. *Pſal.* 14. 1. *The fool hath ſaid in his heart there is no God.* He denied God, *Elohim*, which Word notes God's Providence; Not, there is no *Jehovah*, which notes his Eſſence; he denied not God, *quoad Eſſentiam*, but *quoad Providentiam*, whereupon the Pſalmiſt dubs the Atheiſt Fool. It ſtrips God of his Judicial Power. How ſhall He judge his Creatures, if He know not what they think, and regards not what they do? How eaſie will it be for Him to be impoſed upon by the fair pretences and lying excuſes of Men? 'Tis Diabolical. The Devil denies not God's Right to Govern, but he denies God's actual Government, for he ſaith, *Luke* 4. 6. *The power and glory of the world is delivered* unto him, *and to whomſoever* ſaith he, *I will, I give it.* God had caſt off all care of all things, and made the Devil his Deputy. He that denies Providence, denies moſt of God's Attributes; he denies at leaſt the exerciſe of them; he denies his Omniſcience, which is the Eye of Providence; Mercy and Juſtice, which are the Arms of it; Power, which is the Life and Motion of Providence; Wiſdom, which is the Rudder of Providence, whereby it is ſteered; and Holineſs, which is the Compaſs and Rule of the Motion of Providence.

4. *It is clearly againſt natural Light. Socrates*, an Heathen, could ſay, Whoſoever denied Providence, did Δαιμονιᾶν, was poſſeſſed with a Devil *. Should God create a Man anew with a ſound Judgment, and bring him into the World, when he ſhould ſee the Harmony, Multitude, Vertues and Operations of all Creatures, the ſtated times and ſeaſons, muſt he not needs confeſs that ſome inviſible, unconceivable Wiſdom did both frame, and doth Govern all the Motions of it? And it is a greater Crime in any of us to deny Providence either in Opinion or Practice, than it was or could have been in Heathens; becauſe we have not only that natural reaſon which they had, ſufficient to convince us; but Supernatural Revelation in the Scripture, wherein God hath declared thoſe Methods of his Providence, which Reaſon could not arrive to. As to deny the Creation of his the World, is a greater Crime in a Man that knows the Scripture, than in a Heathen, becauſe that hath put it out of doubt. And the aſſerting of this being the End of all God's Judgments in the World, *Wrath brings the puniſhment of the Sword, that you may know there is a Judgment, i. e.* Providence; the denial of it is a Sin againſt all paſt or preſent Judgments, which God hath or doth exerciſe. The Scripture frequently declaring the reaſon of ſuch and ſuch Judgments to be, that Men may *know* that the *Lord is God.*

* Montague *againſt* Selden. *p.* 525.

Job 19 22.

2. The ſecond thing is, The *Grounds of the denial of Providence.* This Atheiſm has been founded, *Secondly*

1. *Upon an over-weening conceit of Mens own worths*; when Men ſaw themſelves fruſtrated of the rewards they expected, and ſaw others that were Inſtruments of Tyranny and Luſt, graced with the favours they thought due to their own vertue, they ran into a conceit, that God did not mind the Actions of Men below. So that it was Pride, Intereſt, Self-conceit, and Opinion of Merit, rather than any well-grounded Reaſon introduced this part of Atheiſm into the World; for upon any Croſs this opinion of Merit ſwelled up into Blaſphemous Speeches againſt God. When we have any thoughts (as we are apt to have) by our religious acts to merit at God's hand, we act againſt the Abſoluteneſs of his Providence, as though God could be obliged to us by any other than his own Promiſe. Methinks *Job* hath ſome ſpice of this in ſpeaking ſo often of his own Integrity, as though God dealt injuriouſly with him in afflicting him. God ſeems to charge him with it, *Job* 40. 8. [*Wilt thou alſo diſannul my judgment? wilt thou condemn me that Thou mayeſt be righteous?* As though in ſpeaking ſo much of his own Integrity, and in complaining Expreſſions, he would accuſe God of Injuſtice, and condemn him as an unrighteous Governour; and in *Job*'s Anſwer you find no Syllable or Word of his Integrity to God, but a Self-abhorrency, *Job* 42. 26. *Wherefore I abhor my ſelf in duſt and aſhes.* I doubt that from this ſecret root ariſe thoſe Speeches which we ordinarily have among Men; *What have I done that God ſhould ſo afflict me?* Though in a ſerious way it is a uſeful Queſtion tending to an enquiry into the Sin that is the cauſe of it. But I doubt ordinarily there is too much of a Reflection upon God, as though they had deſerved other dealing at his hands. Take heed therefore of Pride, and conceits of our own worth, we ſhall elſe be led by it to diſparaging Conceits of God, which indeed are the roots of all actions contradictory to God's Will.

2. *It is founded upon pedantical and ſenſual notions of God.* As though it might detract from his pleaſures and delight, to look down upon this World; or, as though it were a Moleſtation of an Infinite Power, to buſie Himſelf about the cares of Sublunary Things. They thought it unſuitable to the Felicity of God, that it ſhould interrupt his Pleaſure, and make a breach upon his Bleſſedneſs. As though it were the Felicity of a Prince not to take care of the Government of his Kingdom, nor ſo much as provide for the well-being of his Children. I doubt that from ſuch, or as bad Conceptions of God, may ſpring ordinarily our diſtruſt of God upon any Diſtreſs; take heed therefore of entertaining any Conceptions of God, but what the Scripture doth furniſh you with.

3. Or elſe, this ſort of Atheiſm was uſher'd *in by a flattering Conceit of the Majeſty of God.* They thought it unbecoming the excellency of the Divine Majeſty to deſcend to a regard of the petty things of the World; this ſeems to be the fancy of them, *Pſal.* 37. 11. *How doth God know? Is there knowledge in the moſt High?* They think Him too high to know, too high to conſider. How unreaſonable is it to think God moſt High in place, and not in Perfection; and if in Perfection, not in Knowledge and Diſcerning? They imagined of Him, as of a great Prince, taking his Pleaſure upon the Battlements of his Palace, not beholding the Worms upon the Ground; muffled with Clouds,

as *Job* 22. 13. 14. *how doth God know? Can he judge through the dark Clouds? thick Clouds are a covering to him, that he ſees not, and he walks in the circuit of Heaven.* We cannot indeed have too high apprehenſions of Gods Majeſty and excellency: But muſt take heed of entertaining ſuperſtitious conceits of God, and ſuch as are diſhonourable to him, or make the grandeur and ambition of men, the meaſures of the greatneſs and Majeſty of God. Upon this root ſprung Superſtition and Idolatry, and the Worſhip of *Dæmons*, who according to the Heathens fancy, were Mediators betwen God and men. And I doubt ſuch a conceit might be the firſt ſtep to the introducing the Popiſh Saint-worſhip into the Chriſtian World: and this lies at the root of all our omiſſions of duty, or neglects of ſeeking God. Let us therefore have raiſed thoughts of God's Majeſty, and admiring thoughts of his condeſcention, who notwithſtanding his greatneſs, humbles himſelf to behold what is done upon the Earth. The Pſalmiſt ſets a pattern for both, *Pſal.* 113. 5, 6.

* *Pſal.* 113. 5. 6.

4. *From their wiſhes upon any gripes of Conſcience.* They found guilt ſtaring then in the face, and were willing to comfort themſelves with the embraces of this Doctrine, wherein they might find a ſecurity and eaſe to their proſtituted conſciences, and unbounded liberty in the wayes of ſin. Thoſe in *Zephaniah*, were firſt ſettled upon their lees, and then to drive away all fears of puniſhment, deny Gods Government, *Zeph.* 1. 12. *the Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil.* A brave liberty for a City to be without a Magiſtrate, a houſe without a Governour, a Ship without a Pilot, expoſed to the mercy of Winds and Waves; A man to be without reaſon, that paſſion and luſt ſhould act their pleaſure; a Liberty that Beaſts themſelves would not have, to be without a Shepherd, and one to take care of them. Such wiſhes certainly there are in men upon a ſence of guilt: they wiſh for their own ſecurity there were no providential eye to inſpect them. Take heed therefore of guilt which will draw you to wiſh God deprived of the government of the World, and all thoſe attributes which qualifie him for it. The readineſs to entertain the motions of Satan; rather than the motions of the Spirit, implies a willingneſs in them that Satan might be the God of the World, who favours them in Sin, rather then the Creator who forbids it. But indeed the fears of conſcience evidence a ſecret belief in men of a juſt providence, whatever means they uſe to ſtifle it; elſe why is man upon the commiſſion of ſome notorious ſinful act, afraid of ſome evil hap to betide him? Why is he reſtleſs in himſelf? There is no ſinner unleſs extreamly hardned, but hath ſome ſecret touch of conſcience upon notorious enormities: While the work of the Law is written in their heart, their conſcience will bare witneſs and accuſe them.

* *Rom.* 2. 14. * In the moſt flagitious courſes which the Apoſtle reckons up, * they cannot put off the knowledge

* *Rom.* 1. 29,30,31 32. of the judgment of God, that they which commit ſuch things are worthy of death, that is, worthy of death by the Judgment of God, which Judgment is diſcovered in the Law of Nature.

Thirdly. 3. The third things is, *The various wayes wherein men practically deny providence, or abuſe it, or contemn it.*

1. *When we will walk on in a way contrary to checks of providence*, when we will run againſt the will of God manifeſted in his providence, we do deny his government, and refuſe ſubjection to him; when we will be peremptory in our reſolves againſt the declaration of God's will by his checks of providence, we contend with him about the government of us and our actions. Such a diſpute had *Pharaoh* with God, notwithſtanding all the checks by the plagues poured out upon him, he would march againſt *Iſrael* to take them out of God's hand into his own ſervice again, *Exod.* 15. 9. *The enemy ſaid, I will overtake, I will divide the ſpoil, my luſt ſhall be ſatisfied upon them, I will draw my ſword, my hand ſhall deſtroy them.* Here is the will of man vaunting againſt the Governour of the World, reſolved to diſpute God's Royalty with him in ſpight of all the blaſtings of his deſigns, and the ſmart blows he had had from that powerful arm, which coſt him and his ſubjects their lives; they would not underſtand the taking off their wheels, but would run headlong into the Read Sea: A remarkable example of this is in a good man not ſo peremptory in words, but againſt the revelation of God's mind both by the Prophet, and his Providence; *Jehoſephat* had made a League with *Ahab*, * and God had ordered *Micajah* to acquaint him with the ill ſucceſs of the affair they went about, *verſ.* 16, 19. which *Jehoſaphat* found true, for his own life was in danger, he was hardly beſet by the Enemy upon a miſtake, *ver.* 31, 32. he had an eminent anſwer of prayer, for upon his cry he had a quick return; God ingaged his providence over his Enemies hearts for him, *verſ.* 13. the Lord helped him, and God moved them to depart from him. And for this conjunction and continuance in it againſt *Micajah*'s propheſie, God ſends a Prophet to reprove him, 2 *Chron.* 19. 2. *ſhould thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the Lord? therefore is wrath upon thee from the Lord*; he reproves him ſharply for this confederacy, yet *Jehoſaphat* after had a ſignal providence in delivering him from another army, 2 *Chron.* 20. 24. Yet after this he goes on in this way, 2 *Chron.* 20. 35. *after this, i. e.* after a reproof by a prophet, after ill ſucceſs in his league, after eminent care of God in his deliverance, after a ſignal freeing him from a dangerous invaſion in a miraculous way, he enters into a league with *Ahab*'s Son, as wicked as his Father, *verſ.* 36. he joyned himſelf with him to make ſhips to go to *Tarſhiſh*, and after that a third Prophet is ſent to reprove him, and the Ships were broken, *verſ.* 37. Here is a remarkable oppoſition to checks of providence, and manifeſt declarations of God's will, as if he would be the Commander of the World inſtead of God. *Abner*'s action is much of the ſame kind, who would make the houſe of *Saul* ſtrong againſt *David*, though he knew and was ſatisfied that God had promiſed the Kingdom to *David.*

* 2 *Chor.* 18. 1,2, 3.

2. *In omiſſions of Prayer.* One reaſon to prove the fools denying God's government of the world, is, that they call not upon the Lord. *Pſal.* 14. 1, 4. *The Lord looked down from Heaven to ſee if there were any that did underſtand and ſeek God.* 'Tis certainly either a denying of God's ſufficiency to help us, when we rather beg of every Creature, than ask of God; or a charging him with a want of Providence, as though he had thrown off all care of worldly matters, 2 *Kings* 1. 3. *Is it not becauſe there is not a God in Iſrael, that you go to inquire of Baalzebub the God of Ekron?* Seeking of any thing elſe with a neglect of God, is a denying the care of God over his Creature. Do we not in this caſe make our ſelves our own governours and Lords, as though we could ſubſiſt without him, or manage our own affairs without his aſſiſtance? If we did really believe there was a watchful Providence, and an infinite powerful goodneſs to help us, he would hear from us oftner then he doth. Certainly thoſe who never call upon him, diſown his government of the World, and do not care whether he

he regards the Earth or no. They think they can do what they pleaſe without any care of God over them. The reſtraining prayer is a caſting off the fear of God. *Job.* 15, 4. *Thou caſteth off fear, why? and reſtraineſt Prayer before God.* The neglect of Prayer ariſeth from a conceit of the unprofitableneſs of it. *Job* 21,15. *What profit ſhould we have if we pray unto him?* Which conceit muſt be grounded upon a ſecret notion of God's careleſneſs of the world; ſuch fruit could not ariſe, but from that bitter root. But the Prophet *Malachi* plainly expreſſes it, *Malach.* 3. 14. *Ye have ſaid it is in vain to ſerve God, and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance?* Whence did this ariſe, but from a denial of Providence upon the obſervation of the outward happineſs of the wicked? *verſ.* 15. *And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedneſs are ſet up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.* Sometimes it ariſeth from an apprehenſion that God in the way of his Providence dealeth unjuſtly with us. A good Prophet utters ſuch a ſinful ſpeech in his paſſion, 2 *King* 6. 33. *Behold, this evil is of the Lord, what ſhould I wait for the Lord any longer?*

3. *When men will turn every ſtone to gain the favourable aſſiſtance of men in their deſigns, and never addreſs to God for his direction or bleſſing.* When they never deſire God to move the hearts of thoſe whoſe favour they court, as though Providence were an unuſeful and unneceſſary thing in the World. It was the caſe of thoſe *Elihu* ſpeaks of, *Job* 35. 9, 10. *They cry out by reaſon of the arm of the mighty, but none ſaith, where is God my Maker, who gives ſongs in the night?* &c. None in the midſt of their oppreſſions and cryes under them, did conſider either the power of God in the Creation, as he was their Maker, nor his Providence in the government of the World, as he raiſed up men from low eſtates, and gave matter of chearfulneſs even in a time of darkneſs. This was the charge God by his Prophet brought againſt *Aſa*, 2 *Chron.* 16. 7, (before the text) *Thou haſt relyed on the King of Syria, and not relyed on the Lord thy God, herein thou haſt done fooliſhly, v.* 9. where he ſets a reliance on the creature, and a reliance on God, in direct oppoſition. In ſeveral caſes men do thus deny and put a contempt on God as the governour of the World, when we will caſt about to find out ſome Creature-refuge rather than have recourſe to God for any ſupply of our neceſſities. Doth not he ſlight his fathers care that will not ſeek to him in his diſtreſs? This was *Aſab*'s Sin, 2 *Chron.* 16. 12. *in his diſeaſe he ſought not to the Lord, but to the Phyſicians.* The *Jews* think, that one reaſon why *Joſeph* continued two years in Priſon, was his confiding too much upon the Butler's remembrance of him, and intereſt for his deliverance, which they ground upon the requeſt he makes to him, *Gen.* 40. 14. *but think on me when it ſhall be well with thee, and ſhew kindneſs to me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this houſe.* I muſt confeſs the expreſſions are very urgent, being ſo often repeated, and ſeems to carry a greater confidence at preſent in the arm of fleſh, than in God. We do not read that *Joſeph* prayed ſo earneſtly to God, though no doubt but being a good man he did: Methinks the ſetting down his requeſt with that repetition in the Scripture, ſeems to intimate a probability of the *Jews* conceit. Or alſo when we do ſeek to him, but it is out of a general belief of his Providence and ſufficiency, out of an actuate conſideration, or when we ſeek to him with colder affections than we ſeek to Creatures, as if we did half diſpair of his ability or will to help us: as when a man thinks to get learning by the ſagacity of his own wit, his indefatigable induſtry, and never deſires with any ardent affection the bleſſing of God upon his endeavours. When we lean to our own Wiſdom, we diſtruſt the Providence of God, *Pro.* 3. 5. *Truſt in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own underſtanding.* Truſt in God, and leaning to our own Wiſdom, are oppoſed to one another as inconſiſtent; or when a man hath ſome great concern, ſuppoſe a ſuit at Law, to think to carry his cauſe by the favour of friends, the help of his money, the eloquence of his Advocate, and never intereſt God in his buſineſs: This is not to acknowledge God in thy ways, which is the command, *Pro.* 6. *In all thy ways acknowledge him*; as though our works were not *in the hand of God, Eccleſ.* 9. 1. This is to take them out of God's hand, and put them into the hands of men. To truſt in our wealth, it is to make God a dead and a ſtupid God, and diſown his Providence in the beſtowing it upon us. The Apoſtle ſeems to intimate this in the oppoſition which he makes between *uncertain riches*, and the *living God**. Theſe and many more actions ſuitable to them, are virtual denials of God's ſuperintendency, as though God had left off the Government of the World, to the wits, or rather follies of men. Theſe are to magnifie the things we ſeek to, above God, as the chief Authors of all our good. 'Tis to imagine him leſs careful than man, more inſufficient than man. 'Tis a departure from a full fountain to a ſhallow ſtream; not to deſire God's aſſiſtance, is either from ſome check of conſcience that our buſineſs is ſinful, that we dare not intereſt him in it, or a diſowning God's care, as if we could hide our counſels from him, (*Iſa.* 29. 15. *Wo unto them that ſeek deep to hide their Counſel from the Lord, and they ſay, who ſeeth us, and who knoweth us?*) and bring our buſineſs to paſs before he ſhall know of it; At leaſt it is a ſlighting God's government, ſince we will not engage God by prayer in the exerciſe of it on our behalf, and diſdain to acquaint him with our concerns. 'Tis a reflection upon God's wiſdom to do ſo, which the Prophet mentions with a woe, *Iſa.* 31. 1, 2. *Wo unto them that go down to Egypt for help, but they look not to the holy one of Iſrael, yet he alſo is wiſe.* It is a diſparagement to God's Providential wiſdom, not to look to him in our concerns, yea, and of his righteouſneſs too, *they look not to the holy one of Iſrael.* In this they neither regard his holineſs, nor his wiſdom. When we conſult not with him upon emergent occaſions, we truſt more to our own Wiſdom, Counſel and Sufficiency, than to God's; and ſet up our ſelves as our own Lords, and independent upon him, as though we could manage things according to our pleaſure.

* 1 *Tim.* 6. 17.

4. *When upon the receiving any good, they make more grateful acknowledgment to the inſtruments, than to God the principal Author of it.* As if God had no hand in beſtowing thoſe bleſſings upon them, as if the inſtruments had diſpoſſeſſed God of his governing-Providence, and engroſt it in their own hands. This men are guilty of when they aſcribe their Wealth to their own wit and fortune, their health to their own care, or the Phiſician's skill; their learning to their own induſtry, their proſperity to their friends or merits. When men thus return their thank-offering to ſecond cauſes, and aſcribe to them what is due to God, they give the glory of his Providence to a miſerable Creature. Thus was the fooliſh boaſting of the *Aſſyrian*, *Iſa.* 10. 13, 14. *By the ſtrength of my hand I have done this, and by my wiſdom: for I am prudent, for I have removed the bounds of the People,* &c. *Belſhazzar*'s offence alſo, *Dan.* 5. 23. *Thou haſt lifted up thy ſelf againſt the Lord of Heaven, and praiſed the gods of ſil-*

ſilver, as though they were the authors of all thy greatneſs: ſo *Hab.* 1. 16. *they ſacrifice to there net, and burn inſence to their drag, becauſe by them their portion is fat.* Alluding to thoſe that then worſhipped their warlike weapons, and the tools whereby they had got their wealth, in the place of God, as the Heathen uſed to do *. How baſe a uſage is this of God to rifle him of all his glory, and beſtow it upon the unworthieſt inſtruments, inanimate Creatures? 'Tis as high Idolatry as that of the Heathens, in as much as it is a ſtripping God of the glory of his Providential care, though the object to which we direct our acknowledgments, is not ſo mean as their's which was a ſtock or ſtone. But is it not the ſame injury to a perſon to rifle him of his goods to beſtow it upon a begger, as to give it to a Prince? 'Tis a depriving a man of his right: Yet, is not this ordinary! Do not men aſcribe more to the Phyſician that ſaves an eye in danger of being loſt by a defluxion, than to God who hath given them both with the enjoyment of the light of the Sun; yea more to the Medicine, than to that God, who hath a witneſs of his Deity in every Drug? 'Tis as if the kindneſs a Prince ſhews to his Subjects ſhould be attributed to a Scullion in his Kitchin rather than to himſelf. This is to be-ly God and ſay it is not he: *'Tis applicable to the caſe of mercies as well as affiictions and judgments, of which it is properly meant. And this contempt is the greater by how much the greater mercy we have received in a way of Providence, *Hoſ.* 2. 9. *ſhe did not know that I gave her Corn, and Wine, and Oyl, and multiplyed her Silver and Gold, which they prepared for Baal.* She that had moſt reaſon to know, becauſe ſhe had enjoyed ſo much, ſhe that had experience how by a ſtrong and mighty hand I brought her out of *Egypt* into the Land now poſſeſſed by her. She would not know that I gave her thoſe good things ſhe prepared for *Baal.* It would be a natural conſequence from this Scripture, that thoſe that imploy the good things they injoy upon their luſts, do deny the Providential goodneſs of God in their poſſeſſion and injoyment of them becauſe they prepare God's goodneſs for their ſinful pleaſures, as though their own luſts had been the Authors of them; and alſo their inſtruments, that receive too high and flattering thanks of this nature, are much like *Herod*, that tickled himſelf with the Peoples applauſe, that his voice was the voice of God and not of man.

* *Dought. Analect. Sacr. Excurs.* 182

* *Amiram de les religions.*

* *Jer.* 5. 12.

5. *When we uſe indirect courſes, and diſ-honeſt waies to gain wealth or honour.* This is to leave God, to ſeek relief at Hells gates, and adore the Devil's Providence above God's: When God doth not anſwer us, like *Saul* we will go to the witch of *Endor*, and have our ends by Hell when Heaven refuſeth us. 'Tis a covenanting with the Devil, and ſtriking up a bargain and agreement with Hell, and acknowledging Satan to be the God of the World. No man will doubt but in expreſs Covenants with the Devil, as Witches and Conjurers are reported to make, that the Devil ſhall give them ſuch knowledge, ſuch wealth, orbring them to ſuch honour; 'tis no doubt, I ſay, but ſuch do acknowledge the Devil the God of the world, becauſe they agree by articles to have thoſe things conferred upon them by Satan, which are only in the power of God abſolutely to promiſe or beſtow. So when a man will commit Sin to gain the ends of his ambition or covetouſneſs, does he not implicitely covenant with the Devil who is the head of ſinners, and ſet up his ſin in the place of God, becauſe he hopes to attain thoſe things by ſinful means which are only in the hand of God, and on whom he only can have a dependance; This is the Devil's deſign out of an enmity to Providence. He tempted Chriſt to be his own Carver, thereby to put him upon a diſtruſt of his Father's care of him, *Mat.* 4. 3. *Command that theſe ſtones be made Bread*, as though God would not provide for him; which deſign of the Devil is manifeſt by our ſaviour's anſwer. This is to proſtitute Providence to our own luſts, and to pull it down from the Government of the World, to be a Lacky to our ſinful pleaſure; to uſe means which God doth prohibit, is to ſet up Hell to govern us, ſince God will not govern our affairs in anſwer to our greedy deſires. 'Tis to endeavour that by God's curſe which we ſhould only expect by God's bleſſing: For when God hath forbid ſinful waies, ſeverely threatned them, perhaps curſed them in Examples before our eyes, what is it but to ſay, that we will rather believe God's curſe will further us than his bleſſing? 'Tis to diſparage his bleſſing, and prefer his curſe, to ſlight his wiſdom and adore our folly. When we go out of God's way, we go out of God's protection, we have no Charter for the bleſſing of providence without that condition, *Pſal.* 37. 3. *Truſt in the Lord, and do good, ſo ſhall thou dwell in the Land, and verily thou ſhalt be fed*, to do evil then is not to truſt in God, or have any regard to his Providential care.

6. *When we diſtruſt God when there is no viſible means.* A diſtruſt of God renders him impotent, or falſe and mutable, or cruel and regardleſs, and what not? We detract from his power, as if it depended upon Creatures, or that he were like an Artificer that could not act without his Tools: As if God were tyed to means, and were beholding to Creatures for his operating power; as if that God who created the World without inſtruments, could not providentially apply himſelf to our particular exigencies without the help of ſome of his Creatures. If he cannot work without this or that means you did expect your mercy by. It ſuppoſeth that God hath made the Creature greater then himſelf, and more neceſſary to thy well-being, than himſelf is; or elſe we conceit him falſe or fooliſh, as if he had undertaken a task of government too hard for him, as if he were grown weary of his labour, and muſt have ſome time to recruit his ſtrength, or as if he were unfaithful, not walking by rules of unerring goodneſs; or if we acknowledge him wiſe and able and faithful, yet it muſt then be a denyal of his gracious tenderneſs, which is as great as his power and wiſdom, and a perfection equal with any of the reſt. If his caring for us be a principal argument to move us to caſt our care upon him, as it is, 1 *Pet*, 5. 7. *caſting all your care upon him, for he careth for you*: Then if we caſt not our care upon him, it is a denial of his gracious care of us, this is to imagine him a tenderer governour of beaſts than men, as though our Saviour had ſpoke a palpable untruth, when he told us, not an hair of our heads doth fall without his leave; as if he regarded Sparrows only, and not his Children; or elſe it implies that God cannot mind us in a crowd of buſineſs in ſuch multitudes in the World, which he hath to take care of. But certainly, as the multitude of things doth not hinder his knowledge of them, ſo neither do they hinder his care. The arms of his goodneſs are as large to embrace all Creatures, as the eyes of his Omniſcience are to behold them. From this root do all our fears of the power of men grow, *Iſa*, 51. 12, 13. *Who art thou that art afraid of a man that ſhall die*, &c. *and forgetteſt the Lord thy Maker, that hath ſtretched forth the Heavens*, &c. Our forgetfulneſs, at leaſt, if not a ſecret denial of God's power in the Works of Creation and Providence, uſhers in diſtruſt of him, and that introduceth a fear of Man. If they that know his Name, will put their

their truſt in him, *Pſal.* 9.10. *For thou, Lord, haſt not forſaken them that ſeek thee*; Then a diſtruſt of him diſcovers an ignorance and inconſideration of his name and his waies of working, implies his forſaking of his Creature. He that truſts in any thing elſe beſides God, denies all the powerful operations of God, and conceives him not a ſtrength ſufficient for him, *Pſal.* 52. 7. that man doth not *make God his ſtrength, who truſts in the abundance of his riches.* How groſs is it not to truſt God under the very ſence of his powerful goodneſs, but queſtion whether he can or will do this or that for us? when we will have jealouſies of him when he doth compaſs us round about with mercy, and incircle us with his beams, 'tis to queſtion whether the Summer Sun will warm me, though it ſhine directly upon me, and I feel the vigour of its beams upon my Body: much more baſe is this, then to diſtruſt him when we have no means: What doth this imply, but that he cares not what becomes of his Children, that no advantage can be expected from him, that his intentions towards us are not gracious even whiles we feel him?

7. *Stoutneſs under God's afflicting or merciful hand, is a denyal or contempt of providence.* This was the aggravation of *Belſhazzars* Sin, *Dan.* 5. 23. *and the God in whoſe hand thy breath is, and whoſe are all thy waies, haſt thou not glorified*; he glorified not God in the way of his providence, but was playing the Epicure, and was ſacrilegiouſly quaffing in the veſſels of the Temple when the City was beſieged; he ſeemed to dare the providence of God upon a preſumption that the City was impregnable by reaſon of *Euphrates*, and the proviſion they had within their walls, which, *Xenophon* ſaith, was enough for Twenty years, yet was taken that night when the handwriting was. And by how much God's judgments have been more viſible to us, and upon ſome well known by us, or related to us, ſo much the greater is the contempt of his providential government, as *v.* 22. *And thou his Son Belſhazzar haſt not humbled thy heart, though thou knoweſt all this*, &c. He had known God's judgments upon his Grandfather *Nebuchadnezzer*, a Domeſtick example of God's vindicating his government of the World, and yet went in the ſame ſteps, ſo *Jer*, 5, 3, 4. *Thou haſt conſumed them, but they have refuſed to receive correction, they have made their faces harder then a rock:* what is the reaſon? the Prophet renders it, *v.* 4. *They are fooliſh, for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God.* Correction calls for ſubmiſſion, but thoſe like a Rock under God's hand, were correction-proof, they would not conſider the ways of God's Providence, and the manner of them; 'tis as if by our peeviſhneſs we would make God weary of afflicting us, which is the worſt caſe can happen. This is God's complaint of the ten Tribes, *Hoſ.* 7. 9. *gray hairs* are upon them, and *they know it not, ſtrangers have devoured his ſtrength*, &c. There was a conſumption of their ſtrength, the *Aſſyrians* and *Egyptians* to whom they gave gifts, had drained their treaſure, but they would not conſider God as the Author, or acknowledge whence their miſery came, *they would not ſeek God for all this, v.* 10. 'Tis like a mans picking a pocket, or cutting a Throat under the Gallows in contempt of Juſtice*; whereas good men are both affected with, and remember God's judgments. *Eber* called his Son *Peleg*, diviſion, becauſe in his daies the Earth was divided, that in the dayly ſight of the Sun he might remember that ſharp Providence in ſcattering of the *Bable* builders. Judgments affects us when they are before our eyes, as the Thunder and Plagues did *Pharaoh*; but when they are removed, men return to their beloved ways, as tho God had ſhot a way all his arrows, and was departed, to mind them no more. Take heed of this, 'tis a ſin highly provoking: God is ſo tender that his Providence ſhould be minded and improved, that a ſin of this nature he follows with his diſpleaſure in this life at leaſt, *Iſa.* 22. 12, 13. *And in that day did the Lord God of Hoſts call to weeping and mourning, and behold joy, and gladneſs, eating Fleſh, and drinking Wine, let us eat and drink, for to morrow we ſhall die.* When God in any judgment ſhews himſelf to be Lord *God of Hoſts*, and calls us to weeping, and we behave our ſelves jollily in ſpight of his government, it is a ſin he will remember, and bind the guilt upon us, *v.* 14. *and it was revealed in my Ears by the Lord of Hoſts, ſurely this iniquity ſhall not be purged from you till you die.*

*Fenkin.

8. *Envy alſo is a denial of Providence.* To be ſad at the temporal good, or the gifts of another, as counting him unworthy of them, it is a reflection upon the Author of thoſe gifts, accuſing providence of an unjuſt or unwiſe diſtribution*. Since God may do what he will with his own; if our eye be evil, becauſe God is good, we intrench upon his Liberty, and deny him the diſpoſal of his own goods, as if God were but our Steward, and we his Lords. 'Tis a temper we are all Subject to, *Pſal.* 37. 1. *Fret not thy ſelf becauſe of evil doers, neither be thou envious againſt the workers of iniquity.* 'Tis peculiarly the product of ſelf-love, which affects the principality in the World, and particularly affects the conduct of God in diſtributing his goods, that he muſt not give but to whom they pleaſe. It ariſeth indeed from a ſence of our wants; but the language of it is, God is unjuſt in his Providence to me, becauſe he beſtows not upon me that good which he gives to another. 'Tis ſuch a ſin that it ſeems to be a companion of our firſt parents pride, which was the cauſe of their fall. They envied God a felicity by himſelf, for they would be like him, *they would be as Gods.* Hence prehaps, the *Jews* ſay *Cain* denied the Providence of God, as invying his Brother, becauſe God accepted *Abel*'s ſacrifice and not his. *Jonah*'s paſſion aroſe from this pride, for fear he ſhould be accounted a falſe Prophet, where-upon he invies God the glory of his mercy, and the poor *Ninivites* the advantage of it, he would have God conform the way of his Providence to his pleaſure and reputation. Indeed it is to envy God the honour of his Providence in thoſe gifts or good things another poſſeſſes, whereby he is inſtrumental to glorifie God and advantage others. Thus we would direct God what inſtruments he ſhould employ, when no Artificer in his own Art would endure to be directed by any ignorant perſon what tools he ſhould uſe in his work.

* *Cajetan Summal* P 4. 28.

9. *Impatience under croſs providences is a denial and contempt of God's government.* Men quarrel with God's revealed will, and therefore no wonder that they quarrel with his providential will; whereby we deny him his right of governing, and ſlight his actual exerciſe of his right. As if God were accountable to us for his diſpenſations, and muſt have only a reſpect to us or our humour in his government, *Job.* 18. 4. *he tears himſelf in his anger, ſhall the Earth be forſaken for thee? and ſhall the rock be removed out of his place?* Muſt God alter the ſence of his affairs according to our model and platform? and becauſe he doth not obſerve our rules and methods, muſt we tear our ſelves in anger? This is a ſecret curſing of God, and flying in his face when we ſee providence ſo croſs, that there ſeems to be no help at any time either in Heaven or Earth, *Iſa.* 8. 21, 22. *they ſhall fret themſelves and curſe their King and their God, and look upwards, and they ſhall look unto the Earth, and behold trouble and darkneſs.*

Take

Take heed of fretting at God's management of things in the World, or thy own particular concerns; this may lead to a cursing of God, and is indeed an initial secret swelling against him, and cursing of him. Man is ambitious to become a God. *Adam*'s posterity have in one sort or other imitated him. This

1. *Is a wrong to the Soveraignty of Providence.* 'Twas a good admonition of *Luther*'s to *Melancton* when he was troubled much about the affairs of the Church, *monendus est* Philippus *ut desinat esse rector mundi.* By this temper we usurp God's place, and set our selves in this Throne, we invade his supremacy by desiring every thing to be at our beck, and are displeased with him, because he doth not put the reins of the Worlds government into our hands. As if we would command his will, and become his Soveraigns. 'Tis a striving with our maker for the superintendency, when we will sit Judge upon him, or censure his acts, and presume to direct him. *Isa.* 45. 9. *Wo to him that strives with his Maker, shall the clay say to him that fashions it, what makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands?* How do men summon God to the Bar of their interest, and expostulate with him about his works, why he did not order them thus and thus; and if he doth so, to tell him he hath no hand, no hand of Providence in the World? The design of that place is to stop such peevishness and invasions of God's right; I will not have my Soveraign Will disputed, as if I were but the Creatures Servant; I am content you should *ask of me things to come, v.* 11. and pray to me, but notwithstanding yet to submit to my pleasure without a peevish endeavouring to wrest the Soveraignty out of my hand, and pull the Crown from my head.

2. *Tis a wrong to the goodness and righteousness of Providence.* 'Tis a charging God with ill management, and an implicit language, that if we were the Commanders of Providence, things should be managed more justly and righteously; as it was *Absolom's* pretence in wishing to be the King of *Israel* in *David*'s stead, 2 *Sam.* 15. 4. If patience be a giving God the honour of his righteousness in his judgments, *Psal.* 119. 75. *I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.* Impatience must be a charge against God for unrighteousness in his judicial proceedings, and a saying *the way of the Lord is not equal, Ezek.* 18. 25. 'Tis implied in that complaint, *Isa.* 58. 2, 3. *They ask of me the ordinances of Justice,* &c. *wherefore have we fasted and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our Souls, and thou takest no knowledge?* We demand justice of thee, since thou dost not seem to do that which is fit and righteous, in not regarding us in our suits, and not bestowing that which we have fasted for. God governs the World according to his will, our murmuring implies that God's will is not the rule of righteousness. We affront the care of God towards his Creatures, as if the products of our shallow reasons were more beautiful and just than God's contrivances for us, who hath higher and more glorious ends in every thing, both for our selves and the World, of which we are members, and for his own Glory, to which we ought to subject our selves, when perhaps our projects tend immediately to gratifie some sensual or spiritual lust in us. 'Tis the commendation the Holy Ghost gives of *Job*, *Job.* 1. 22. *in all this Job sinned not, neither charged God foolishly*, as a Character peculiar to him, implying that most men in the World do, upon any emergency, charge God with their crosses, as dealing unjustly with them, in inflicting punishment when they think they have deserved rewards: *Jeremiah* is not innocent in this case, *Jerem.* 20. 7. *O Lord, thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived,* in the ill success of his prophecy, as though an immense goodness would, and a Soveraign power needed to deal in a fraudulent way with his creatures to bring his ends about.

3. *'Tis a wrong to the wisdom of Providence.* We would degrade his Omniscience and Wisdom, and sway him by our foolish and purblind dictates; 'tis as if we would instruct him better in the management of the World, and direct him to a reformation of his methods, *Job* 40. 2. *shall he that contends with the Almighty, instruct him? He that reproves God, let him answer it:* 'Tis a reproving God, and reproofs imply a greater authority, or righteousness, or wisdom in the person reproving; we reprove God as if God should have consulted with us, and asked our advice; 'tis to take upon us to be God's counsellors, and to conclude the only wise God by our imperfect reason, *Rom.* 11. 34. *Who hath been his Counsellor?* 'Tis a secret boasting of some excellency in our selves, as if God did not govern well, or we could govern better: Shall a silly Passenger, that understands not the use of the Compass, be angry that the skilful Pilot will not steer the Vessel according to his pleasure? Must we give out our orders to God, as tho the Counsels of infinite wisdom must roul about according to the conceits of our fancy? Is not the language of our hearts in our *fits of impatience*, as prodigiously proud against God's Providence as the Speech of that Monster was against the Creation, who said, *If he haa been by God at the Creation of the World, he could have directed him to a better Platform:* All this, and much more, is vertually in this sin of *Impatience.*

10. *In charging our sins and miscarrages by them, upon Providence*, in this we contemn it. Some think *Cain* doth so, *Gen.* 4. 9. *am I my Brother's keeper?* Thou art the keeper and governor of the World, why didst thou not hinder me from killing my Brother? 'Tis certain the first man did so, *Gen.* 3. 12. *the woman thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree?* thy gift is the cause of my sin and ruine. 'Tis as certain *David* laid the Sin of *Uriah*'s murder at the door of Providence, 1 *Sam.* 11. 25. when he heard that *Uriah* was dead *the sword, saith he, devours one as well as another.* Man conjures up trouble to himself, when by his folly he brings himself into sin, and from thence to misery, and then *his heart frets against the Lord*, and lays the blame both of his sin and following mischiefs upon him, *Pro.* 19. 3. *the foolishness of man perverts his way, and his heart frets against the Lord.* There are many otherways wherein we deny or slight Providence.

1. *When we do things with a respect to the pleasure of men, more than of God.* As though God were careless both of himself and his own honour, and regarded not the principles and ends of our actions.

2. *In vain boasting and vaunting of our selves.* As *Benhadad* would have such a multitude of men in his army as that there should not be dust enough in *Samaria* to afford every man a handful; * wherein he swaggers with God, and vaunts as if he were the Governor of the World; yet this man with his numerous Host was routed by a troop of Lacquies, *v.* 15. 20. they are called the young men of the Princes; such is the folly of men against the order of God, when they boast in their hearts that their house shall continue for ever *. * *2 Kirg.* 20. 10. * *Psal.* 49. 11.

3. *Oppression. They slay the fatherless*, and say, the God of *Jacob* shall *not regard it* *. Their denial of Providence was the cause of their oppression of the poor, and where this is found in any, it is an argument it ariseth principally from a like cause; this is also made the cause why they eat up God's people as they eat bread *. * *Psal.* 94. 6, 7. * *Psal.* 14. 14.

4. *Misinterpretations of Providence.* Such cursed jealousies had the *Jews* of God.

Numb.

Numb. 14. 3. and *wherefore hath the Lord brought us into this Land to fall by the ſword? were it not better for us to return into Egypt?* As though God in that mighty deliverance had cheated them with a deſign to deſtroy them in the wilderneſs, when one of thoſe plagues poured out upon *Pharaoh* being turned upon their heads, had deſtroyed them in *Egypt*. So fooliſh are they to think that God would ruine them upon dry Land, who might have drowned them as well as their enemies in the Red Sea: ſo unreaſonable is man in his diſputes againſt God.

5. *In limiting providence.* In bounding it to time, manner, and other circumſtances, as they did, *Pſal.* 78. 41. *they limited the holy one of Iſrael, for they remembered not his hand.* As though God muſt manage every thing according to the will of a ſimple Creature. It was a forgetfulneſs of Providence, at leaſt, that was the cauſe of it.

The Second *Uſe* is of *Comfort.* As the juſtice and righteouſneſs of God is the higheſt comfort to a good man, ſince the Evangelical diſpenſation: In that he hath to deal with a righteous God, who can as ſoon deny himſelf as his righteouſneſs. So it is none of the meaneſt comforts, that we acknowledge and worſhip that God, who exerciſeth himſelf in a conſtant government of the World, and leaves not any thing to the capriciouſneſs of that which we call fortune and chance. What ſatisfaction can any man in his ſober wits have to live in a World caſt off from all care of the Creator of it? Wiſdom without Providence would make any man mad, and the greateſt advantage would be to be a ſtupid and ſenſleſs fool: Can there be any worſe News told to men than this, that let them be as religious as they will, there is no eye above takes notice of it? What can be bitterer to a rational man than that God ſhould be careleſs of the World? What a door would be opened by it for all ſin in the wicked, and diſpair in the godly; 'Tis as great a matter of joy to the godly, that God reigns, as it is of terror to the wicked, *Pſal.* 97. 1. *The Lord reigns, let the Earth rejoice, Pſal.* 99. 1. *The Lord reigns, let the people tremble.*

* *It was an excellent Speech of a* Stoick, οὐκ ἐστὶ ζῆν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ κακῶν ἀπηλλαγμένον πανταχόθεν.

'Tis a comfort, That,

1. *Man is a ſpecial object of Providence.* God provides for all Creatures, even thoſe that are the works of his hands, much more for man, who is more peculiary the work of his head, in whoſe Creation he took Counſel *Gen.* 1. 26. *let us make man in our Image, after our likeneſs.* The work of his heart in being made according to his Image, and intended as a ſubordinate end of his whole Creation next to the principal, that of God's Glory he is the preſerver of man and beaſt: of man principally, of beaſts in ſubſerviency to mans good, and preſervation.

2. *Holy men, a more ſpecial object of it.* God preſerves and provides for all things, and all perſons: But his eye is more peculiarly fixed upon thoſe that fear him. *Pſal.* 33. 18. *behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy,* ſo fixed, as if he had no regard to any thing elſe. If God hath a care of man created after his own Image, tho his Image be depraved, much more of thoſe wherein his Image is reſtored. If God loves himſelf, he loves his Image and his works. A man loves the works which he hath made of ſome external matter, much more doth a Father love his Son, much more doth God love his own, and therefore will work their good, and diſpoſe of them well. God exerciſeth a ſpecial Providence over the actions of a good man as well as his Perſon, *Pſal.* 37. 23. *the ſteps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and he delighteth in his wayes*; 'tis a ſpecial, becauſe a delightful Providence, he delights in his way; how highly may it cheer a man to be in covenant with that God, which rules the World, and hath all things at his beck, to be under not onely the care of his wiſdom, but of his goodneſs; The Governor of the World, being ſuch an only friend, will do him no hurt, being ſuch an only Father will order all things to his good out of a Fatherly affection; he is the Worlds Soveraign, but a good mans Father: He rules the Heavens and the Earth, but he loves his holy ones. Other things are the objects of his Providence, and a good man is the end of it. For, *his eyes run to and fro throughout the whole Earth, to ſhew himſelf ſtrong for him whoſe heart is perfect toward Him.*

3. Hence it will follow, that the *Spirits of good men have ſufficient grounds to bear up in their innocent ſufferings and ſtorms in the World*; *Innocent ſufferings*, There is a righteous Governor, who orders all, and will reward them for their pains, as well as their ſervice, *Heb.* 6. 10. *for God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love*; there is one that preſides in the World, who ſees all their calamities, and cannot be miſtaken in their cauſe, who hath as much power and wiſdom, as will to help them. It would be an affliction indeed, if there were no ſoveraign power to whom they might make their moan in their diſtreſs, to whom they might eaſe their conſciences, if there were no Governor to whom they might offer up their petitions.

In the ſtorms they meet with in the world. How doth the preſence of a skilful Pilot in a weather-beaten Ship cheer the hearts of the fearful Paſſengers? What a dread would it be to them to have the veſſel wherein their lives and all are concerned, left to the fury of Winds and Waves, without an able hand to manage it? God hath a bridle to check the paſſions of men, to marſhal them according to his pleaſure; they are all but his inſtruments in the government, not the Lords of it: God can lay a Plot with more wiſdom for a good mans ſafety, than the Enemy can for his deſtruction; he can countermine their Plots with more Power than they can execute them; he can out-wit their craft, overpower their Strength, and turn their deſigned Cruelty againſt them, as a knife into their own Breaſts.

4. *Hence follows a certain ſecurity againſt a good mans want.* If God take care of the hairs, the ornamental ſuperfluities, why ſhould we doubt his care of our neceſſary ſupply? If he be the guardian of our hairs which fall off without our ſence of their departure, ſhall he be careleſs of us when we are at a pinch for our all? Will God reach out his care to Beaſts, and deny it to his Children? What would you judge of that Father, who ſhould feed his Servants and ſtarve his Sons? He ſupplies his Enemies, and hath he no bowels for his Friends? The very unjuſt as well as the juſt are enlightened by his Sun, and refreſht by his rain. aud ſhall he not have a Providence for thoſe that have a ſpecial intereſt in that Mediator, whoſe interpoſition kept up thoſe ſtanding mercies after our forfeiture of them by ſin? If he bleſs with thoſe bleſſings, thoſe who are the objects of his curſe, will he not bleſs thoſe that are in his ſpecial favour with them, ſo far as they may prove bleſſings to them? *Pſal.* 34. 10. *The young lions do lack and ſuffer hunger, but they that ſeek the Lord, ſhall not want any good thing, v.* 9. *for there is no want to them that fear him.* A good man ſhall have what he needs, not alwaies what he thinks he needs. Providence intends the ſupply of our neceſſities, not of our deſires; he will ſatisfie our wants, but not our wantonneſs. When a thing is not needful, a man cannot properly be ſaid to want it; when it is needful, a good man ſhall not be without it; what is not beſtowed upon us, may not be ſo beautiful at that time wherein we deſire it, for every thing is *beautiful in its ſeaſon* *. He that did not want

* *Eccleſ.* 3. 11.

want God's kindness to renew him, shall never want God's kindness to supply him; his hand shall not be wanting to give, where his heart hath been so large in working. Others live that have an interest only in common Providence, but good men have Providence cabineted in a promise, and assured to them by a deed of covenant-conveyance; he was a provider before, he hath made himself now your Debtor. You might Pray for his providential care, before, with a common faith, now with a more special expostulation: For in his promise he hath given a good man the key of the Chest of his Providence, because it is *the promise of this life and that which is to come* *; of this life not to our desires, but necessities; of the life to come to both, wherein they shall have whatsoever they can want, and whatsoever they can desire.

* 1 *Tim.* 4. 8.

Again consider God doth exercise a more special Providence over men, as cloathed with miserable circumstances, and therefore among his other Titles, this is one, to be a helper of the Fatherless *. 'Tis the argument the Church used to express her return to God, *Hos.* 14. 3. *for in thee the fatherless find mercy.* Now what greater comfort is there then this, that there is one presides in the World, who is so wise he cannot be mistaken, so faithful he cannot deceive, so pitiful he cannot neglect his people; and so powerful, that he can make stone even to be turned into bread, if he please?

* *Psal.* 10. 14.

Further, take this for a comfortable consideration, *God doth not govern the World only by his will as an absolute Monarch, but by his wisdom and goodness as a tender Father.* 'Tis not his greatest pleasure to shew his Soveraign power, or his unconceivable wisdom, but his immense goodness, to which he makes the other attributes subservient, What was God's end in creating, is his end in governing, which was the communication and diffusion of his goodness; we may be sure from hence, that God will do nothing but for the best, his wisdom appointing it with the highest reason, and his goodness ordering it to the most gracious end; and because he is the highest good, he doth not only will good, but the best good in every thing he acts.

What greater comfort can there be, than that we are under the care of an infallible unwearied and righteous Governor? infallible because of his infinite wisdom, unwearied because of his incomprehensible omnipotency, and righteous because of his unbounded goodness and holiness.

3. *Use* of *Exhortation.*

The duties arising from hence, will run as a thread through the web of our whole lives, and all the motions of them. This doctrine hath an influence upon our whole course, there is nothing we meet with, but is an act of Providence; and there is no act of Providence, but calls for some particular duty. Is there any good we want, we must seek it at his hands, we must depend upon him for it, we must prescribe no methods to him, but leave the conduct of it to his own wisdom. Is it a cross Providence, and contrary to our desires and expectations? Murmur not at it. Is it afflictive and troublesom? Submit to it: Is it either good or bad, and present, we must study to understand it: Is it a good, and present? give God the Glory of it.

1. *Seek every thing you need at the hands of God.* 'Tis not only the skilfulness of the Pilot, but a favourable gale from Heaven, which must conduct the Ship to the intended port. As his Providence is the foundation, so it is the encouragement of all prayer. The end of the Lords prayer is, *for thine is the Kingdom the power and the Glory*: the providential Kingdom belongs to God, Power he hath to manage it, and his Glory is the end of all; seek to him therefore for the exercise of his power in thy concerns, and for his directing them to his glory in his providential administrations. Every one of our daies, and both the mirey and the misery of them depend upon him, *Pro.* 27. 1. *thou knowest not what a day may bring forth*, but God foresees all events have recourse therefore to his care for every dayes success; what are our contrivances without the leave and blessing of Providence? Like the bubbles blown up from a nut-shell, easily broken by the next puff Our labour will be as fruitless as *Peter*'s with all his toyl, and catch nothing, till God speaks the word, and sends the fish into our net *. The way of man is not in himself *. *O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in in himself, it is not in man that walk's to direct his steps.* Dangers are not within the reach of our eye to foresee, not within the compass of our power to prevent. Humane prudence may lay the Platform, and God's power blast the execution, when it seems to be grown up neerest to maturity. *Hezekiah* was happy in his affairs, because he was assisted by God; *Ahaz* unhappy, because he is deserted by God. If we would have a Clock go well, we must look chiefly to the motion of the chief Weel; a failure in that makes an error in all the rest: nothing can terminate its motion to our benefit without Providence. Coloured glass can reflect no beams without the Sun's light, nor fruits be ripened without its influence. Our dependance on God is greater than theirs on the Sun. God lets men play with their own wit and strength, and come to the brink of execution of their designs, and then blows upon them that, that they may know there is a God in the Earth. *Pythagoras* could say, it was γλοιον a ridiculous thing, to seek that which is brave and vertuous any where else then of God *. *Cyrus* is a brave pattern, who is mentioned in Scripture, and represented by *Xenophon* calling upon God when he was first chosen General; and in his Speech to his Captaines to encourage them to hope for a good success of the expedition, tells them they might expect it, because I have begun with God, which you know, saith he, is my custom, not only when I attempt great matters, but also the τα μικρα things of lesser concernment. The seeking of God should be the prologue to all our affairs? we are enjoyned first to pray, and then determine, *Job* 22. 27. *Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee.* The entereſſing Providence in our concerns, is the high way to success. The reason we miscarry, is because we consult not God, but determine without him; and then we have no reason to complain of him for not prospering our way, when we never commended our affairs to his conduct. It hath been the practice of holy men. *Nehemiah* first petitioned God before he would use his interest in the Kings favour, *Nehem.* 2. 4. *then the King said unto me, for what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of Heaven, and I said unto the King*, &c. So *Abraham*'s Steward puts up his request to God, before he would put the business he came upon, in execution, *Gen.* 24. 12. *David* frequently in particular cases. 1 *Sam.* 23. 9. 2 *Sam.* 19. 23. God only doth what he pleases in Heaven and in Earth; He only can bless us, He only can blast us. Shall we be careless in any undertaking, whether we have his favour or no? 'Tis a ridiculous madness to resolve to do any thing without God, without whose assisting and preserving of us, we had not been able to make that resolution.

* *Luk.* 5. 5. * *Jer.* 10. 13.

* *Iamblich. vita Pithag. lib.* 1. *cap.* 18. *p.* 89. *Xenophon* περι κυρου παιδ. *lib.* 1. *p.* 23.

2. *Trust Providence.* To trust God when our Ware-houses and Bags are full, and our Tables spread, is no hard thing; but to trust him when our purses are empty, but a handful of meal and a cruse

cruſe of Oil left, and all ways of relief ſtopt, herein lies the wiſdom of a Chriſtians Grace. Yet none are exempted from this duty; all are bound to acknowledge their truſt in him by the dayly prayer for dayly bread; even thoſe that have it in their Cupboards as well as thoſe that want it; The greateſt Prince as well as the meaneſt beggar. Whatever your wants are, want not faith, and you cannot want ſupplies. 'Tis the want of this binds up his hand from doing great works for his Creatures: The more we truſt him, the more he concerns himſelf in our affairs. The more we truſt our ſelves, the more he delights to croſs us; for he hath denounced ſuch an one curſed that maketh Fleſh his arm *, though it be the beſt Fleſh in the World, becauſe it is a departing from the Lord. No wonder then that God departs from us, and carries away his bleſſing with him: while we truſt our ſelves, we do but trouble our ſelves, and know not how to reconcile our various reaſons for hopes and fears; but the committing our way to the Lord renders our minds calm and compoſed, *Pro.* 16. 3. *commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts ſhall be eſtabliſhed.* Thou ſhalt have no more of thoſe quarrelling diſturbing thoughts, what the ſucceſs ſhall be.

* *Jer.* 17. 5.

1. *Truſt Providence in the greateſt extremities.* He brings us unto ſtraits, that he may ſee the exerciſe of our faith. *Zeph.* 3. 12. *I will leave in the midſt of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they ſhall truſt in the name of the Lord.* When we are moſt deſolate, we have moſt need of this exerciſe, and have the fitteſt ſeaſon to practiſe it: he is alwaies our refuge and our ſtrength, but in time of trouble a preſent help, *Pſal.* 46. 1. *Daniel*'s new advancement by *Belſhazzar* but a day before the City was taken by the Enemy *, the King, ſlain, and (no doubt) many of his Nobility, and thoſe that were neareſt in Authority with him, it being the intereſt of the Enemy to diſpatch them, was a danger; yet God by wayes not expreſſed, preſerved *Daniel*, and gave him favour with the Conqueror. God ſometimes leads his People into great dangers, that they may ſee and acknowledge his hand in their preſervation. *Daniel* had not had ſo ſignal an experience of God's care of him, had he been in the lower condition he was in before his new preferment. God's eye is alwaies upon them that fear him; not to keep diſtreſs from them, but to quicken them in it, and give them as it were a new life from the dead, *Pſal.* 33. 18, 19. *To deliver their Soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.* God brings us into ſtreights, that we may have more lively experiments of his tenderneſs in his ſeaſonable relief: If he be angry, *he will repent himſelf for his Servants, when he ſees their power is gone*; becauſe then the glory of his Providence is appropriated to himſelf, *Deut.* 32. 36, 39. *See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no God with me: I kill, and I make alive.* No Creature can have any pretence to ſhare in it; He delights thereby to blow up both our affections to him, and admirations of him, and ſtore up in us a treaſure of experiments to encourage our truſting in him in the like ſtreights. We ſhould therefore repoſe our ſelves in God in a Deſart, as well as in the Cities: with as much faith among Savage beaſts, as in the beſt company of the moſt ſociable men *. And anſwer the greateſt ſtreight with *Abraham*'s Speech to *Iſaac*, *God will provide.* For we have to do with a God, who only knows what may further our good, and accordingly orders it; what may hinder it, and therefore prevents it. He can ſet all cauſes in ſuch a poſture, as ſhall conſpire together as one link to bring about ſucceſs, and make even contrary motions meet in one gracious end; as the Rivers which run from *North* and *South*, the contrary quarters of the World, agree in the ſurges of one Sea. Though Providences may ſeem to croſs one another, they ſhall never croſs his word and promiſe, which he hath magnified above all his name. And his Providence is but a ſervant to his Truth.

* *Dur. de Sent. P.* 168.

2. *Truſt it in the way of means.* Tho we are ſure God has decreed the certain event of ſuch a thing, yet we muſt not encourage our *idleneſs*, but our *diligence.* Tho *Moſes* was aſſured of the Victory, when *Amalek* came armed againſt him, yet he commands *Joſhua* to draw up the valiant men into a body, himſelf *goes to the Mount to pray*, and is as diligent in the uſe of all means, as if he had been ignorant of God's purpoſe, and had rather ſuſpected the rout of his own than his Enemies Forces. Neither doth *Joſhua* afterwards, tho ſecur'd by promiſe in his conqueſt of *Canaan*, omit any part of the duty of a wiſe and watchful General; he ſends Spies, diſciplines his Forces, beſiegeth Cities, and contrives Stratagems. Providence directs us by means; not to uſe them is to tempt our Guardian; where it intends any great thing for our good, it *opens* a door, and puts ſuch circumſtances into our hands, as we may uſe without the breach of any Command, or the neglect of our Duty. God could have ſecur'd Chriſt from *Herod*'s fury, by a miraculous ſtroke from Heaven upon his Enemy, but he orders *Joſeph* and *Maries* flight into *Egypt* as a means of his Preſervation. God rebukes *Moſes* for praying, and not uſing the means in continuing the Peoples march, *Ex.* 14. 15. *Wherefore crieſt thou unto me? ſpeak unto the Children of Iſrael, that they go forwards.* To uſe means, without reſpect to God, is proudly to contemn him; to depend upon God without the uſe of means, is irreligiouſly to tempt him; in both we abuſe his Providence. In the one we diſobey him in not uſing the means he hath appointed; in the other, preſumptuouſly impoſe upon him for the encouragement of our lazineſs. Diligence on our part, and the Bleſſing on God's, *Solomon* joins together, *Pro.* 10. 4. *The hand of the diligent makes rich*; but 22. *The bleſſing of the Lord maketh rich.* So *Eccl.* 9. 1. *Our works are in the hand of God*; our works, but God's bleſſing; God's bleſſing, but not without our works. It was the practice of good men. *Jacob* wraſtles with God to divert his Brother's fury, yet ſends a Preſent to his Brother to appeaſe him *. *David* truſts in the name of the Lord his God in his Duel with *Goliah*, but not without his Sling: Our labour ſhould rather be more vigorous than faint, when we are aſſured of the bleſſing of Providence by the infallibility of the Promiſe.

* *Gen.* 32. 9, 13.

3. *Truſt Providence in the way of the precept.* Let not any reliance upon an ordinary Providence induce you into any way contrary to the Command. *Daniel* had many inducements from an appearance of Providence to eat the Kings meat, his neceſſity of compliance in his captivity, probability of preferment by learning the wiſdom of the Countrey, whereby he might both have advanced himſelf, and aſſiſted his Countrey-men, the greatneſs of the conſideration for a Captive to be fed from the Kings Table, the ingratitude he might be accuſed of for deſpiſing ſo kind a treatment; but none of theſe things moved him againſt a command, becauſe the Law of God forbad it, he would not eat of the King's meat. *Daniel* might have argued, I may wind my ſelf in to the King's favour, do the Church of God a great ſervice by my intereſt in him, which may be daſht in pieces by my refuſal of this kindneſs; but none of theſe things wrought upon him. No Providences wherein we have ſeeming circumſtances of glorifying God, muſt lead us out of the way of duty; this is to rob God one way, to pay him another. God brought *Daniel*'s ends about, he finds favour with the Governour, his requeſt is granted, the ſucceſs is anſwerable, and all thoſe ends attained, which he might in a ſinful way by an ill conſtructi-

Dan. 1. 8, 9, 10. &c. *but Daniel purpoſed in his heart that he would not defile himſelf with the portion of the King's meats.*

on of Providence have propoſed to himſelf, all which he might have miſſed of, had he run on in a carnal manner: This, this is the way to ſucceſs, *Pſal.* 37. 5. *Commit thy ways unto the Lord, truſt alſo in him, and he ſhall bring it to paſs.* Commit thy way tothe guidance of his Providence, with an obedience to his precept, and relyance on his promiſe, and refer all ſucceſs in it to God. If we ſet up our golden Calfs made of our own ear-rings, our wit and ſtrength and carnal prudence, becauſe God ſeems to neglect us, our fate may be the ſame with theirs, and the very duſt of our demoliſht Calf may be a bitter Spice in our drink, as it was in theirs.

3. *Truſt him ſolely without preſcribing any methods to him*; Leave him to his wiſe choice, wait upon him becauſe he is a God of judgment *, who goes judiciouſly to work, and can beſt time the executions of his will. The wiſe God obſerves particular periods of time for doing his great works. *John.* 2. 4. *My hour is not yet come, women, what have I to do with thee?* Which man is no competent judge of: I will do this Miracle, but the ſeaſon is not yet come wherein I will be moſt beautiful. God hath as much wiſdom to pitch the time of performance of his promiſe, as he hath mercy at firſt to make it. How preſumptuous would it be for the ſhallow world, a thing worſe than nothing, and vanity, to preſcribes rules to the Creator? Much more for a ſingle perſon, a little Atome of duſt, infinitely worſe than nothing, and vanity, to do it. Since we had no hand in Creating the world or our ſelves, let us not preſume to direct God in the government of it, *Job.* 38. 4. *Where waſt thou when I laid the foundation of the Earth, declare if thou haſt underſtanding?* Would it not be a diſparagement to God to ſtoop to thy fooliſh deſires? yea, would you not your ſelves have a lower conceit of him, if he ſhould degrade his wiſdom to the wrong biaſs of your blind reaſon?

* *Iſa.* 30. 18.

Thirdly, *Submit to Providence.* 'Tis Gods right to govern the World, and diſpoſe of his Creature; 'tis his Glory in Heaven to do what he will *, let us not by our unſubmiſſive carriage deprive him of the ſame glory on earth; he brings to paſs his will by ways the Creature cannot underſtand. 'Tis the wiſeſt ſpeech in the medley of fooleries, the *Turkiſh Alcoran* *. We muſt walk by the rule of reaſon which God hath placed in us for our guide; yet if Providence brings to paſs any other event contrary to our rational expectations, becauſe it is a clear evidence of his will, we muſt acquieſce. As when a Traveller hath two ways to come to his journeys end, the one ſafe, and the other dangerous, reaſon perſwades him to chuſe the ſafeſt way, wherein he falls among thieves; now having uſed his reaſon, which in that caſe was to be his director, he muſt acquieſce: Gods Providence bringeth forth an event, which he could not without violence to his reaſon avoid. And therefore it is a great vanity, when a man hath reſolved the moſt probable way in a buſineſs, and fails in it, to torment himſelf; becauſe though our conſultations depend upon ourſelves, yet the iſſues of them are ſolely in the hand of God. It concerns us therefore to ſubmit to Gods diſpoſal of us and our affairs, ſince nothing can come to paſs but by the will of God effecting it, or permitting it. If the fall of a Sparrow is not without his Will *, much leſs can the greater events which befall men, the nobler Creatures, be without the ſame concurrence of Gods pleaſure; therefore ſubmit: For,

* *Pſal.* 115. 3. *But our God is in the Heaven: he hath done whatſoever he pleaſed.* **Deus triumphat in ſua cauſa,* &c.

* *Math.* 19. 20.

1. *Whatſoever God doth, he doth wiſely.* His acts are not ſudden and raſh, but acts of Counſel; not taken up upon the preſent poſture of things but the reſolves of Eternity. As he is thehigheſt wiſdom, ſo all his acts reliſh of it, and he guides his will by counſel, *Eph.* 1. 11. [*Who worketh all things after the Counſel of his own will*]. If God took Counſel in Creating the World, much more in laying a platform of government, much more in the act of government; for men can frame modes of government, that can never reduce them into practice. Now God being infinitely wiſe, and his will infinitely good, it muſt needs be that goodneſs and wiſdom are the rules whereby he directs himſelf in his actions in the world. And what greater motive can there be to perſwade our ſubmiſſion than Wiſdom and Goodneſs tranſacting all things? Gods counſel being the firmeſt, as well as the wiſeſt, it is a folly both ways to reſiſt it.

2. *God diſcovers his mind to us by Providences.* Every work of God being the reſult of his Counſel; when we ſee it actually brought forth into the World what elſe doth it diſcover to us, but that Counſel and Will of his? Every ſingle Providence hath a language wherein Gods mind is ſignified, much more a train and contexture of them, *Luk.* 7. 22. *Tell John what things you have ſeen and heard, how that the Blind ſee, the Lame walk, the Lepers are cleanſed, the Deaf hear, the Dead are raiſed to Life, to the Poor the Goſpel is preached.* Our Saviour informs *John*'s Diſciples from acts of Providence, he gives him no other anſwer, but turns him over to interpret and conſture his works in the caſe. Providence therefore muſt not be reſiſted, when Gods mind in it is diſcovered: 'Tis diſingenuous to act againſt his pleaſure and manifeſt mind; 'tis the Devils ſin. *Aaron* when he loſt his two Sons, in ſo judicial a manner by Fire from Heaven, yet held his peace *; becauſe God had declared his mind poſitively, *I will be glorified.* 'Tis dangerous to reſiſt the mind of God, for the word of his Providence ſhall proſper in ſpight of men and Devils, *Iſa.* 55. 11. *My word that goes forth of my mouth, ſhall not return unto me void; it ſhall proſper in the thing whereto I ſent it*; and therefore a reſiſting of it is termed θεομαχία, a fighting againſt God by *Gamaliel*, no great friend to the Church, *Acts.* 5. 38, 39.

* *Levit.* 10. 1. 2, 3.

4. *Murmur not at Providence.* Though we do not clearly reſiſt it, if there be a repining ſubmiſſion, it is a partial oppoſition to the Will of God. We might as well murmur at God's Creation, as at his Providence; for that is as arbitrary as this; he is under Law but his own righteous will: we ſhould therefore leave the government of the World to God's wiſdom, as we acknowledge the frame of it to be an act of his power. If God ſhould manage his ways according to our preſcriptions, what ſatisfaction would God have? what ſatisfaction would the World have? He might be unjuſt to himſelf, and unjuſt to others, Your own complaints would not be ſtilled, when you ſhould feel the ſmart of your Counſels; yet if they were, what ſatisfaction could there be to the complaints of others, whoſe intereſts and therefore judgments and deſires lye croſs to yours? Man is a croſs Creature. The *Iſraelites* exclaimed to God againſt *Pharaoh*, and when the Scence was changed, they did no leſs murmur againſt *Moſes* in the wilderneſs. They were as troubleſome when they were delivered, as when they were afflicted. In *Egypt* they would have their liberty, and in the Wilderneſs their ſtomachs turn, and they long for the Onyons and Garlick, though attended with their former ſlavery. Let God govern the World according to his own Wiſdom and Will, till all mankind can agree in one method to offer to him, and that I think will never be, though the World ſhould laſt for ever. Murmur not therefore; whatſoever is done in the World, is the work of a wiſe Agent, who acts for the perfection of the whole univerſe; and why

ſhould

ſhould I murmer at that which promotes the common happineſs and perfection, that being better and more deſirable, than the perfection of any one particular perſon? Muſt a Lutineſt break all his ſtrings becauſe one is out of tune? And muſt God change his courſe becauſe things are out of order with one man, though in regard of divine Providence things are not out of order in themſelves, or without any care, for God is a God of order? This temper will hinder our prayers; with what face can we pray to that God whoſe wiſdom thus repine at? If God doth exerciſe a Providence in the World, why do we murmur? if he doth not take care of thoſe things, why do we pray to him? 'tis a contradiction. It alſo hinders us from giving God the glory, and our ſelves the comfortable ſight of his Providence. God may have taken ſomething from us, which is the matter of our ſorrow, and give another thing to us, which might be the matter of our joy, *Jacob* loſt
* *Gen.* 23. 29, 31. a joynt, and got a bleſſing *: What advantage can it be to murmur? Can all your cryes ſtop the motions of the Heavens, when a ſtorm reaches you? Can your clamours make clouds move the faſter, or perſwade the ſhowers from drenching us? Murmuring at any afflictive Providence, is the way to make the Rod ſmarter in it ſelf, and ſharper to us.

5. *Study Providence.* 'Tis a part of *Atheiſm* not to think the acts of God in the World worth our ſerious thoughts. And if you would know the meaning of his adminſtrations, grow up in the fear of God. *Pſal.* 25. 14. *The ſecret of the Lord is with them that fear him.* God is highly angry with thoſe that mind him not, *Pſal.* 28. 5. *becauſe they regard not the operation of his hands, he ſhall deſtroy them, and not build them up*: He ſhall utterly root them out.

1. *Study Providence univerſally.* The *darkeſt*; God brings order out of the Worlds confuſion, even as he framed a beautiful Heaven and Earth out of a rude Maſs. The *terribleſt*; thoſe offer ſome thing worth our obſervation; the dreadful Providence of God makes *Sodom* an example to after ages. *Jude* 7. *They are ſet forth for an example, ſuffering the vengeance of eternal fire*, &c. The *ſmalleſt*; God is a wiſe Agent, and ſo the leaſt of his actions are ſignificant. There is nothing ſuperfluous in thoſe acts we account the meaneſt; for to act vainly and lightly, argues imperfection, which cannot be attributed to God. The wiſdom of God may be much ſeen in thoſe 'Providences the blind World counts ſmall; as a little picture is oft times of more value, and hath more of the workman's skill than a larger which an ignorant perſon might prize at a higher rate; the Lilies, Flowers, Sparrows, our Saviour raiſes excellent obſervations from.

2. *Regularly.* By the words; compare Providence and the promiſe together; God's manner of adminiſtrations, and the meaning of them is underſtood by the word, *Pſal.* 77. 13. *Thy way, O God, is in the Sanctuary.* By faith; we many times correct our ſence by reaſon, when we look through a blew or green glaſs, and ſee all things blew or green; though our ſenſe repreſents them ſo, yet our reaſon diſcovers the miſtake; why ſhould we not correct reaſon by faith? Indeed our purblind reaſon ſtands in as much need of a regulation by faith, as our deceitful ſence doth of a regulation by reaſon. We may often obſerve in the Goſpel, that the holy Ghoſt taking notice of the particular circumſtances in the bringing Chriſt into the World, and in the courſe of his life, often hath thoſe expreſſions, *as it was written, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled.* There is not a Providence happens in the World, but there are ſome general rules in the Word, whereby we may apprehend the meaning of it. From God's former work diſcovered in his word, we may trace his preſent Foot-ſteps: Obſerve the timings of Providence wherein the beauty of it appears, ſince *God hath made every thing beautiful in its time.*

3. *Intirely.* View them in their connexion. A harſh touch ſingle would not be pleaſing, but may rarely affected the conſort: The Providences of God bear a juſt proportion to one another, and are beautiful in their intire Scheme; but when regarded apart, we ſhall come far ſhort of a delightful underſtanding of them. As in a piece of Arras folded up, and afterwards particulary opened, we ſee the hand or foot of man, the branch of a tree; or if we look on the outſide, we ſee nothing but knots and threads, and uncouth ſhapes that we know not what to make of; but when it is fully opened, and we have the whole Webb before us, we ſee what Hiſtories and pleaſing characters are interwoven in it. View them in their end; there is no true judgment to be made of a thing in motion, unleſs we have a right proſpect of the end to which it tends. Many things which may ſeem terrible in their motion, may be exellent in their end. Providence is crowned by the end of it. *Aſaph* was much troubled about the proſperity of the wicked, and affliction of the Godly, but he was well ſatisfied when he underſtood their end, which was the end of Providence too, *Pſal.* 73. 16, 17. *When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me, untill I went into the Sanctuary, then underſtood I their end.* *Moſes* his Rod was a Serpent in its motion upon the ground; but when taken up, it was a Rod again to work miracles. God ſet us a pattern for this in the Creation. He views the Creatures as they came into being, and pronounced them *good*, he takes a review of them afterward in their whole frame, and the ſubordination of them to one another, and the ends he had deſtined them to, and then pronounceth them *very good*; The merciful Providences of God if ſingly looked upon, will appear good, but if reviewed in the whole web, and the end of them, will commence very good in our apprehenſions.

4. *Calmly.* Take heed of paſſion in this ſtudy, that is a miſt before the eye of the mind; ſeveral pleaſures alſo diſturb and ſtifle the nobler operation of the intellective part, and all improving thoughts of Gods Providence, *Iſa.* 5. 12. *And the Harp, and the Viol, and Wine, are in their feaſts, but they regard not the work of the Lord, nor conſider the operations of his hands*; All thoughts of them are choaked by the pleaſures of ſenſe. Paſſions and ſenſual pleaſures, are like flying Clouds in the night, interpoſing themſelves between the ſtars and our eyes, that we cannot obſerve the motions of them. Turbulent paſſions, or Swiniſh pleaſures prevailing, obſcure the Providence of God. Our own humour and intereſt we often make the meaſures of our judgment of Providence, *Shimei*, when *Abſalom* rebels againſt his Father, looks no further than his own intereſt, and therefore interprets it as a judgment of God in revenging the houſe of *Saul*, 2 *Sam.* 16. 7, 8. *The Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the houſe of Saul, in whoſe ſtead thou haſt reigned.* Therefore the Spirit of God takes particular notice that he was of the houſe of *Saul*, *v.* 5. when indeed this judgment was quite another thing, for *David's* ſin in the matter of *Uriah* was writen in the forehead of it.

5. *Seriouſly.* 'Tis not an eaſie work; for the cauſes of things are hid as the ſeminal virtues in plants, not viſible till they manifeſt themſelves. Providence is God's Lanthorn in many affairs; if we do not follow it cloſe, we may be left in the dark, and loſe our way. With much Prayer, For we cannot our ſelves find out the reaſon of them; being ſhallow Creatures, we cannot find out thoſe infinite wiſe methods God obſerves in the managing of

them; but if we ſeriouſly ſet to work, and ſeek God in it, God may inform us, and make them intelligible to us. Though a man may not be able of himſelf to find out the frame and motions of an Engine, yet when the Artificers hath explained the work, diſcovered the intent of the Fabrick, it may be eaſily underſtood; If it be dark, whilſt you ſeriouſly muſe on it, God may ſend forth a light into you, and give you an underſtanding of it, *Mat.* 1. 20. *Joſeph thought* of thoſe things, and whilſt he thought on them, *The Angel of the Lord appeared to him* in a dream; God made them known to him. The *Iſraelites* ſaw God's acts in the bulk of them, but *Moſes* ſaw his way and the manner how he wrought them, *Pſal.* 103. 7. *He made known his wayes unto Moſes, his acts unto the Children of Iſrael. Moſes* had more converſe with God than they, and therefore was admitted into his ſecrets.

6. *Holily.* With a deſign to conform to that duty Providence calls for. Our motions ſhould be according to the Providence of God, when we underſtand the intent of them. There is a call of Providence, *Iſa.* 22. 12. *In that day the Lord called to weeping and mourning*; Sometimes to ſorrow, ſometimes to joy. If it be a Providence to diſcover our ſin, let us comply with it by humiliation; if it be to further our grace, ſuit it by lively and freſh actings. As the ſap in plants deſcends with the Sun's declination, and aſcends at the return of the Sun from the Tropick; there are ſeveral graces to be exerciſed upon ſeveral acts of Providence; either publick to the Church and Nation, or particular to our own perſons. Sometimes faith, ſometimes joy, ſometimes patience, ſometimes ſorrow for ſin There are ſpiritual leſſons in every Providence, for it doth not only offer ſomething to be underſtood, but ſome things to be practiſed, *Mark.* 10. 15, A Child is brought to Chriſt, and Chriſt from thence teaches them a leſſon of humility. *Luk.* 13. 1, 2, 3. When Chriſt diſcourſes of that ſad Providence of the blood of the *Galileans*, and the Tower of *Siloa*, he puts them upon the exerciſe of repentance. The Ruler enquired the time when his Son began to recover, that his faith in Chriſt might be confirmed, for upon that circumſtance it did much hang; and in doubtful caſes after a ſerious ſtudy of it, and thou knoweſt not which way to determine, conſider what makes moſt for God's glory and thy ſpiritual good, for that is the end of all: Let us therefore ſtudy Providence; not as Children do Hiſtories, to know what men were in the World, or to pleaſe their fancy only; but as wiſe men, to underſtand the motions of States, and the intrigues of Councels; to enrich them with a knowledge whereby they might be ſerviceable to their Countrey. So let us enquire into the Providence of God, to underſtand the mind of God, the intereſt of the Church, the wiſdom and kindneſs of God, and our own duty in comformity thereunto.

6. *Aſcribe the Glory of every Providence to God* *Abraham*'s Steward petitioned God at the beginning of his buſineſs, *Gen.* 24. 12. and he bleſſes God at the ſucceſs of it, *ver.* 26, 27. We muſt not thank the tools which are uſed in the making an engine, and aſcribe unto them what we owe to the Workmans skill: Man is but the inſtrument, God's Wiſdom is the Artiſt. Let us therefore return the Glory of all where it is rightly placed: We may ſee the difference between *Rachel* and *Leah* in this reſpect, when *Rachel* had a Son by her maid *Bilhah*, ſhe aſcribes it to God's care, and calls his name *Dan*, which ſignifies judging, *Gen.* 30. 6. *God hath judged me, and heard my voice.* That the very Name might put her in remembrance of the kindneſs of God in anſwering her prayer. And the next *Naphali*, ſhe eſteems as the fruit of prayer, *verſ.* 8. Whereas *Leah* takes no notice of God, but vants of the multitude of her Children, *ver.* 11. behold *a troop comes.* She impoſed the name of *Gad* upon them, which alſo ſignifies *fortune* or *good luck.* And the next *Aſher*, *verſ.* 13. which is fortunate or bleſſed. And we find *Leah* of the ſame mind afterward, *verſ.* 17. It is ſaid God hearkned unto her, ſo that her Son *Iſſachar* was an anſwer of Prayer; but ſhe aſcribes it to a lower cauſe which had moved God; becauſe ſhe had given her maid to her Husband, *verſ.* 18. *Not unto us, not unto us, O Lord, but to thy name be the Glory.*

Doct. 2. *All the motions of Providence in the World are ultimately for the good of the Church; of thoſe whoſe heart is perfect towards him.* Providence follows the rule of Scripture. Whatſoever was written, was written for the Churches comfort *. Whatſoever is acted in order to any thing written, is acted for the Churches good. All the Providences of God in the World are conformable to his declarations in his word. All former Providences were ultimately in order to the bringing a Mediator into the World, and for the glory of him; then ſurely all the Providences of God ſhall be in order to the perfecting the Glory of Chriſt in that miſtical body, whereof Chriſt is head, and wherein his affection and his Glory are ſo much concerned. See the Proof of this by a Sripture or two. *Pſal.* 25. 10. *All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto ſuch as keep his Covenant and his Teſtimonies.* Not one path, but [*all*] the works and motions; not one particular act or paſſage of providence, but the whole tract of his proceedings; not only thoſe which are more ſmooth and pleaſant; but thoſe which are more rugged and bitter. All [*mercy and truth*] ſutable to that affection he bears in his heart to them, and ſutable to the declaration of that affection he hath in his promiſe. There is a contexture and a friendly connexion of kindneſs and faithfulneſs in every one of them. They both kiſs and embrace each other in every motion of God towards them. As mercy made the Covenant, ſo truth ſhall perform it. And there ſhall be as much mercy as truth in all Gods actings towards thoſe that keep it, *Rom.* 8. 28. *We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpoſe*; [*we know*] we do not conjecture or gueſs ſo, but we have an infallible aſſurance of it. [*All things*] even the moſt frightful, and ſo thoſe that have in reſpect of ſenſe, nothing but Gall and Wormwood in them; [*work together*] they all conſpire with an admiable harmony and unanimous conſent for a Chriſtians good. One particular act may ſeem to work to the harm of the Church, as one particular act may work to the good of wicked men: but the whole ſeries and frame of things combine together for the good of thoſe that are affectionate to him. Both the Lance that makes us bleed, and the plaiſter which refreſheth the Wounds. Both the griping purges, and the warming Cordials combine together for the Patients cure [*to them who are called according to his purpoſe.*] Here the Apoſtle renders a reaſon to this poſition; becauſe they are called not only in the general amongſt the reſt of the world, to whom the Goſpel comes; but they are ſuch that were in Gods purpoſe and counſel from Eternity to ſave, and therefore reſolved to encline their will to Faith in Chriſt. Therefore all his other Counſels about the affairs of the world ſhall be for their good. Another reaſon of this, the Apoſtle intimates. *verſ.* 27. *The Spirit makes interceſſion for the Saints according to the will of God.* The interceſſions of the Spirit, which are alſo according to Gods will and purpoſe,

* *Rom.* 15. 4.

purpoſe, will not be fruitleſs in the main end, which both the interceſſions of the Spirit and purpoſe of God, and the will and deſire of the Saints, do aim at, which is their good. Indeed where any is the object of this grand purpoſe of God, he is the object of God's infinite and innumerable thoughts *Pſal.* 40. 5. *Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou haſt done, and thy thoughts which are to us ward, they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee; If I would declare and ſpeak of them, they are more than can be numbred.* The Pſalmiſt ſeems to intimate, that in all the wonderful works which God hath done, his thoughts are toward his people. He thinks of them in all his actions; and thoſe thoughts are infinite, and cannot be numbered, and reckoned up by any Creature. He ſeems to reſtrain the thoughts of God towards his people in all thoſe works of wonder which he doth in the World, and which others are the Subjects of: But his thoughts, or purpoſes, and intentions in all (*for the word ſignifies purpoſes too*) are chiefly, next to his own glory, directed toward his people, thoſe that truſt in him, which *verſ.* 4. he had pronounced bleſſed. They run in his mind as if his heart was ſet upon them, and none but them.

Here I ſhall premiſe two things as the groundwork of what follows.

1. *God certainly in all his actions has ſome end*, that is without queſtion, becauſe he is a wiſe Agent; to act vainly and lightly, is an evidence of imperfection, which cannot be aſcribed to the only wiſe God.

* *Ezek.* 1. 18. The Wheels of Providence are full of Eyes *. There is motion, and a knowledge of the end of that motion. And Jeſus Chriſt, who is God's Deputy in the providential government, hath Seven Eyes, as well

* *Revel.* 5. 6. as Seven Horns *. A perfect ſtrength, and a perfect knowledge how to uſe that ſtrength, and to what end to uſe it. Seven being the number of perfection in Scripture.

2. *That certainly is Gods end which his heart is moſt ſet upon, and that which is laſt in execution.* What doth God do at the folding up of the World, but perfect his people, and welcome them into Glory? Therefore God principally next to himſelf loves his Church. The whole Earth is his, but the Church is his treaſure, *Exod.* 19. 5. *If you will keep my Covenant, then ſhall you be a peculiar treaſure unto me above all people, for all the Earth is mine*; *Segullah* ſuch a treaſure, that a Man, a King will intruſt in no hands but his own; *all the Earth is mine*, is not a reaſon why the Church was his treaſure, but an incentive of thankfulneſs, that when the whole Earth was his, and lay before him, and there were many people that he might have choſen and loved before them yet he pitched upon them to make them his choiceſt treaſure. And when the bleſſed God hath pitched upon a people, and made them his treaſure, what he doth for them is with his whole heart, and with his whole Soul, *Jer.* 32. 41, 42. ſpeaking of making an everlaſting Covenant, he adds; *yea I will rejoyce over them to do them good*, &c. *aſſuredly with my whole heart, and with my whole Soul.* As though God minded nothing elſe but thoſe people he had made an everlaſting Covenant with; which is the higheſt ſecurity, and moſt pregnant expreſſion of his affection that can be given to any; not to give them a parcel or moiety of his heart, but the whole infinite intire piece, and to engage it all with the greateſt delight in dooing good to them. That infinite heart of God, and all the contrivances and workings of it, center in the Churches welfare The World is a Wilderneſs, but the Church is a Garden. If he water the Wilderneſs, will he not much more dreſs his Garden? If the flights of Birds be obſerved by him, ſhall not alſo the particular concernments of the Church? He hath a repoſitory for them, and all that belong to them; He hath a Book of Life for their Names *, a book of Record for their members *, a Note-book for their Speeches, *Mal.* 3. 16. *A book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord*; And a book of Providence for their preſervation, *Exod.* 32. 32. In the proſecution of this, I ſhall ſhew,

Luk. 10. 20. * *Pſal.* 139. 16.

1. That it is ſo *de facto*, and hath been ſo. *First.*
2. That according to the ſtate of things, and Gods Oeconomy, it muſt be ſo. *Secondly.*
3. The improvement of it, By way of *Uſe*. *Thirdly.*

1. That all Providence is for the good of the Church *de facto*, and has been ſo. *First,*

1. It will appear by an enumeration of things. *Reaſon first.*

Firſt, All good things. 2dly. All bad things are for their good. Firſt All good things. I. The World.

II. Gifts and common graces of men in the World

III. Angels.

I. The World. The whole World was made and ordained for the good of the Church, next to the glory of God. This will appear in three things. *First.*

1. *The continuance of the World is for their ſakes.* God would have deſtroyed the World becauſe of the ignorance and wickedneſs of it, before this time, but he overlooked it all, and had reſpect to the times of Chriſt, and the publiſhing faith in him, and repentance, *Act.* 17. 30 *And the times of this ignorance God winked at*, God overlooked *, he looked not ſo upon them, as to be provoked to deſtroy the World; but his eyes were fixed on the times of Chriſtianity; therefore would not take notice in the extremity of his juſtice of the wickedneſs of thoſe foregoing ages. Believers are the Salt of the Earth *. which makes the world ſavoury to God and keeps it from corrupting. 'Tis meant not only for the Apoſtles, but of Chriſts Diſciples, of all Chriſtians, for to them was that Sermon made, *v.* 1. *If the Salt have loſt his ſavour*, if the Salt be corrupted, and Chriſtianity overthrown in the World, wherewith ſhall the World be ſalted? how can it be kept from corruption; If they that perſecuted the Prophets before you in *Judea*, (which is ſometimes called the Earth in Scripture) cannot reliſh you and find nothing grateful to their Palates in your Doctrine and Converſation, wherewith ſhall they be ſalted? How ſhall they be preſerved from corruption? The Land will be good for nothing but to be given as a prey to the *Romans* to be trod under their feet, as being caſt out of Gods protection. They are the foundation of the World, *Pro.* 10. 25. *the righteous are an everlaſting foundation.* *Maimonides* underſtands it thus, that the World ſtands for the righteous ſakes. When God had *Noah* and his Family lodged in the Ark, he cares not what deluge and deſtruction he brings upon the reſt of the World. When we had conducted *Lot* out of *Sodom*, he brings down that dreadful ſtorm of fire. He cares for no place, no nor for the whole World, any longer than whileſt his People are there, or he hath ſome to bring in, in time. For the meaneſt believer is of more worth than a World; therefore when God hath gathered all together, he will ſet fire upon this frame of the Creation: For what was the end of Chriſts coming and dying, but to gather all things together in one? *Eph.* 1. 10. *That in the diſpenſation of the fulneſs of time he might gather together in one all things in Chriſt.* When Chriſt hath ſummed up all together, he hath attained his end. And to what purpoſe then can we imagine God ſhould continue the World any longer? for his delight is not ſimply in the World, but in the Saints there. *Pſal.* 16. 3. *But to the Saints that are in the Earth, in whom is all my delight*; not in the Earth, but in the Saints there,

* *Mat.* 5. 13.

Grotius *on the place.*

hich

which are the only excellent things in it, which Chriſt ſpeaks (of whom that Pſalm is meant) who knew well what was the object of his Fathers pleaſure. The ſweet ſavour God ſmelt in *Noah*'s Sacrifice, was the occaſion of God's Declaration for the Worlds ſtanding, *Gen.* 8. 21. *And the Lord ſaid in his heart, I will not curſe the ground any more for mans ſake.* That he would no more ſmite it with a totally deſtroying judgment. It was his reſpect to Chriſt repreſented in that ſacrifice, and to the faith and grace of *Noah* the ſacrificer. What ſavour could an infinitely pure Spirit ſmell in the blood and flames of beaſts?

2. *The courſe of natural things is for the good of the Church, or particular members of it.* God makes articles of agreement with the Beaſts and Fowls, whoſe nature is raging and ravenous, and binds them in ſure bonds for the performance of thoſe articles, *Hoſea* 2. 18. *And in that day will I make a Covenant for them with the Beaſts of the field, and with the fowls Heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground, and will make them to lye down ſafely.* As upon our ſin God can arm them againſt us; ſo upon our obedience he can make them ſerviceable even againſt their Natures; as if he had made a Covenant with them, and they had both the reaſon and vertue to obſerve it. I do not remember any inſtance in Scripture, that God went out of the uſual tract of his Providence, and acted in an extraordinary manner, but where his people were one way or other concerned. It was for *Joſhua*'s and the *Iſraelites* ſake that the Sun was arreſted to ſtand ſtill in the Valley of *Ajalon*, that they might have light enough to defeat their Enemies, and purſue their victory *. The Sea ſhall, againſt its natural courſe, ſtand in heaps like walls of Braſs to aſſiſt the *Iſraelits* eſcape *. The fire is reſtrained in the operation of its nature, even whilſt it retains its burning quality, when the lives of the three valient believing Children are in danger. The mouths of Lyons are muxled, when the ſafety of his beloved *Daniel* is concerned *. And the ſhadow goes back upon the Dyal for *Hezekiah*'s ſake *. When God would at any time deliver his people, He can muſter up Lightnings and Thunders for their aſſiſtance *; He can draw all the Regiments of Heaven into Battel-array, and arm the Stars to fight againſt *Siſera*, when *Iſraels* condition needs it; and make even the loweſt Creatures to liſt themſelves as *Auxiliaries* in the ſervice. God hath not a diſpleaſure with ſenſleſs Creatures, neither is tranſported with ſtrains of fury againſt ſuch objects, when he alters their natural courſe. *Hab.* 3. 8. *Was the Lord diſpleaſed againſt the Rivers? was thy wrath againſt the Sea, that thou didſt ride upon thy horſes and chariots of ſalvation?* No, but he made thoſe Creatures the Horſes and Chariots to ſpeed aſſiſtance and ſalvation to his people, which the Pſalmiſt elegantly diſcribes, *Pſal.* 114. All Creatures are his Hoſt; and that God that created them, hath ſtill the Soveraign command over them, and can imbodie them in an Army to ſerve his purpoſe for the deliverance of his people, as he did againſt *Pharoah*.

* *Joſh.* 10. 12, 13.
* *Exod.* 14. 22.
* *Dan.* 6. 22.
* 2 *King.* 20. 11.
* 1 *Sam.* 7. 10.

3. *The intereſt of Nations is ordered as is moſt for the Churches good.* He orders both the courſe of natural things, and of civil affairs, for their intereſt. He alters the ſtate of things, and changeth Gover. nours and Governments for the ſake of his people. For theſe cauſes God ſent *Eliſha* to Crown *Jehu* King, 2 *King.* 9. 6, 7. *I have anointed thee King over the people, the Lord,* &c. *that I may avenge the blood of my Servants the Prophets, and the blood of all the Servants of the Lord at the hand of Jezabel.* For the ſakes of the Godly in that Nation, and the revenging the blood of the Prophets which had been ſhed, was he raiſed up by the Lord. He hath ſent ſuch judgments upon *Egypt*, that it was as much the intereſt of that Nation to let *Iſrael* go, as it was before to keep them their vaſſals. God orders the intereſt and affairs of Nations for thoſe ends? and according to this diſpoſition of affairs, Chriſt times his interceſſions for his Church. The Angels had been ſent out to view the ſtate of the World, and found it in peace, *Zach.* 1. 11. *behold, all the earth ſits ſtill, and is at reſt*; there had been Wars in *Artaxerxes* and *Xerxes* his time, but in the time of *Darius*, that part of the World had an univerſal peace, which was the fitteſt time for the reſtoration of the *Jews*, and building the Temple; becauſe it could not be built, but by the Kings coſt. whoſe treaſure in the time War was expended another way; nor would it conſiſt with their policy to reſtore the *Jews* to their Government at ſuch a time when they had Wars with the Neighbour-parts of *Egypt*. See how God orders the ſtate of the World in ſubſerviency to his gracious intentions towards his Church. The time of the *Jewiſh* captivity was now out, according to the promiſe of God, and God gives that part of the World a general peace, that the reſtauration of the *Jews*, and the rebuilding of the Temple might be facilitated, and the truth of his promiſe in their deliverance accompliſhed. Upon the news of this general peace in that part of the World, Chriſt expoſtulates with God for the reſtauration of *Jeruſalem*, *verſ* 12. *How long, O Lord. wilt thou not have mercy on Jeruſalem, and on the Cities of Judah, againſt which thou haſt had indignation theſe threeſcore and ten years?* The time of the Captivity determined by God, was now expired. The firſt reformation in *Germany* was back'd by Reaſons of State as it was then altered; it being the intereſt of many Princes of that Countrey to countenance *Luther*'s Doctrine, for the putting a ſtop to the growing greatneſs of *Charles* the fifth, who had evident deſigns to enſlave them. I might mention many more, only by the way let me adviſe thoſe that have an inclination to read hiſtories of former tranſactions, to which men naturally are addicted, to make this your end, to obſerve the ſtrange Providences of God in the World, and how admirably he hath made them ſubſervient to the intereſt of the Church; which will be the moſt profitable way of reading them, whereby they will not only ſatisfie your curioſity, but eſtabliſh your Chriſtianity, *Calvin* underſtands that place, *Deut.* 32. 8. *He ſets the bounds of the people according to the number of the Children of Iſrael*, that in the whole ordering of the ſtate of the World, God propoſed this as his end, to conſult for the good of his people, and his his care extends to the reſt only in order to them; and though they are but a ſmall number, yet he orders his whole Government of the Worlds affairs as may beſt tend to their Salvation. Therefore God ſets the people bounds, or enlarged them according as they may be ſerviceable one way or other to this end, And the reaſon is rendred, *v.* 9. *For the Lords portion is his people, and Jacob is the Lot of his inheritance.* Therefore God orders all the reſt of the World in ſubſerviency to the maintaining and improving his portion and inheritance.

Secondly. 2. *As the World, ſo the gifts and common graces of men in the World are for the good of the Church*, which is a great argument for providence in general; ſince there is nothing ſo conſiderable in goverment as the diſpoſing of places to men according to their particular endowments and abilities for them. And the beſtowing ſuch gifts upon men, is none of the meaneſt arguments for Gods providential Government of the World. As,

1. *The gifts of good men.* The gifts conferred upon

on *Paul* were depoſited in him, not only to be poſſeſſed by him, but uſed and laid out for the good of the Church. *Col.* 1. 25. *Whereof I am made a Miniſter according to the diſpenſation of God which is given to me for you:* The manifeſtation of the Spirit to any man is given to profit withal. 1 *Cor.* 21. 7. And this is the great end for which men ſhould ſeek to excel, *viz.* for the edifying of the Church, 1 *Cor.* 14. 12. *For as much as you are zealous of Spiritual gifts, ſeek that you may excel to the edifying of the Church.*

2. *The gifts and common graces of bad men.* There is ſomething that is amiable in men, though they have not grace. As in Stones, Plants and Flowers, though they have not ſenſe, there is ſomething grateful in them, as colour and ſmell, &c. And all thoſe things that are lovely in men, are for the Churches good, the beſt life, and the worſt death, things preſent, let who will be the poſſeſſor, all things between Life and Death are for the good of Believers, becauſe they are Chriſts, 1 *Cor.* 3. 22. *Whether Paul, or Apollo, or Cephas, or the World, i. e.* [Whether the gifts of the prime lights in the Church, or the common gifts of the world] *are all yours, and ye are Chriſts, and Chriſt is Gods.* God is the diſpenſer of them, Chriſt is the Governour of them, and all for your ſakes. As the medicinal qualities of waters are not for the good of themſelves, but the accommodation of the indigencies of men. By the common works of the Spirit God doth keep men from the evil of the World. For it cannot be ſuppoſed, that the Spirit, whoſe Miſſion is principally for the Church, ſhould give ſuch gifts out of love to men which hate him, and are not the objects of his eternal purpoſe; but he hath ſome other ends in doing it, which is the advantage of his Church and People: And this God cauſes by the preaching of the Goſpel, which when it works gracious works in ſome, produceth common works in others for the good of thoſe gracious ones. As a ſeed of corn hath ſtraw husks and Chaff come up with it, which are ſhelters to that little ſeed which lies in the midſt; ſo in the preaching of the Goſpel there are ſome husks and Chaff come up among natural men, which God makes to be ſhelters to the Church, as thoſe common works, and reſtraining men through the knowledg of Chriſt. God gives gifts to them, not out of love to them, but love to his Church. As Nurſes of great mens Children are fed with better meat than the other Servants, not out of any particular perſonal reſpect to them, but to their office, that the milk whereby the Child is nouriſhed, may be the ſweeter and wholſomer; were it not for that Relation, ſhe muſt be content with the Diet allowed to the reſt of the Servants. Some ſtinking plants may have medicinal virtues, which the Phyſician extracts the cure of a diſeaſe, and flings the reſt upon the Dunghil. God beſtows ſuch qualities upon men otherwiſe unſavoury to him, which he draws forth upon ſeveral occaſions for the good of thoſe that are more peculiarly under his care, and then caſts them away. Theſe gifts are indeed the ruine of bad men, becauſe of their pride; but the Churches advantage in regard of their excellency, and are often as profitable to others, as dangerous to themſelves. As all that good which is in plants and animals, is for the good of man; ſo all the gifts of natural men are for the Churches good, for they are for that end as the principal, next the glory of God; becauſe every inferior thing is ordained to ſomething ſuperior as its end. Plants are ordained for the nouriſhment of Beaſts, for Men. The inferior men for the ſervice of higher, and all for the community; yet ſtill there is a higher end beyond thoſe, *viz.* the Glory of God, to which they are ultimately ordained, which is ſo connected with the Churches good, that what ſerves one, ſerves the other.

3. *Angels*, the top Creatures in the Creation, are ordered for the good of the Church. If the Stars are not Cyphers in the World only to be gaz'd upon, but have their influences both upon Plants and Animals; As the Sun in impregnating the Earth. and enlivening the Plants, and aſſiſting the growth of fruits for the good of mankind: If the Stars have thoſe natural influences upon the ſenſible world, the Angels which are the morning Stars, have no leſs intereſt as inſtruments in the government of it. The Heathens had ſuch a notion of *Dæmons* working thoſe things which were done in the World, but according to the will and order of the ſupream God. The Angels are called watchers, *Dan.* 4. 13. *a Watcher, and an holy one, verſ.* 17. *this is by the decree of the watchers, and the demand by the word of the holy ones:* they watch for Gods orders, and watch for Gods honour, and the Churches good. There are orders of ſtate among them, for we read of their decree; 'tis called their decree *miniſterially*, as they execute it; *approbativè* as they ſubſcribe to the equity and goodneſs of it. As the Saints are ſaid to judge the World, not *authoritativè* as in commiſſion with Chriſt, but as they approve of Chriſt's ſentence. They ſeem to requeſt thoſe things of God which may make for his glory; and they decree among themſelves what is fit to be preſented to God in order to his glory. They cannot endure that men ſhould trample upon Gods authority, diſpoil him of his right, and tread down his inheritance; and therefore they ſend ſuch requeſts to God to act ſo as men may acknowledg him and his government, *to the intent that the living may know that the moſt high rules in the Kingdoms of men.* Their care therefore muſt be for the Church, ſince God rules all things in order to that, and ſince that is Gods portion and inheritance; ſo that as they have a care of Gods glory, they muſt alſo have a care of Gods portion, and his peculiar treaſure. The inward part of the Temple was to be adorned with Cherubims, to note the ſpecial attendance of the Holy Angels in the aſſemblies of the Saints: As evil Angels plot againſt the Church, ſo good Angels project for it. Though in the Scripture we find Angels ſometimes employed in affairs of common Providence, and doing good to them that are not of the Church; as one is ſent to comfort *Hagar*, and relieve *Iſhmael* upon his cry, though he had ſcoffed at *Iſaac* the heir of the covenant, when he was in *Abraham's* Family *; yet for the moſt part they were employed in the concerns of ſome of his ſpecial Servants, Angels thruſt *Lot* out of *Sodom**. An Angel ſtopt the Lyons mouths when *Daniel* was in the Den, *Dan.* 6. 18. *My God hath ſent his Angel, and hath ſhut the Lyons mouths.* God imploies Angels in the preſerving and ruining of Empires, which is clear in the prophecy of *Daniel*, and ſome underſtand *Iſa.* 10. 34. *And Lebanon ſhall fall by a mighty one*, of an Angel. As the Soul ſends forth a multitude of Spirits ſwiftly into the nerves for the ſupply of the loweſt member, which runs thither upon the leaſt motion: So do the Angels which are Gods Miniſters, run at the appointment of God, and are employed in all the wheels of Providence. The Spirit of the living Creatures was in the wheels of Providence *.

By way of approbation.

By way of Authority.

Exod. 25. 1.

Trap. *on Numb.* P. 58.

* *Gen.* 21. 17.

1 *Gen.* 19. 25, 16.

* *Ezek.* 1. 20.

1. *The higheſt orders among them are not exempted from being officers for the Church.* Though they are called Gods Angels in reſpect of their immediate attendance on God; yet they are called mens Angels in reſpect of the ſervice they do for them, *Mat.* 18. 10. *Their Angels do alwaies behold the face of my Father which is in Heaven.* They are not the ordinary ſorts of Angels only which attend upon thoſe little

little ones, upon young Converts humble Souls, thoſe little ones in the Kingdom of Heaven; but they are the higheſt Courtiers there, ſuch as ſee the face of God, and ſtand before him. A King hath many Servants, but not every Servant, only the chief of the Nobility, ſtand before him; ſo they are not Angels of the meaneſt order and rank in Heaven, that are ordered to attend the loweſt Chriſtian. The Apoſtle makes no doubt of this, *Heb.* 1. 14. *are they not all miniſtring Spirits* [there is no queſtion but they are] *ſent forth to miniſter for them who ſhall be heirs of Salvation?* He aſſerts confidently that not one of them is blotted out of the Liſt for this employment. *Are they not all?* none are exempted from the ſervice of God, ſo none are exempted from the end of that ſervice, which is the good of Believers. They are Gods ſervants, but for the Churches good, for them which ſhall be heirs, [*are they not all?*] it is irrational to deny it. And they are ſent forth, every one of them hath his commiſſion ſign'd by God for this purpoſe, and not only for the Church in general, but for every member in particular [*for the heirs of Salvation.*] And not only for them which are already called and enrolled, but for them who ſhall be called, whoſe names are written in the Book of Gods election [*who ſhall be heirs.*] And they are not only faintly ſent, as if they might go if they will, but they have a ſtrict charge to look after them well, not in one or two of their works, or ways, but in all, *Pſal.* 91. 11. *He ſhall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways, to bear thee up in their hands, leſt thou daſh thy foot againſt a ſtone*; they are to uſe all their ſtrength to this purpoſe, *to bear them up in their hands.* As the elder Children are appointed by Parents to have a care of the younger in their works and motions, and to uſe both their wiſdom and ſtrength for them. The Angels are a guard to ſecure them here, and laſt to convey them to their Fathers houſe, *Luk.* 16. 22. when a man is in favour with a Prince, all the Courtiers will be obſervant of him.

2. *Armies of them are employed upon this occaſion.* There are great multitudes of them, as *Bildad* ſpeaks, *Job* 25. 3. *Is there any number of his armies?* that is, of his Angels: when *Joel* ſpeaks of the heathens gathering together? *thither*, ſaith he, *Lord, cauſe thy mighty ones to come down* *. A whole ſquadron of them ſhall attend upon a gracious man according to the circumſtances he is involved in. *Gen.* 32. 1, 2. *And Jacob went on his way, and the Angels of God met him; and when Jacob ſaw them, he ſaid this is Gods hoſt.* Regiments of Angels, enough to make up an Army (for ſo *Jacob* terms them) met him upon the way to ſecure his Brother *Eſau*, and to encourage him in his journey. So ſome interpret, 2 *Sam.* 5. 24. *the ſound of a going in the tops of the mulberry-trees.* The ſign of the marching of a Brigade of Angels, with the Lord, in the head of them, for the diſcomfiture of *David's* Enemies; *then ſhall the Lord go out before thee to ſmite the hoſt of the Philiſtines:* And this they do not of their own heads, but by the pleaſure of God, not only by a bare will, but a delight, *Pſal.* 103. 21. *Bleſs the Lord all ye his hoſts, ye Miniſters of his that do his pleaſure.* רצונו his choiceſt pleaſure, he delights to ſee this his Militia upon action.

* *Joel* 3. 11.

3. *Chriſt hath the government of them to this end for his Church.* Angels are all put in ſubjection to him, *Heb.* 2. 7, 8. *In that he put all in ſubjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him.* He is exalted above all principality and power, God hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the Church, *Eph.* 1. 21, 22. all things, even principalities and powers are put under his feet, to be commiſſioned and influenced by him for the good of his Church *; they are ordered by the Spirit of Chriſt to this purpoſe, *Zach.* 1. 10. *Thoſe are they whom the Lord hath ſent to walk to and fro through the Earth.* They are his faithful meſſengers diſpatcht into the World by him, as ſcouts and ſpies to take notice of the ſtate of the World, and to give him intelligence, and an exact account of affairs, and *v.* 11. they give an account to Chriſt. Chriſt is the Head and General of them, *Col.* 2. 10, They are his Hoſt, alwaies in a warlike poſture, with Chriſt in the Head of them, *Zac.* 1. 8. upon their *Horſes*, which notes readineſs to move and ſpeed in motion: And as an Hoſt they are ſaid to pitch their tents round about them that fear him; and are in a continual conflict with the evil Angels to prevent their deſigns in the behalf of Chriſt, whom they acknowledge as their head by their worſhip of him *. Chriſt orders them to take care to ſeal his Servants in the foreheads, that they may be preſerved in the ſtorms which ſhall happen in the World at the time of the ruine of the *Romiſh* Papacy, *Revel.* 7. 2, 3. An Angel comes that had the ſeal of the living God (commiſſion of God) ſaying, *hurt not the Earth, nor the Sea, nor the Trees, till we have ſealed the Servants of our God in the foreheads.*

* *Ezek.* 1. 12. *Whither the Spirit was to go, they went.*

* *Heb.* 1. 6.

4. *The great actions which have been done in the World, or ſhall be done for the Church, are performed by them.* Angels were ſent as expreſſes by God with his great decrees concerning the revolutions of times *. An Angel was ſent to *Daniel* with the meſſage of a Redeemer, and the cleareſt prophecy of Chriſt, which the *Jews* are not able to anſwer to this day, which they moſt ſtartle at. Part of the diſcovery of the Revelation to *John*, which is as a ſtanding Almanack to the Church, was made us by an Angel *. And when by the courſe of time thoſe turnings are to happen in the World, the Angels muſt have their ſhare of ſervice in them. The Trumpets are ſounded by Angels, and the Vials which are filled with the cauſes of ſuch alterations, are poured out by the hands of Angels, Some indeed by the Angels there mentioned, underſtand the viſible inſtruments of reformation, not excluding the Angels who are inviſible Miniſters in the affairs of the World *.

* *Dan.* 7. 16. *Dan.* 8. 16. *And I heard a mans voice which called and ſaid* Gabriel, *make this man to underſtand the viſion* * *Dan.* 9. 21. *Rev.* 10 8, 9. & 22. 8, 9. * Lightf. *Temple. Chap.* 38. p. 253, 256

5. *They engage in this work for the Church with delight,* They act as Gods Miniſters in his Providence with a unanimous conſent † So that they perform their office with the ſame ſwiftneſs, and with the affection, without emulation, to go one before another, which makes many actions ſucceed ill among men; but they go hand in hand. They do it with affection; both in reſpect of the kind diſpoſition of their natures, and as they are fellow-members of the ſame body, for they are parts of the Church, and of the Heavenly *Jeruſalem*, *Heb.* 12. 22. *Ye are come to the Heavenly Jeruſalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general aſſembly and Church of the firſt born*, and therefore act out of affection to that which is a part of their body, as well as out of obedience to their head. They do it in reſpect of their own improvement too, and increaſe of their knowledge (which is the deſire of all intellectual Creatures.) For they compleat their underſtandings by the ſight of the methods of infinite wiſdom in the perfecting his gracious deſigns. And it is Gods intent that they ſhould grow in the knowledge of his great myſterys by their employment, *Eph.* 3. 10. *To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in Heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wiſdom of God*; *i. e.* By the gracious works of God towards the Church, and in the behalf of it, for the ſecurity and growth of the Church, and in the executions of thoſe decrees

† *Ezek.* 1. 9. *their wings were join'd one to another.*

crees which as inſtruments they are imployed in. For I do not underſtand, how it can be meant of the *knowledge* of *Chriſt*, for that they know more than the Church below can acquaint them with; for without queſtion they have a clear inſight into the offices of Chriſt who is the Head, and whom they are ordered to worſhip. They underſtand the aim of his death, and reſurrection, and can better explain the dark predictions of Scripture, than purblind man can. But by obſerving the Methods which God uſes in the accompliſhment of them, they become more intelligent, and commence Maſters of knowledg in a higher degree, which it is probable is one reaſon of their joy, when they ſee Gods infinite Wiſdom and Grace in the converſion of a ſinner; without affection to them, and their employment about *them*, they could not *rejoyce* ſo much: And their rejoicing in their firſt bringing in to God, argues their joy in all their employments, which concerns their welfare.

Secondly. 2. *As all good things, ſo all bad things are ordered by Providence for the good of the Church.* That which in its own nature is an Injury, by Gods ordering puts on the nature of a Mercy; and what is Poyſon in it ſelf, by the Almighty Art becomes a Soveraign Medicine. Are Gods Diſpenſations in their own nature deſtructive? That wiſe Phyſician knows how to make Poyſons work the effect of Purges: Are they ſharp? It is to humble and purge the Church? As ſhadows ſerve to ſet out the pictures, ſo the darkeſt paſſages of Providence are made by God to commend the beauty of thoſe glorious things he works for his Church. We may ſee this

1. In *Bad perſons.* As,

1. *The Devil.* God manageth him for his own glory, and the ſtrengthning of Believers *. The Devils deſiring to enter into the herd of ſwine, with an intent, probably, not only to deſtroy the ſwine, but to incenſe the *Gadarens* againſt him, out of whom they had been caſt, to do him ſome conſiderable miſchief. But what is the iſſue? As they diſcover their malice, ſo they inhance the value of Chriſts kindneſs to the diſtreſſed man, whom he had freed from this tyranny: Hereby alſo was the Law of God juſtified, in commanding the *Jews* to abſtain from Swines Fleſh, which the *Gardarens*, being Apoſtate *Jews*, had broken; he magnified his own power in the routing ſuch a number of unclean Spirits, which had not been ſo *conſpicuous* in the turning them out of one man, had not this regiment diſcovered themſelves among the Swine, and brought ſuch a loſs upon the *Gadarens*; whereby as they ſhewed their own ſtrength and malice, ſo they diſcovered occaſionally the greatneſs of Chriſts charity, and his power over them; ſo that in granting the malicious petition of this exaſperated Legion, the Law of God is juſtified, our Saviours love glorified, his power manifeſted. And a foundation laid for the gaining Proſelytes in that Country (to which purpoſe he left the man he had cured *.) and to ſtrengthen the faith of thoſe poor Believers, which then followed him. God makes uſe of the Devils by the Soveraignty of Providence, to bring about ends unknown to themſelves for all their wiſdom. The malice of the Devil againſt *Job* hath rendered him a ſtanding miracle of patience for ever. They are *the rulers of the darkneſs of this World* *. Not of the light of the World; they are the rulers of the wicked, and the ſcullions of the Saints, to ſcour and cleanſe them. They are the rulers of the World, but ſubordinate to ſerve the Providence of God? wherein God declares his wiſdom by ſerving himſelf of the worſt of his Enemies. The Devil thought he had brought a total deſtruction upon mankind, when he perſwaded our firſt Parents to eat of the forbidden fruit; but the only wiſe God ordered it to bring about a greater glory to himſelf, and a more firm ſtability to his people, in introducing an everlaſting covenant which could not be broken, and eſtabliſhing their happineſs upon ſurer terms than it was ſetled in Paradiſe. And afterwards in filling the heart of *Judas* to betray Chriſt, and the hearts of the *Jews* to crucifie him. Even by that way whereby he thought to hinder the good of mankind, he occaſionally promotes their perpetual redemption: And I do not much queſtion but thoſe very principles which the Devil had diſtill'd into the *Gentile* World, of ſhedding human blood in Sacrifices, for expiation of guilt, and the Gods converſing with Men in human ways, and the imagination of the interceſſion of *Dæmons* for them; the firſt out of rage againſt mankind, and both that and the other to induce them to Idolatry, might facilitate the entertainment of Chriſt as the *expiatory Sacrifice* and the belief of his interceſſion. God over-reaches the Devil, and makes him *inſtrumental* for *good*, where he deſigns *hurt* and *miſchief*.

2. *Wicked men.* All the wicked in the midſt of the Church are for the good of it, either for the exerciſe of their grace, or ſecurity of their perſons, or intereſt, *Pro.* 16. 7. *When a mans ways pleaſe the Lord, He will make his enemies to be at peace with him.* Sometimes he will incline their hearts intentionally to favour, or order even their actions againſt them to procure their peace, contrary to their intentions. Sometimes God makes them his Sword to cut his People, ſometimes Phyſick to purge them, ſometimes Fire to melt and refine them, ſometimes Hedges to preſerve them, ſometimes a ranſom to redeem them *. A Traveller makes uſe of the mettle of a head-ſtrong Horſe to carry him to his journies end. That wind which would overturn a little Boat, the ſkilful Pilot makes uſe of to drive his Ship into the Harbour, and the Husbandman to cleanſe his Corn from the Chaff. Though the ends of the workers, *viz.* God and wicked men, are different; yet the end of the work is but one, which is ordered by Gods Soveraign pleaſure. It was promiſed in the promiſe of the Goſpel to the Gentiles, *Gen.* 9. 27. *God ſhall inlarge Japhet, and he ſhall dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan ſhall be his ſervant.* God ſhall allure *Japhet*, the Gentiles of *Europe*, to dwell in the tents of *Shem*, and *Canaan* the head of the curſed Poſterity, ſhall be Servants to the Church beſide their will, and ſometimes againſt it, by an overruling hand. And Chriſt hath bought them to be his Servants, 2 *Pet.* 2. 1. *denying the Lord that bought them*, and therefore hath the diſpoſing of them, whether they voluntarily give up themſelves to him or no. He is a Lord by purchaſe over them, who own him not as a Saviour. The hatred of the Churches enemies ſometimes conduceth more to her good, than the affections of all her worldly Friends. Now this appears,

1. *In furthering the Goſpel.* The *Jews*, who ſpeak not of Chriſt among themſelves, but with approbrious terms, have been the exact preſervers of the Old Teſtament, even to the very number of the letters; wherein Chriſtians have ſufficient to confirm them in the belief of Chriſts being the *Meſſiah* and unanſwerable arguments againſt their adverſaries; Whereupon St. *Auſtin* terms them *capſarios Eccleſiæ*, ſuch that carry the Books of the Children of great men after them to School. When the Authority of the *Revelation* was anciently queſtioned, the Church of *Rome* was inſtrumental to keep it in the number of the Canonical books, not thinking they ſhould find their own Church ſo plainly Deciphered in it, to be the Mother of abominations. To this we may refer the action of *Ptolemy Philadelphus* King of *Egypt*, in cauſing the Scripture to be tranſlated

Mat. 8. 31, 32.

Lu. 8. 39.

Eph. 6. 12

Prov. 21. 18.

Helvicus contra Judæos.

about three hundred years before the coming of Chriſt; through which the Nations * might better diſcern (as it were through a proſpective glaſs) the new Star of *Jacob* which was ſhortly to ariſe: No doubt but many of the *Gentiles* by comparing the old Scripture Prophecies. which they now could read in the *Greek* language, might be more eaſily induced to an embracing the Goſpel, and acknowledging Chriſt to be the *Meſſiah*, when it came to be divulged among them. *Herod* is the cauſe of the conſulation about the place of Chriſts birth; not for any good-will he had to him, whom he intended to murther, but God makes uſe of this to clear up the truth of the Prophecy concerning *Bethlehem*, the place of his Birth, *Mat.* 5. 6. *Out of thee ſhall come a Governour that ſhall rule my people Iſrael.* And they certainly were not very good, who preached Chriſt out of envy, and propagated the Goſpel, wherein *Paul* rejoyced not in their ſin, bnt in the providential fruit of it, *Phil.* 1. 15, 18. *Some indeed preach Chriſt even of envy and ſtrife; what then! Notwithſtanding every way, whether in pretence or truth, Chriſt is preached, and I therein do rejoyce, yea, and will rejoyce.*

* *Jakſon Vol.* 1. *p.*62

2. *In furthering the temporal good of the Church*;

1. *In its preſervation.* Wicked men are often ſerviceable to the Church, as the filthy Raven was to holy *Elijah*, or as the Lion which would have devoured *Sampſon*, is a ſtore-houſe to provide him food; for in his hunger he finds a table ſpread in the belly of his Enemy. *Pharoah*'s deſign was to deſtory *Iſrael*, and the Daughter of that irreconciable Enemy, is directed by God to preſerve *Moſes*, who was to be rhe ruine of her family, the deſtruction of the *Egyptian* glory and the Deliverer of the Church. She ſaves him out of charity, and God out of a wiſe deſign; She by his Education in the *Egyptian* learning, fits him for the Court, and God for the deliverance of his Church. *Egypt* had corn to relieve firſt *Abraham* *, afterward *Jacob* in a time of famine; the family wherein the Church of God was only then bound up. *Herod* lies in wait for Chriſts deſtruction, and *Egypt*, the moſt Idolatrous Country in the World, and an ancient Enemy to Gods Church, affords him ſhelter. God makes *Moab to hide his out-caſts, and be their covert from the face of the ſpoiler* *. Some think, Gods deſign in ſending *Jonah* to *Nineveth*, to work ſo remarkable a change by repentance, was to ſoften ſome of their hearts, and the hearts of their poſterity, to deal more tenderly with thoſe gracious *Iſraelites*, who in the captivity of the ten Tribes, ſome years after, ſhould be their gueſts. God making thereby proviſion for his own people in that common judgment which ſhould come upon the Nation. This God doth ſometimes by reviving the law of nature, and the common ſentiments of Religion in the hearts of natural men; whereby their own conſciences bearing witneſs to the innocency and excellency of the Church of God, put them upon thoughts for its ſecurity. Sometimes it is above their own Sphere, and beſides their own intentions. The Whale which ſwallowed *Jonah*, intended him as a morſel to quell his hunger, but proves his ſecurity, and diſgorgeth him upon the ſhoar: They underſtand their own aim, but not the deſign of God. The Leech that ſucks the Patients blood, knows not the Chyrurgeons deſign, who uſeth it for the cure of a diſeaſe Sometimes their rage proves their own ruine, and the Churches ſafety; as the Leech burſts it ſelf ſometimes, and ſaves the Patient. The very Earth, whereby is meant the carnal World, is ſaid to help the *Woman*, the Church, by ſwallowing up the flood which the Dragon caſts out of his mouth againſt her *. Juſt as the old rags were the inſtruments whereby *Jeremiah* was drawn out of the Dungeon.

* *Gen.* 10. 12.

* *Iſa.* 16. 3, 4.

* *Rev.* 12. 16.

2. *In the advancement of the Church, or perſons eminent.* *Abner* had a Plot for bringing *Iſrael* to *David*'s Scepter, which concurred both with Gods purpoſe and promiſes, but ſprung from an ill cauſe, a diſdain to be checked by be *Iſhboſheth*, though his King, for an unjuſtifiable act, for having too much familiarity with one of *Sauls* Concubines *. And from this animoſity he contrives the depoſing of *Iſhboſheth*, and the exaltation of *David*; *v.* 18. *For the Lord hath ſpoken of David, by the hand of my ſervant David I will ſave my people Iſrael out of the hand of the Philiſtines.* He is the firſt Engine that moves in this buſineſs, and by him and his correſpendents after his death, *v.* 17. the buſineſs is brought about by Gods over-ruling hand, wherein Gods promiſe is accompliſhed, *David* a type of Chriſt, and the great Champion for the Church againſt its enemies round about, is advanced. Very remarkable is the advancement of *Mordecai*, in order to the advancing the *Jews* as well as preſerving 'em, when the necks of all the viſible Church God had in the *World* were on the block. *Haman* ignorantly is the cauſe of this preferment of *Mordecai*, and at that time too, when he came to petition for his death, *Eſther* 6. 4. *He was come to ſpeak to the King to hang Mordecai upon the Gallows which he had prepared for him:* The King asks him, what ſhould be done to the man whom the King delights to honour, *v.* 16. He imagaineth that the Kings queſtion did reſpect himſelf, lays out a Schem of what honour he was ambitious of, *v.* 8. 9. which was by the King deſigned for *Mordecai*, and *Haman* made the Herald to proclaim him: Here *Haman*, not only a wicked man in himſelf, but the greateſt Enemy *Mordecai* and the whole Church of God had, is made unwittingly an inſtrument to exalt *Mordecai*, and in him the whole Church of God.

* 2 *Sam.* 3: 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

3. *In enriching the Church, or ſome perſons in it, whereby it may become more ſerviceable to God.* How wonderful was it, that when the *Iſraelites* were abominated by the *Egyptians*, God ſhould ſo order their hearts, that the *Egyptians* ſhould lend them Gold and Jewels *, and diſmiſs them with wealth as well as ſafety; and not ſo much as one perſon moleſt them, till they arrived at the Red Sea? The very gain and honour of the Enemies is ſometimes conſecrated to the Lord of the whole Earth, *Micah* 4. 13. *Ariſe and threſh, oh Daughters of Sion, I will make thy horn Iron, and thou ſhalt beat in pieces many people, and I will conſecrate their gain unto the Lord, and their ſubſtance to the Lord of the whole Earth:* This was when many Nations were gathered againſt *Sion*, *v.* 11. the wealth of the Sinner is laid up for the Juſt, *Pro.* 13. 22. And God ſometimes makes the wicked unwittingly to themſelves, in their carking, be the factors for good men, into whoſe lap Providence pours the fruit of their labour. God gave *Cyrus* the ſpoils of *Babylon*, and the treaſures of *Crœſus*, to enable him to furniſh the *Jews* with materials for building the Temple, *Iſa.* 55. 3, 4. *and I will give thee the treaſure of darkneſs, and hidden riches of ſecret places*, (ſpeaking of *Cyrus*) *that thou mayeſt know, that I the Lord which call thee by thy Name, am the God of Iſrael, for Jacob my Servants ſake, &c.* That he might acknowledge him the God of *Iſrael*, and lay his wealth out in the ſervice of God, and the ſervice of *Jacob* his ſervant.

* *Exod.* 12. 35, 36.

Iſa. 45. 3, 4

2. As bad perſons. *ſo bad things are ordered to the good of the Church*, whether they be *ſinful* evils, or *afflictive.*

1. *Sin.*

1. *A mans own ſin.* *Oneſimus* runs from his Maſter, and finds a ſpiritual Father; his being a Runagate, is the occaſion of his being a Convert. By flying from his Maſter, he becomes a Brother in the Lord *. What *Joſeph*'s brethren ſinfully intended for revenge againſt

* *Phil.* 10. 12, 16.

against their brother, and security from their Fathers checks, (who acquainted *Jacob* with their miscarriages) God ordered for the preservation of them who were the only visible Church in the World. Their sin against their Brother, contrary both to their intentions and expectations, became the means of their safety. God makes the remainders of sin in a good man, an occasion to exercise his grace, discover his strength, and shew his loyalty to God.

2. *Other mens sins.* That might be in *Sarah* but a heady passion, for hearing her Son mocked by *Ishmael*, that made her so desirous to have the bondwoman and her first son thrust out*; but God makes use of it to make a separation between *Isaac* the heir of the Covenant, and *Ishmael*, that he might not be corrupted by any evil example from him: God orders *Abraham* to hearken to her voice, because in *Isaac* his seed should be called*: And the revengeful threatening of *Esau* was the occasion of *Jacob*'s flight, whereby he wat hindred from marrying with any of the people of the Land, by whom he might have been induced to Idolatry*. Why should we mistrust that God that can make use of the Lusts of men to bring about his own gracious purposes?

* *Gen.* 21. 10.
* *ver.* 12.
* *Gen.* 27. 43, 49.

2. *Commotions in the World.* There is the eye of God, that eye which runs to and fro throughout the whole Earth in the Wheels of worldly Motions, even in the most dreadful Providences in the World, that stare upon men with a grim countenance*. All the overturnings in the World are subservient to the Churches interest, though they are not visibly so, unless diligently attended*. God orders the confusions of the World, and is in the midst of the tumults of the people, *Psal.* 29. 10, 11. *The Lord sits upon the floud, yea, the Lord sits King for ever, the Lord will give strength to his people, the Lord will bless his people with peace.* He sits upon the floud as a Charioteer in his Chariot, guiding it with holy and merciful intentions to his people, to give them both strength and peace in the midst of them, and as the issue of them. By Water and Floods is frequently meant tumults and confusions in the World. If it were not so; why should our Saviour encourage his Disciples and all their Successors in the same profession, to lift up their heads when they hear of wars, if their redemption* were not designed by God in them? they are all testimonies of the nearer approaches of Christ in power and glory to judge the Earth, and glorifie his people. Gods great end in the shaking of Nations, is the performing those gracious promises to his Church which yet remain unaccomplisht: These earthquakes in the World, will bring Heaven to the Church. The great revolutions in the Eastern part of the World, the ruine of the *Babilonian* Empire, the erecting the *Persian*, and all the means whereby it was brought about, God ordered, God foretold, God directed for *Jacobs* service. *Cyrus* led by ambition, levies an army against *Babylon*; yet though he was a ravenous Bird, he was to execute the Counsel of God, *Isa.* 46. 11. *calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my Counsel*, to be an instrument for the delivery of the captiv'd *Jews*, and the restorer of the ruin'd Temple. He had called him out by name to make a great revolution of the World. He foretold by his Prophet *Isaiah* many years before, the means he should use in the siege of *Babylon* to attain the victory, the very dividing *Euphrates*, which was the great confidence of the *Babylonian*, *Isa.* 44. 27. *that say to the deep be dry, and I will dry up the rivers*; whereby it was as it were dried up for them to pass over; the very opening of the gates, *Isa.* 45. 1. *and the gates shall not be shut*; the *Babylonians* in a presumptuous security had left them open, thinking it impossible the City could be taken, because of the River *Euphrates*, *I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight*; and what was the end of that great revolution and motion in that part of the World? See *Isa.* 45. 4. *For Jacob my Servants sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name*: This Prophecy was, when *Jerusalem* and the Temple were standing. God casts about long before his People needs, for their welfare in the great revolutions and changes of the World. In *Isa.* 44. 29. *that saith of Cyrus, he is my Shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure, even saying to Jerusalem, thou shalt be built; and to the Temple, thy foundation shall be laid.* *Cyrus* had no knowledge of this end of God, *though thou hast not known me*, *Isa.* 45, 4, 5. twice repeated. *Cyrus* did not know God, neither did he know Gods ends; he acts his own purposes, and is acted by God to higher purposes than he understood, In all the siftings of Nations, and sifting the Church among the Nations, as Corn is sifted in a Sieve, God designs not the destruction of his people, but the cleansing them, the separating the Flower from the Bran.

† *Ezek.* 1. 18. *Their wings were dreadful, and their wings were full of eyes.*
† *Broughton on Revel.* 13. *Sect.* 177.
* *Luk.* 21. 25, 26, 27, 28.

3. *Destroying Judgments, yea, and the very Curses sometimes are turned into Blessings.*

Destroying judgments. The desolation of the *Jews* was not only in order to the fulfilling Gods truth in his threatnings, but useful for the great Gopel design; the fall of the *Jews* was the calling of the *Gentiles*, *Rom.* 11. 11, 12. *Through their fall Salvation is come unto the Gentiles:* And also their fall and dispersion among the *Gentiles*, was prophesied of as the occasion of their return to God, *Ezek.* 20. 36, 37. *like as I pleaded with your Fathers in the Wilderness, so will I plead with you, and cause you to pass under the rod, and bring you into the bond of the covenant*; when they are in the Wilderness of Captivity, then God shall plead with them, and make them to pass under the rod of Propriety, and bring them into Covenant. The like also is prophesied of that Captivity of the Ten Tribes to this day not known where they are, *Hos.* 2. 14. The time of Gods speaking kindly to her, should be in the Wilderness, and then I *will give her the valley of Achor for a door of hope.* No question but God hath performed his promise, and brought many of the posterity of the ten Tribes into the Church among the Mass of the *Gentiles*, among whom they were dispersed.

* *Gen.* 49. 7. *Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce: and their wrath, for it was cruel. I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.*

Curses sometimes, as God orders them, prove Blessings. The curse of inspir'd *Jacob* upon *Levi**, was the advantage both of *Levi* and the *Israelites*; that they were dispersed among the several Tribes without any universal cohabitation as the rest, was a Curse: But that they should be the instructors of the People in the matters of the Law, was an Honour God put upon the head of that Tribe, and a publick Blessing to the People.

4. *Divisions in the Church.* One would think this of all other things should shake the foundation of it; yet God orders even these to the good of the Church. *Paul* and *Barnabas*, two great Apostles, fell out*. The contention comes to be very sharp, a thing naturally of very ill consequence, in two of the prime guides of Christianity, and at the laying the first foundation of it; but the Gospel gains ground: One sails to *Cyprus*, and the other travels into *Syria* Perhaps had not this quarrel been between them, and they thus disjoynted from one another, some of those poor Souls had never, or at least not so soon, have heard of the Gospel-mercy.

† *Act* 15. 36, 37. 38, 39, &c.

5. *Persecutions.* These naturally tend to the dissolution and utter extirpation of it, but God orders them otherwise. God doth often lay the Scene of his amazing Providences in very dismal afflictions: As the Limner first puts on the dusky colours, on

which he intends to draw the portraiture of ſome illuſtrious beauty. The Oppreſſion of *Iſrael* immediately before their Deliverance, was the dusky colour whereupon God drew thoſe gracious lines of their Salvation of *Egypt*, the pattern of all the after Deliverances of the Church in all Ages, and a Type of our Spiritual Redemption by Chriſt. The Humiliation, Perſecution and Death of the Son of God, was the dusky colour upon which God drew that amazing piece of Divine Love and Wiſdome in Mans Salvation, which the eyes of Saints and Angels will be fix'd on with raviſhing admirations to all Eternity. All Afflictions in the World, which God doth exerciſe the Church with, are parts of his Providence, and like mournful Notes in Muſick, which make the melody of the Tune more pleaſant, and ſet off thoſe ſweeter Aires which follow upon them. Afflictions here, cauſe the joys of Heaven to appear more glorious in the eyes of glorified Saints. The Perſecutions of the Martyrs did but heighten their Graces, ſend them to the place of Reſt, and enlarge their Robes of Glory. God many times ſaves his People by ſufferings, and brings them to the ſhore upon the planks of a broken ſhip, and makes that which was the occaſion of their loſs, to be a means of their ſafety: they ſometimes evidence that which they would deſtroy, *Herods* Murdering the Children to deſtroy him that was born King of the *Jews*, made his Birth more Conſpicuous in the World: ſnuffing the Candle makes it burn the clearer.

They ſometimes make,

1. *To the improvement of the Church.* One of the ſoreſt Judgments God brought upon the *Jewiſh*, Church, is expreſly aſſerted by God to be for their good; *Jer.* 24. 5. ſpeaking of the Captiv'd *Jews*, *Whom I have ſent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good.* The *Chaldeans* had overrun their Land, carried them Captives, made them Slaves, deſtroyed the Temple; yet God tells them this was for their good, when there was no preſent appearance of any good in it. It ſhould be good in reſpect of Gods Favour towards them, which retired to turn with the greater force; *ver.* 6. *I will ſet mine eyes upon them for good, I will build them, and not pull them down:* God will give them a more durable ſettlement. In reſpect alſo of that frame of heart they ſhould have toward God; their knowledge of him, and cleaving to him, *ver.* 7. *I will give them a heart to know me, and they ſhall return to me with their whole heart:* God had but a moyety of their hearts before, but then he ſhould have the whole. And indeed it was remarkably for their good; for they who before were addicted to Idolatry, were never guilty of the ſame ſin after: And God kept them from being drawn away to it by the example and ſolicitation of thoſe among whom they were. The Church grows by tears, and withers by ſmiles. Gods Vine thrives the better for pruning. God makes our Perſecutions fit us for that for which we are perſecuted. As *Saul* by his perſecution of *David* for the Title God had given him to the Kingdom, made him fitter to ſucceed him in the Throne, and manage the Government. God uſes perſecutors as lances, which whiles they wound us, let out the purulent and oppreſſive matter; and makes them inſtruments of his Providence to work out his Peoples Happineſs, and thus makes the very wrath of man to be an occaſion of his Peoples Praiſe; *Pſal.* 76. 10. *The wrath of man ſhall praiſe thee.* God doth in this as a Father deals with his Son, ſends him to a ſharp School, that he may be Trained up in Learning.

2. *In the increaſe of the Church.* The *Jews* Crucified our Saviour to diminiſh the multitude of his followers, and by this means the number is increaſed. The whole World runs after him, by that means they uſed to ſtop their Courſe; which Chriſt foretold, that when he was lifted up he ſhould draw all men after him; And that a grain of Corn brings not forth more ſeed, unleſs it be caſt into the ground, and dye.

1. *In the increaſe of it within its own bounds.* When the *Iſraelites* were moſt oppreſt in *Egypt*, the more they multiplied *. When the Dragons fury did moſt ſwell againſt the Woman, ſhe brought forth a Man-child *. When the *Roman* Empire was at the higheſt, and was moſt enflam'd with Anger againſt the Chriſtians: When the Learning of the Philoſophers, the Witchcrafts of Hereticks, the Power of the Emperors, and the Strength of the whole World was ſet againſt them, the Chriſtians grew more flouriſhing and numerous by thoſe very means which were uſed to deſtroy them. Not only a new ſucceſſion of Saints ſprung up from the Martyrs Aſhes, but their Flames were the occaſion of warming ſome ſo much with a Heavenly fire, that ſome Perſecutors have become Preachers. Their very bonds for the Truth have ſometimes ſeminal Vertue in them to beget men to Faith in Chriſt. *Phil.* 1. 12. *The things which have happened unto me, have fallen out rather to the furtherance of the Goſpel.*

* *Exod.* 1. 20.

* *Rev.* 12. 1, 3, 4.

2. *In the increaſe of it in other parts.* *Pauls* Priſon made his Preaching Famous in *Rome*, and was an occaſion of bringing Chriſtianity into *Nero's* Court; that Monſter of Mankind *; one might have looked for Saints in Hell as ſoon; his bonds were as great a confirmation of the Truth of his Doctrine, as his Eloquence. When *Saul* made havock of the Church, and by that ſtorm diſperſed the Chriſtians, they like ſo many grains of Corn ſcattered in ſeveral parts of a greater Field, produced the greater Harveſt. *Acts* 8. 3, 4. *Therefore they that were ſcattered abroad, went every where preaching the Word.* As Clouds ſcattered by the Winds, they Rain'd down the Goſpel in ſeveral Quarters. The *Jews* when ſcattered in their ſeveral flights, did ſcatter among the Heathen the Notions of the true Religion. When they ſhall go down to *Egypt* to ſecure themſelves from *Senacheribs* Invaſion, they ſhall be a means to make many Converts among that Idolatrous Nation, *Iſa.* 19. 18. *In that day* (the day of the *Jews* Trouble) *ſhall five Cities in the land of Egypt ſpeak the Language of Canaan, and ſwear to the Lord of Hoſts*: ſo one expounds it, but I rather think it meant of the times of the Goſpel. The ſight of the *Iſraelites* ſhall be the occaſion of ſome *Egyptians* Converſion. A poor Slave in *Naamans* Family was an occaſion both of the cure of his Body, and of that of his Soul; 2 *Kings* 5. 2, 3, 17. So much for the firſt Reaſon, drawn from an enumeration of things.

* *Phil.* 1. 13. *Phil.* 4. 22.

2. Reaſon; to prove that all Providence is for the good of the Church; is, *Becauſe God hath ſometimes preferred Mercy to the Church, and Care of it above his own concernment of Juſtice.* He values his Mercy to them, above his Juſtice upon his Enemies. He conſults their Safety before he brings Ruine upon the Wicked whoſe Sins are full. He firſt prepared the Ark for *Noah*, and ſees him lodged in it, before he begins to ſhower down deſtruction upon the World. He hath ſometimes puniſhed a Nation more for their Offences againſt his People, than their Sins againſt himſelf. *Amalek* was guilty of many Idolatries and other ſins againſt God; but God chargeth none of them upon them, but their malicious hindring the *Iſraelites* in their March to *Canaan*, 1 *Sam.* 15. 2. *Thus ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, I remember that which Amalek did to Iſrael, how he laid wait for him in the way when he came up from Egypt.* He ſhews his love to them, and how much he values them, that when he is acting Juſtice, and

Secondly.

and pouring out his Wrath, when he is (as it were) cutting and flashing on all sides, and is in fury with wicked Men, he hath nothing but sweetness and tenderness towards his own, *Amos* 9. 9, 10. in the sifting of *Israel* and the Nations, *Not the least grain shall fall upon the Earth. All the sinners of my people shall die by the Sword.* While he thunders out his Fury upon wicked Men, he hath his Eyes upon the least grain of the true *Israel*. What would it be for God, when he is raising the Glory of his Justice upon the People that have provoked him, not to regard the Concernments of this, or that, or many sincere Souls, but put no stop to his Fury? Yet he doth, not a Grain shall perish. He is more desirous to hear of the Preservation and Welfare of a few Righteous, than of the just Punishment of the Wicked, wherein his Justice is gloriously interessed. The Man clothed in Linnen, that was to mark the Mourners, return'd to God, and gave an account that he had done according to his Command *; the other five, which were to kill, returned not to give any account of their severe and sharp proceedings. The Angels that held the four Winds of the Earth, *Rev.* 7. 1. which some understand of Wars and Commotions in the World for the overthrow of the *Romish* power, were ordered not to let the Winds go, till the servants of God were sealed in their Foreheads.

* *Ezek.* 9. 11.

3. Reason; *God takes particular notice of the meanest of his people, and mightily condescends to them, much more of the church.* 'Tis strange to consider that the Scripture mentions none of those great Potentates among the Heathen, but either as they were instruments of his Peoples good, or executioners of his Justice upon them, or subjects of his Peoples Triumph. *Cyrus* and *Darius* are mentioned as their friends; *Nebuchadnezzar*, and *Senacherib*, and others, as Gods instruments in scourging them.* *Chedorlaomer* and the other Kings with him, as they were the subjects of *Abrahams* Valour and Triumph. He takes no notice of the Names of any in his Word, but upon such Accounts: *Cyrus* and *Nebuchadnezzer* had done, no doubt, many actions before, but none taken notice of but those: But he takes notice of the meanest wherein was Grace and the meanest of their concerns and actions *. He mentions in his Word *Jacob*'s Flocks, &c. things of no great moment; the actions, speeches, gestures of his People, to shew how his Providence wrought for them, and how much he is concern'd in the least of their Affairs. But the great Empires of the World, their Original and Progress, and the magnified founders of them, he spake not of, but as they have some relation or other to his People. As we love to use the names of our Friends, so doth God love the relish of the names of his servants. The name of *Noah* is repeated several times, as the *Jews* observe *. The Spirit of God loves the very mention of their names: he delights to dwell upon the Catalogue of their names. The Scripture uses to reckon the Genealogies of wicked Men in short characters. *Cains* Generation is numbred in haste, as if God had no care at all of them *, he puts them with a kind of &c. But he insists much upon the Generation of the Godly. *Seths* Posterity are written in a large scroul, and more legible hand *, with the number of the years which they lived; which in *Cains* Posterity there is no notice taken of. His whole Respect, his Heart, his Eye, his All is fixed upon them. And Christ himself stands more astonished, and wondring at the Faith of the Centurian, the importunity of the *Canaanitish* Woman; condescends to them to grant them what they would have. You never find him taking notice of the Learning of the Rabbies, the Magnificence of *Herod*, or the glorious Building of the Temple. See how condescending God is, to work a Miracle for the support and strengthning of a weak Faith, and the peevish distrust of his People. *Gideons* Faith was weak, yet how compassionate is God towards him *, in ordering his Providence as *Gideon* would have it, without upbraiding him; just as a tender Mother cherishes a weak Child? And this Miracle was in order to the Churches Deliverance from a present oppressive Enemy. Certainly when we find God taking care and ordering even the very Pins, Snuffers and Basins of the Temple, the place of his Worship, as well as the more stately Ornaments of it; we may say, doth his Care extend to the meanest Utensils in his Temple, and not much more to the Worshippers in it? Doth he give order for the Candlesticks, and will not have much more care of the lights in them? His care to the least, implies his care of the greatest too. In a building, the little stones must be well laid, as well as the greatest. Every Believer is a stone in the Spiritual building.

* *Revet in Gen. exercit.* 129.

* *Gen.* 7. *Gen.* 8.

* *Gen.* 7. 17. 18.

* *Gen.* 5. 6, 7, 8, 9, &c

* *Judg.* 6. 36, &c. *He would have one time the Fleece dry, another time wet, God condescends to them in all*

4. Reason, *God reveals often to his people what he will do in the World, as if he seemed to ask their advice*, and therefore surely all his Providences shall work for their good. God would not surely acquaint them, and advise with them what he should do, did he intend to do any thing to their hurt. There is not any thing in the heart of Christ wherein the Church is concerned, but he doth reveal it to them, *John.* 15. 5. *I have called you friends; for all things I have heard of my Father, I have made known to you*; he discovered all to them, the ends of his coming, his Fathers love, his death and resurrection, what he would do after his ascension, the progress of his affairs, and the glory of Heaven, and the end of all. *John* must be the Pen-man of the Revelation, which concerned the future state of the Church in all ages. *Joseph* must know the interpretation of dreams in order to the Churches preservation. *Moses* must be acquainted with Gods methods in the *Israelites* deliverance, with the *Egyptians* ruine. *Daniel* must know the future state of the *Eastern* parts of the World; he must know the turnings of the times, and the end of the World. 'Tis to *Noah*, and none else, that he immediately discovers his intended destruction of the World. And all those revelations ended in his peoples advantage; nay, he doth not only reveal, but, as it were, consult with him in his affairs. God doth as it were unbosom himself to *Abraham*, as one friend to another, as it were, advised with him concerning his intention on *Sodom*, *Gen.* 18. 17. *And the Lord said, shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do? i. e.* I will by no means do it, it will not consist with my Love and Friendship to him, to hide any thing from him. And see the reason of it, v. 18. *Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty Nation, and all the Nations of the Earth shall be blessed in him.* It was first his great affection to him, because he had advanced him, and promised that a mighty Nation should spring out of his Loyns. And he had not withheld from him the secret of giving the *Messias*, which was a universal blessing, and so many ages were to run out, before it was to be accomplisht; he had discovered to him his acts of mercy, and therefore would not hide from him his acts of justice; he would know his mind in it, what he thought of it. And you know the story, how God regulated himself by *Abraham*'s Prayer, and denyed him nothing; till *Abraham* left off suing any more. It would make one conjecture, that if *Abraham* had proceeded farther, he had quite diverted the judgment from *Sodom*. And when the *Israelites* had provoked God by a Golden Calf, he would not do any thing against them, till he had consulted *Moses*,

Dan. 10. 11. 19. 20.

and

and therefore lays the whole caſe before him, and ſeeks to take him off from pleading with the Lord, and promiſing to make of him a great Nation †, and in ſuch Terms that one would wonder at. *Now therefore let me alone*; As if God did fear *Moſes*'s Interpoſition would prevent him, and diſſwade him from it. Do not you ſtand in the way, my Wrath will cool if you interpoſe your ſelf; as much as to ſay, God could not do it, unleſs *Moſes* gave his conſent: *Moſes* would not be quiet, but pleads the Providences of God which had been all for him, the Promiſe of God made to *Abraham* concerning them. And he would not leave, till God repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his People, *v.* 14. If Angels, as *Calvin* ſaith, are God's Counſellors in Heaven, Believers are (as it were) his Counſellors on Earth.

* *Exod.* 32. 9. 10. *and the Lord ſaid to Moſes, I have ſeen this people, and behold it is a ſtiffnecked people, now therefore let me alone that my wrath may wax hot againſt them.*

5. *God hath given the choiceſt things he hath to his People*; He hath given his Law. The Church is the Sphere wherein the Light of the Goſpel is fixed, and wherein it ſhines, from whence its Beams do dart out to others, *Iſa.* 2. 3. *Out of Sion ſhall go forth the Law.* The Oracles of God, the great things of the Law, as it is phraſed, *Hoſ.* 8. 12. his Covenant, and the Counſel of his Will, are intruſted with the Church. Now this being a Mercy which exceeds all other things in the World, is therefore comprehenſive of all other as the greater comprehends the leſſer. And the *Pſalmiſt* conſiders it as the Top-Stone of all Bleſſings; for after ſumming up the Providences of God, he ſhews how God had diſtinguiſhed *Jacob* by more eminent Marks of his Favour, *Pſalm* 147. 19, 20. *He ſhews his Word to Jacob, his Statutes and his Judgments unto Iſrael, he hath not dealt ſo with any Nation*; he hath not left ſo rich a Legacy to any, or given any ſo much of his Heart. Others are ordered by the Word of his Power, (for that is meant by Word in the foregoing Verſe); but *Jacob* hath the Word of his Grace too. And this being the choiceſt piece of Affection which God hath ſhewed to the Church, implies the making all leſſer Providences ſubſervient to it. The Church, wherein God hath laid up his Goſpel, and thoſe Souls which are as the Ark, wherein God hath depoſited his Law, ſhall be ſhadowed with the Wings of his merciful Providence, in a perpetual Succeſſion of all true Bleſſings. All the Providences of God are to preſerve his Law in the World; his ſevereſt Judgments are to quicken up the Law of Nature in Men that know no other, and the Law of his Goſpel in Men that ſit under it. And he hath given Chriſt to his Church, and thereby hath given an Earneſt, that ſtill their good ſhall be promoted: 'Tis not to be thought, that God will ſpare any thing elſe, when he hath given them his Son.

Secondly. The Second thing. *It muſt needs be that all Providences is for the good of the Church.*

Firſt. 1. *All the Providence of God is for the glorifying his grace in Chriſt.* The whole Oeconomy or diſpenſation of the fulneſs of time, to the latter ages of the World, is for the gathering all things together in him, *Eph.* 1. 10. *that in the diſpenſation of the fulneſs of time he might gather together in one all things in Chriſt, both which are in Heaven, and which are on Earth, even in him.* In him as their head. This was the deſign in all his diſpenſations, both before his coming, and ſince, ever ſince the promiſe made to *Adam*, though it be more manifeſt in the latter Age. This the Apoſtle repreſents as the main purpoſe of God, *v.* 9. This was the myſtery of his will, which according to his good pleaſure he had purpoſed in himſelf, that is, purpoſed in himſelf as a thing he was mightily pleaſed with; and *ver.* 11. ſaith he, he works all things after, or κατὰ *according to the counſel of his own will*, or of that purpoſe which he had purpoſed in himſelf, to gather all things in one, in Chriſt. All the things that God acts, are referred to this as their end, and ordered by this Counſel as their rule. As it was the deſign of Gods Providence to make way for Chriſts entrance into the World, and all the Prophecies in the Old Teſtament tended to the diſcovery of it; ſo ſince the coming of Chriſt, the end of all is to advance him in reſpect of his head-ſhip, *Eph.* 1. 22, 23. *and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulneſs of him that fills all in all.* God would advance Chriſt to the higheſt pitch, *v.* 21. far above all principality and power, both in this World, and in the World to come; and there is ſtill a fulneſs wanting to Chriſt to compleat him, not any perſonal fulneſs, but a fulneſs belonging to him as Head, which is the advancement God deſigns him. He is already advanced above all principality and power. He is already given as a Head to the Church; but the compleatneſs of it is not till all his Members be perfected, to which all his Providences in the World doth ultimately tend: Therefore if the deſign of God be to honour Chriſt, and if the ſpiritual happineſs of the Church be part of that Glory and Fulneſs of Chriſt, it muſt needs be carried on by God, elſe he will want part of his compleatneſs as a Head: But this ſhall not be wanting, ſince, as all things are ſquared according to that Counſel of glorifying Chriſt as Head, ſo all things are acted for Believers by that power whereby he raiſed Chriſt from the grave to be their Head, which power is the Copy according to which all acts which reſpect the Church, are framed, *v.* 19. *and what is the exceeding greatneſs of his power to us ward, who believe according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Chriſt when he raiſed him up from the dead.* God intended the good of the Church, in this very act of glorifying Chriſt, for he is made the head *over all things to the Church.* As if God then had preſcribed him that order, that the glory he gave him ſhould be alſo managed for the Churches intereſt: Chriſt is Lord of the reſt of the World, but Head of the Church: All things are under his feet, but are not his members; He is Head over all things to the Church, and therefore to every member of the Church, the leaſt as well as the greateſt; and to the whole Church, even that part of it which is on Earth, as well as that part which is in Heaven, who are compleated. The Church is the fulneſs of Chriſt; he would be Bodyleſs without it: therefore ſince Chriſt will be a Head without a Body, if the Church be not preſerved; in order to the Preſervation of it, all things muſt neceſſarily concur by the wiſe diſpoſal of Affairs. Therefore ſince they are travelling to be where their Head is, he having the Government of the World, will make all things contribute Aſſiſtance to him in their Journey; that Chriſt may have that compleatneſs of Glory, which God intends him, he expreſly tells his Father, *John* 17. 10, *That he is glorifyed in his People* *. And at the ſound of the ſeventh Trumpet, *The Kingdoms of this World are to become the Kingdoms of the Lord and of his Chriſt, and he ſhall Reign for ever and ever* *. Now ſince all the Motions in the World, are, that the Kingdoms of the World may become the Kingdoms of his Chriſt, peculiarly his, as being Anointed King by him: It muſt needs be, that all things muſt be ſubſervient one Time or other to the end, wherein the good of his People doth conſiſt; otherwiſe they would not bleſs God ſo highly for it as they do *. *We give thee Thanks, O Lord God Almighty, becauſe thou haſt taken to thee thy*

* *John* 17. 10. *And I am glorifyed in them.*

* *Revel.* 11. 15.

* *Revel.* 11. 17.

thy great Power, and haſt Reigned. And where there is a reſiſtance of this glory of Chriſt, it is a natural effect of that decree whereby Chriſt is conſtituted King, that the reſiſters ſhould be broken in pieces, and daſht like a Potters Veſſel, *Pſal.* 2. 6, 9. And the Iſſue of all is the Bleſſedneſs of thoſe that put their truſt in him, *v.* 12. The care that God hath of Chriſt and the Church in the types of them, ſeems to be equal. The Ark, which was a type of Chriſt, and the Table of Shew-bread a Figure of the Church, had three Coverings; whereas all the reſt of the Veſſels, *&c.* belonging to the Ceremonial Part, had but two *, On the Ark there was the Vail and Covering of Badgers-skins, and a covering of Blew: On the Table of Shew-bread there was a cloath of Scarlet, and a covering of Badgers-skins. God orders as much for the Security of the Church, as for the Security of Chriſt; therefore the ſame things that tend to the glorifying of Chriſt, ſhall tend to the Advantage of the Church.

*Num. 4, 5 6, 7, 8.

2. *God hath given the Power of the Providential Adminiſtration of things to Chriſt to this very end, for the good of the Church.* If God hath conſtituted him Head over all things to the Church, can there be any doubt but that he will manage the Government for that which is the Principal End of his Government, which he hath ſhed his Blood for, and which is chiefly intended by God who appointed him?

1. *All Power of Government is given to Chriſt*, Math 11. 27. *All things are delivered to me of my Father. And the Father Judges no man, but hath committed all Judgment to the Son*, Joh. 5. 22. that is, the whole Government and Adminiſtration of Affairs. 'Tis not to be underſtood of the laſt Judgment, for then it would be a limitation of that Word *all*; not that the Father lays aſide all care of things, but as the Father diſcovers himſelf only in him, ſo he governs things only by him. All this Power was commited him upon his Interpoſition after the Fall of Man. He was made Lord and Chriſt, that is, anointed by God to the Government of the World. For upon the Fall, God as a Rector, had overturned all. Man could not with any Comfort have treated with the Father, had not Chriſt ſtept in and pleaded for the Creation, where-upon God commits all Judgment to the Son, that he might temper it. It was by Chriſt as a covenanting Mediator, that the Earth was eſtabliſhed *. He had this Government Anciently, and it was confirmed to him upon his death; *Heb.* 1. 3. *Who being the brightneſs of his Glory, and the expreſs Image of his Perſon, and upholding all things by the Word of his Power. Calvin* underſtands the firſt word not only of the Deity of Chriſt, but of the diſcovery the Father made of himſelf in and through him as Mediator. The latter words ſome underſtand both of his Providential and Mediatory Kingdom: *By the Word of his Power*; this, ſay ſome, is referred to the Father, whoſe Image Chriſt is, as acting by a delegated Authority and Commiſſion from his Father: others, to Chriſt; as, that Chriſt upholds or bears up all things by his own powerful Word. *Calvin* thinks both may be taken, but embraceth the ſecond as being more generally received.

Iſa. 49. 8.

I may Offer, whether it may not be meant alſo, of the powerful Interpoſition of Chriſt as Mediator; whoſe intereſt in God was ſo great, that he kept up the World by his powerful Interceſſion, when all was forfeited; and God put it, upon that Interpoſition, into his Hands, as *Heir of all things*; (who having a Hand with him in Creation, underſtood both the Rights of God, and the Duty of the Creature) upon the Condition of *purging Sin* by his Death, which he did, and thereupon went to Heaven to take Poſſeſſion of the Government, at the Right Hand of the Majeſty on High, as due to him by Covenant and Articles agreed on between them. I know nothing at preſent againſt ſuch an Interpretation of the Words; but I will not contend about it. All this Honour was confirm'd unto him upon his Death. For having perform'd the Condition requiſite on his part, God Deputes him and Intruſts him with the Government of things, that he might order all things ſo, as to ſee the full Travel of his Soul.

2. *All this Power was intended by God for this End, the good of the Church.* As God appointed Chriſt a Prieſt for his Church to Sacrifice for them, a Prophet to teach them; ſo the other Office of King is conferred upon him for the ſame End, the advantage of the Church. God acquaints us of this End, aimed at by him, in the Promiſe of the Government to him, *Jer.* 33. 15, 19. *In thoſe dayes, and at that time, will I cauſe the branch of Righteouſneſs to grow up to David, and he ſhall execute Judgment and Righteouſneſs in the Land*; what is the end? *In thoſe Days ſhall Judah be ſaved, and Jeruſalem ſhall dwell ſafely.* He ſhould execute Judgment, that is, Adminiſter the Government for the Salvation of *Judah*, and ſecurity of *Jeruſalem*. It was his Office both to build the Temple, and to bear the Glory, and to Rule upon his Throne; to be a Prieſt upon his Throne, to Rule as King and Prieſt, *Zach.* 6. 12, 13. *He ſhall build the temple of the Lord, even he ſhall build the Temple of the Lord.* The erecting a Church is the ſole Work of Chriſt by Gods aopointment. And he was to bear up the Glory of it. He ſhould rule to this End, *for the Counſel of Peace ſhall be between them both.* If by [*both*] be meant, the Lord, and the Man whoſe name is the Branch; it then Chiefly Aims at our Reconciliation, as wrought by Covenant between them. If by [*both*] be meant the two Offices of King and Prieſt, and that the counſel of Peace be between them; it will extend to all the Bleſſings of the Church, to the good and glory of the Church, which is the fruit of his Kingly, as well as the firſt Reconciliation was the fruit of his Prieſtly Office. By Peace, in Scripture, is meant the confluence of all Bleſſings; ſo that the intent of God in beſtowing thoſe Offices upon Chriſt, and ſo great a Rule, was for the good and advantage of that Church or Temple, which he appointed him only to build. And in *Iſaiah* 11. 9. where the Prophecy of the Government of Chriſt is, the End is expreſt to be, that none ſhould *hurt or deſtroy in all his holy mountain.* And certainly, ſince God ſet him at his right hand, and confirm'd this Power unto him, after he had *purged our ſins*; it was certainly out of the high value God had for him, and therefore muſt be the intent of God, that he ſhould govern all things in reference to the deſign of that Death, and for the good of thoſe whoſe ſins he had by himſelf purged. For the poſſeſſing this Government, was the very End why Chriſt Died and Roſe again; *Rom.* 14. 9. *For to this End Chriſt both Died, and Roſe, and Revived, that he might be Lord both of Dead and Living.* If this were Chriſts End in Dying and Riſing, it was his Fathers End too, who appointed him to Death, and Raiſed him by his mighty Power. And ſince he was *delivered for our Offences, and roſe again for our Juſtification, Rom.* 4. 25. The Government he is inveſted with, being Lord of the Dead and of Living, muſt be for the ſakes of thoſe for whom he was delivered, and for whom he roſe. His Regal Power, which was one End of his Death, cannot Croſs the other main End, the conſtituting a Church, and carrying on the good of them that believe. The Government, being in the hands not of God as Creator, but in and through the hands of a Mediator, and that Mediator which both Died and Roſe

again

again peculiarly for them; therefore it cannot in the leaſt be for their hurt, but advantage. The whole management of Chriſts Kingly Office in Relation to the Church, is preſcrib'd unto Chriſt by God. God reveals to him what ſhall be done in the World, what acts he ſhall perform for the Church, and gives him a Hiſtory of all that was to be done upon the ſtage, together with an order to communicate it unto his Servants, *Rev.* 1.1. *The Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt, which God gave unto him, to ſhew unto his Servants* [to be communicated to the whole Church] *things that muſt ſhortly come to paſs.* Whether this Revelation was made to the humane Nature of Chriſt at his Incarnation, as *Tirinus* thinks, or rather upon his Aſcenſion, is not material; The whole Scheme of what was to be done in the world is revealed *here* by God to *Chriſt:* And you find all the Motions in the World relating to the Church, and the End of all is the good of the Heavenly *Jeruſalem.*

3. *All Power thus given, and intended for this End, is adminiſtred by Chriſt for this End.* Chriſt as the Head of the Church, doth like a natural Head; It never ſees, nor hears, nor exerciſeth any act of ſence only for it ſelf, but for the good of the whole Body: The Eye watches for the Body, the Tongue ſpeaks for it, the Underſtanding contrives for it; every part of the Head is active for the whole Body. Now Chriſt as Head is more bound to act for the Church Militant, than for the Church Triumphant; becauſe the greateſt part of his work for the Church Triumphant, *viz.* the bringing them to Heaven, is already performed. And they are above the reach of all things in the World, and all the actions and motions in the World cannot touch or diſorder them. But the command of God concerning the other part behind, is not yet performed; and even they are the members of Chriſt, as well as thoſe in Heaven. The Apoſtle † ſeems to refer both Chriſts Creation, and the Preſervation of things, to this Title of Headſhip. *All things were created by him; and for him, and by him all things conſiſt, and he is the head of the body the Church,* and therefore the conſervation and government of all things ſhall be ſubſervient to the Church, which is the body of this governing Head. The chief Seat of Chriſts Soveraignty is the Church, *Pſal.* 2. 6. *Yet have I ſet my King upon my Holy-hill of Sion:* And he ſtands upon *Mount Sion, Rev.* 14. 1. The Church is the proper Seat and Metropolis of his Empire, the Royal Chamber of this Great King. All the conqueſts of Princes redound to the advantage of that place, where they fix their Reſidence. He is King of the World, but for the ſake of *Sion.* Chriſt did manage this Charge anciently for his People; when *Joſhuah* had paſſed over *Jordan*, and firſt entred upon the conqueſt of *Canaan*, he ſees a man over againſt him with a ſword drawn in his hand; *Joſ.* 5.13,14. *And Joſhua ſaid unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adverſaries? And he ſaid, Nay, but as Captain of the hoſts of the Lord am I now come.* This was Chriſt, that came armed for his People, according to his charge, as their Captain and General. It was not an Angel, becauſe *Joſhua* worſhipped him, *ver.* 14. An Angel did not uſe to receive any Worſhip from Men; and he accepts the Worſhip, and commands him to looſe his ſhoe from his foot, for the place whereon he ſtood was holy; *ver.* 15. And the ſame Perſon, *Joſh.* 6. 2. is called *Jehovah*; and there he gives him orders how he ſhould manage his War. Chriſt came here to direct his People in their concerns; He employs his Wiſdom for his Church, as well as his other excellencies. He is called a Counſellor *; 'tis one of the great Letters in his Name: and this, as the reſt there mentioned, hath a relation to the Church. *For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given.* And the firſt uſe he makes of his Power, after the confirmation of it to us, upon his Reſurrection, is for the Church; *Matth.* 28. 18. *All Power is given unto me in heaven and in earth*; all Authoritative Power over Angels and the Affairs of the World; *Go you therefore and teach all Nations, baptizing them,* &c. *and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the World.* He commands the Apoſtles to gather a Church among all Nations; and doth, by Vertue of this Authority committed to him, promiſe his Preſence with them, in all ſuch ſervice they ſhould do to this End, even to the end of the World. He promiſes his Spirit and his Providential Preſence; as his power ſhould endure to the end of the World, ſo the exerciſe of it for this End ſhould run Parallel with the continuance of it; There ſhould be no alteration or change in this great end of his, as long as the World laſts. How can Chriſt be with them, and that to the end of the World, if all the parts of his Providential Government were not ordered to ſerve this end, the good of the Church? for the Church is *the fulneſs of him that fills all in all, Eph.* 1. 23. That fills all in all places, all in all actions and motions; for the good of his Church, which is his body.

† *Col.* 1. 16,17,18.

* *Iſa.* 9. 6.

3. *God in the Church diſcovers the glory of his attributes.* Thirdly. 'Tis in a mans houſe, where his riches and ſtate is ſeen, 'Tis in the Church God makes himſelf known in his excellency more than in all the World beſides. *Pſal.* 76. 1. *In Judah is God known, his name is great in Iſrael, in Salem alſo is his Tabernacle, and his dwelling-place in Sion.* 'Tis in his Church he doth manifeſt his power: 'Tis called therefore *a glorious high Throne,* Jer. 17. 12. *a glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of our Sanctuary.* Kings uſe to diſplay all their Glory and Majeſty upon their Thrones; in this ſenſe Heaven is called Gods Throne, *Iſa.* 60. 1. becauſe the proſpect of the Heavens affords us diſcoveries of the wiſdom and power of God, more than in any other viſible thing, both in their eſſence, magnitude and motion: So is there a greater diſcovery of Gods attributes in the Church (which is alſo ſtiled Heaven in Scripture) than in the whole World beſides: There it is that the Angels look to learn more of the Wiſdom of God than they underſtood before *. 'Tis there the day of his power dawns *Pſal.* 110. 3. 'Tis there his Saints ſee his power and glory, *Pſal.* 63 2. the Sanctuary is called the firmament of his power, *Pſal.* 150. 1. The glory of Gods Attributes is centered in Chriſt in a higher manner than in the Creation; and in that work did excel themſelves in what they had done in the framing of the World; and the Church being the glory of Chriſt, all thoſe attributes which are glorifyed in Chriſt, do in and through him ſhine forth more clearly upon the Church, than upon any other part of the World. He ſtyles himſelf their Creator, as much as the Creator of the whole frame of Heaven and Earth, *Iſa.* 43. 15. *I am the Lord, your holy one, the Creator of Iſrael, your King.* As though all the attributes of God, his power in creation, his holineſs in redemption, were deſigned for none elſe but them. And indeed by vertue of the covenant they are to be ſo; for if God be their God, then all of God is theirs. What wiſdom, power, ſufficiency, grace, and kindneſs he hath, is principally for them. If God be their God, it is in their concerns he will glorify himſelf as a God, in the manifeſtation of his perfections. This cannot be without the ordering all Providences for their advantage.

* *Eph.* 3. 10.

4. *There is a peculiar relation of God and Chriſt to the Church*; upon which account this Doctrine muſt needs be true. God is ſet out in all relations to manifeſt his great care of his people. He is a Father to provide for them *. A Mother to ſuckle them 5. Fourthly.

* *Iſa.* 68.

Isa. 49.15. * *Eph.* 5. 29. * *John* 20. 17. them. Christ is a Husband to love and protect them *. A Brother to counsel them *. And when all these Relations meet in one and the same person, the result of it must be very strong. Any one Relation where there is affection, is a great security; but here all the Relations are twisted together with the highest affections of them in God to the Church. A Father will order all for the good of his Child; a Mother for her Infant; a Husband for his Wife? and one kind Brother for another; So doth God for his People; and whatsoever those Relations bind Men to on Earth, in respect of Care, Love and Faithfulness, that is God to his Church. The Church hath the Relation to God, which none in the World have besides. They are his Jewels, therefore he will keep them; they are his Children, † *Mal.* 3. 17. therefore he will spare them †. They shall have protection from him as they are his Jewels, and Compassion from him as they are his Sons. The Church is Christs Flesh, as dear to him as our Flesh is to us; as much his, as our Flesh is ours. *Eph.* 5. 29. *No man hates his own Flesh, but nourisheth it, as Christ doth his Church.* No man can have a higher value for his own Flesh, than Christ hath for his Church. The Church, as *Tertullian* speaks, * *Christ unfolded.* is nothing else but *Christus explicatus* *. and as considered in Union with Christ, is called *Christ*; 1 *Cor.* 12.12. 'Tis the Apple of his eye, *Zac.*2.8. A tender and beloved part. The Church is Christs Spouse; the contract is made, the Espousals shall be at the last Day. The Members are pick'd out one by one to be presented to the Lamb at last, as a Glorious Bride for him, *Rev.* 21. 2.

And all Gods dealings with them in the World, are but preparations of them for that State. Upon the making of the Match, God promises a communion of Goods; *Hos.* 2. 20. *I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness*, which is a fruit of Marriage; the Wife being invested in her Husbands Estate. When God hath given the blood of his Son for the Church, he will not deny her the service of the creatures, but Joynture her in that as one part of her Dowry. *In that day will I hear the Heavens*, &c. *ver.* 21. In what day? in the day of betrothing, in the day of the Evangelical Administration: when the contract shall be made between Me and my Church, Heavens, Earth, Corn, Wine and Oil; the voice and motions of all creatures are for *Jezreel*, which signifies the *seed of God.* This great Prince he hath a care of all his subjects, so more peculiarly of his Spouse and Princess, which is his seed too; and all creatures shall be her Servants. This Fatherly Relation and affection is strong and pure, not as the love which acts an ambitious man to Ambition, or a covetous man to Wealth; which respects nothing but the grasping and possessing the Objects they dote upon; and have nothing of love for the Objects themselves; therefore deserves not the name of Love. But it is the love of a Father, whose love is pure towards his children, He seeks their good as his own.

Consider these two things

1. *God hath a peculiar love to this very Relation*, and often mentions it with delight, as if he loved to hear the sound of it in his own Lips: *Cant.* 8. 12. *My vineyard which is mine, is before me. Me, my, mine.* The Church is always under his Eye, seated in his affection; and God is pleased with his propriety in them. God never calls the World, *my* World, though he created it; sometimes he saith the Earth is mine, but it is either to check the presumptions of Men, who ascribe that to themselves which is due to the first Cause; or to encourage his People in the expectation of Deliverance, because all things in the Earth are at his beck: Or to shew his own sufficiency, without the services of his people; as when he saith, the Earth is mine and the fulness thereof; but it is never mentioned in such a way, as to discover any pleasure he hath in the Relation between him and it, simply considered; but *my* Vineyard, *my* People, *my* Children, *my* Jewels, *my* Sactuary, very often. So much doth God esteem his Propriety in them.

2. *This Relation is prevalent with God in the highest Emergencies and Distresses of his People.* The very consideration that they are his People kindles his affection, and enlivens his Strength for them. *Isa.* 63. 8. *And he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lye; so he was their saviour.* God is brought in, as one that had heard the cries of his Church, and had not been moved; but when he recollects himself, and considers that they were his People, and that he was in a special manner related to them, he became their Saviour; He could no longer bear it, but stirs up himself to relieve them. Nay, it hath so strong an influence upon him, that if this Note be often sounded in his Ears, it doth as it were change his Voice; and when he seems to have a mind to cast them off, he cannot. When *Israel* had offended by erecting and worshipping a golden Calf, he calls them no more *his* People, but *Moses* People; *Exod.* 32. 7. *And the Lord said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves.* As though God had not been concerned in this Miraculous Conduct out of *Egypt*; And *ver.* 9. *this people*; as if he had no interest in them, but particularizes them with Disdain. God had here discarded them, and turn'd them over upon *Moses*'s hands, as if he would have no longer any thing to do with them; but *Moses* in Prayer turns them upon God again, and would not own them as his, but pleads that they were God's proper Goods; *ver.* 11. *Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt?* And *ver.* 12, again, thy People; and God at last resumes his former Notes, *ver.* 14. *And the Lord repented him of the evil he thought to do unto his people.* Now they are Gods People again; the repetition of this Relation, is a powerful Rhetorique to perswade him to own them again, which he had Cashiered and turned off.

5. *The whole interest of God in the World lies in his Church and people.* He sees little of himlelf in any part of the corrupted World, but only in them. 'Tis in the Church he hath put his Name; 'Tis there he sees his Image, and therefore places his love there: and shall all this signifie nothing? Shall the Governour of the World let things go contrary to his own interest? They are like to him in that which is one of his greatest perfections, *viz.* his Holiness? which gives him a greater interest in them. 'Tis his Interest that is opposed, by an opposition to the Church. All the hatred any bear, it grows from the inward root of enmity against God himself; *Psal.* 44. 22. Yea, for thy sake are we killed all the day long. God surely will concern himself in the Churches interest, since it is his own. His Interest lies, *Fifthly.*

1. *In the Persons of his People.* 'Tis his Inheri- * *Isa.* 19. tance *. It is his Portion *. *Deut.* 32. 9. *The Lords last portion is his People, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.* * *Deut.* 32. 9. Every part of an inheritance, and a portion, doth as particularly belong to the owner, as the whole. Every part of the ground which belongs to the Inheritance, is the Heirs, as well as the whole Field. He will not suffer the World which is but the work of his hands, to lay waste his Church, which is his proper Inheritance. 'Tis his Treasure, and where a

mans Treaſure, there is his Heart; and where Gods Treaſure is, there is Gods Heart.

2. *In the ſervices and actions of the Church.* If the Church ſhould be deſtroyed, whom hath God to love and imitate him, and to ſhew forth his Glory? If the Candleſtick is broken, that is fit to hold out the light to the World? He hath none in the World beſides, that do intentionally mind his Honour, that take pleaſure in glorifying his Name, and writing after his Copy, and obſerving his Works. And will it ſtand with his intereſt to govern things contrary to theirs, which is really his own?

When God had made the World, and pronounced it good, what would it have ſignified, if he had not brought in man as his Rent-gatherer, and the Collector of his Tribute, to turn it to him? And what would Man ſignifie? ſince the corrupted World embezzles that which is Gods Right, and turns it to its own uſe; if God had not ſome honeſt Stewards, who faithfully act for him, and give him the Glory of his Works? And God will ſpare them as a man ſpares his own Son that ſerves him. God hath no voluntary ſervice in the World but from them; therefore he is more intereſſed in their good, than in the good of the whole World beſides. The ſervices of the Church, are all the delight God hath in the World; *Hoſ.* 9. 10. *I found Iſrael like Grapes in the Wilderneſs, I ſaw your Fathers as the firſt ripe in the fig-tree at her firſt time.* They are as the refreſhing Wine and Grapes, as the delicious fruit of the firſt ripe Figs; wherewith a weary Traveller recruits his Spirits after a long and tyring journey. And God hath a greater delight in the fruit he receives from the Church, than in it ſimply as it is his inheritance; for no inheritance is valued but for the fruit and revenue it yields; and therefore God orders all his *blackeſt Providences in the world*, like dark clouds, to be the watering-pots of this his Garden; that the Fruit and Flowers of it may be brought to maturity, which yield him ſo much pleaſure and honor. God only is acknowledg'd by them and in them, as the *Jews* were bound to acknowledge God the Author of their mercies, by preſenting the firſt fruits of their increaſe to God. And Believers are called ſo, *Rev.* 4. 4. *Theſe were redeemed from among men, being the firſt fruits to God and the Lamb.* 'Tis by and in them that God hath the acknowledgment of all his mercies and bleſſings to the World.

6. *It cannot be but all the Providences of God ſhall work to the good of his Church, if we conſider the affections of God.*

1. *His love.* What hath God in the World as an object to beſtow his affections upon, and communicate the rays of his love unto, ſince he created it, but his Church? The men of the World hate him: He can ſee nothing amiable in them; for what was firſt lovely, they have defaced and blotted out; but the Church hath Gods comlineſs put upon her, *Ezek.* 16. 14. *It was perfect through my comlineſs which I had put upon thee, ſaith the Lord God*; and he did not lay thoſe glorious colours upon her, to manage his government, or any part of it againſt her, to deface her. Beſides their lovelineſs which is conferred upon them by God, they have a love to God, and no man will act againſt thoſe whom he thinks to be his friends. God being *purus actus*, there being nothing but purity and activity in God, his love muſt be the pureſt and higheſt love, the moſt vigorous and glowing: As fire, which ſets all other Bodies, ſo this all other powers in the World in motion for them. God cannot love them, but He muſt wiſh all good to them, and do all good for them; for his love is not a lazy love, but hath its raptures and tenderneſs, and his affection is twiſted with his Almighty Power to work that good for them, which in their preſent condition in the World they are capable of. Now it is certain, God loves his Church: For,

1. *He carries 'em in his hand**, and that not in a looſe manner to be caſt out, but they are engraven upon the palms of his hands*, that he cannot open his hand to beſtow a bleſſing upon any perſon, but the picture of his Church doth dart in his eye. God alludes to the Rings wherein men engrave the image of thoſe that are dear to them. And the *Jews* did in their Captivity engrave the Effigies of their City *Jeruſalem* upon their Rings, that they might not forget it*. If his eye be alway upon the Church, his thoughts can never be off it in all his works.

* *Deut.* 33. 3.
* *Iſa.* 49. 16.
* Sanctius *in Iſa.* 49. 16.

2. *He loves the very gates and outworks. Pſal.* 87. 2. *the Lord loveth the gates of Sion.* He loves a Cottage where a Church is, more than the ſtately Palaces of Princes. The gates were the places where they conſulted together, and gave Judgment upon Affairs. God loved the Aſſemblies of his Saints, becauſe of the Truths reveal'd, the Ordinances adminiſter'd, the Worſhip preſented to him.

3. *Nay one Saint is more valu'd by him than the whole World of the wicked.* God is the God of all Creatures, but peculiarly the God of *Abraham* and of his Seed; One *Abraham* is more deeply rooted in his heart, than all the World; and he doth more entitle himſelf *the God of Abraham*, than the God of the whole World; for in that Style he ſpeaks to *Iſaac*, *Gen.* 26. 24. *I am the God of Abraham thy Father*, much more the God of *Iſrael*; the God of the whole Church, of *which*, *Abraham* was but a Member, tho *the Father of the Faithful*, and a Feoffee of the Covenant. God hath a greater value for one ſincere Soul, than for a whole City; he ſaves a *Lot*, and burns a *Sodom*; yea, than for a whole World; he drowns a World, and reſerves a *Noah*; he ſecures his Jewels, whilſt he flings away the Pebbles.

4. *He loves them ſo, that he over-looks their crabbed and perverſe miſ-conſtructions of his Providence.* When the *Iſraelites* had jealous thoughts of him, and of *Moſes* his Inſtrument, when they ſaw that mighty *Egyptian* Army juſt at their Heels, and themſelves cooped up between Mountains, Forts and Waters, God doth not upon this provoking murmuring, draw up his cloudy Pillar to Heaven, but puts it in the Rear of them, when before it had Marched in the Van *, and wedgeth himſelf in between them and *Pharaoh*'s enraged Hoſt, to ſhew, that they ſhould as ſoon ſheath their Swords in his Heart, as in their Bowels; and if they could ſtrike them, it ſhould be through his own Deity, which was the *higheſt* expreſſion of his Affection: And tho they often murmur'd againſt his Providence after they were landed on the Shore, yet he left them not to ſhift for themſelves, but bore them all the way in his Arms, as *a Father doth his Child* ||, and *bare them like an Eagle upon his wings* *. And God loves them magnificently and royally, *Hoſ.* 14. 4. *I will love them freely* †, without any doubting, without any reluctancy. I will love thee without any repugnancy in my heart, to draw me back from thee, *for mine anger is turned away*, as the ſtreams of a River, quite another way. Now all this conſider'd, can the Governour of the World, the King of Saints, act any thing againſt his own affections? Yea, will he not make all things ſubſervient to them whom he loves?

* *Ex.* 14. 19
|| *Deu.* 1. 13
* *Deu.* 32. 11.
† *Hoſ.* 14. 5 נדבה Sept. ὁμολόγως

2. *His Delight.* See what an inundation of ſweetning joy there was in him, for which he had not Terms of Expreſſion to ſuit the narrow apprehenſions of Men; *Zeph.* 3. 17. *The Lord thy God in the midſt of thee is mighty, he will ſave he will rejoyce over thee with joy, he will reſt in his love, he will joy over thee with ſinging.* He ſeems in his expreſſion to know no meaſure of his delight in the Church, and no end

of

of it; *I will rejoyce over thee with joy.* Joy ſparkles up freſh after joy: 'Tis his *reſt* with his Soul and all that is within him centers it ſelf with infinite contentment. *Joy over thee with Singing*; A Joy that bloſſoms into Triumph. Never had any ſuch charming tranſports in the Company of any he moſt affected, as God hath in his Church; he doth ſo delight in the Graces of People, that he delights to mention them. He twice mentions *Enochs* walking with him †. And certainly God cannot but delight in it more than in the World, becauſe it is a fruit of greater pains than the creation of the World. The World was created in the ſpace of ſix daies by a Word; the Erecting a Church hath coſt God more Pains and Time. Before the Church of the *Jews* could be ſettled, he hath both a conteſt with the Peeviſhneſs of his People, and the Malice of their Enemies. And his own Son muſt bleed and dye, before the Church of the Gentiles could be fixed. Men delight in that which hath coſt them much Pains, and a great Price. God hath been at too much pains, and Chriſt at too great Price, to have ſmall delight in the Church; will he then let wild Beaſts break the Hedges, and tread down the fruit of it? ſhall not all things be ordered to the good of that which is the Object of his greateſt delight in the World?

† *Gen.* 9. 22, 24.

Seventhly. 7. *The preſence of God in his Church will make all Providences tend to the good of it.*

It would be an idle uſeleſs Preſence, if it were not operative for their good. *The Lord is there*, is the very name of the Goſpel-Church ‖; what would it ſignifie if it were a uſeleſs Preſence? Chriſt ſtands upon Mount *Sion*, his Throne is in the Church, when the great things in the World ſhall be acted for the Ruine of Antichriſt *. Gods Preſence in his Church, is the Glory and Defence of it; As the preſence of the King is the Glory of the Court. *Zach.* 2. 5. *For I, ſaith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midſt of her.* His preſence is a Covenant-preſence. *Iſa.* 41. 10. *Fear not, I am with thee; be not diſmayed, for I am thy God.* Whence follows Strength, Help and Support; *I will ſtrengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the Right Hand of my Righteouſneſs:* that is, with my righteous Power, with my power engaged to thee in a Righteous Covenant. His Preſence and Providence in the World, is in a way of Abſolute Dominion; but in his Church in a way of Federal Relation. He is the God *of Iſrael*, and God *to Iſrael*, or *for Iſrael* ‖; yea, and a God *in the midſt* of *Iſrael*. Every one of them ſufficient engagments to protect *Iſrael*, and provide for *Iſrael*, and govern every thing for *Iſraels* good. God is under an Oath to do good to *Iſrael*; will he violate his Oath? tear his Seal? break his Covenant, who never broke his League with any of his people yet?

‖ *Iſa.* 48. 35

* *Rev.* 14. 1

* 1 Chr. 17 24.

Eighthly. 8. *The prayers of the Church have a mighty force with God to this end.* God is entitled a God hearing Prayer, and what prayers ſhould God hear, if not the prayers of his Church, which aim at Gods Glory in their own good? Though the prayers of the Church may in ſome particulars fail, yet in general they do not; becauſe they ſubmit their deſires to the Will of God, which always works what is beſt for them.

When God would do any mighty work in the World, he ſtirs up his people to pray for it; and their prayers by his own appointment have a mighty influence upon the Government of the World: For when they come before him in behalf of the Church in general, he doth indulge them a greater liberty and boldneſs, and as it were a kind of Authority over him, than upon other occaſions of their own: *Iſa.* 45. 11. *Thus ſaith the Lord, the holy one of Iſrael, and his maker, Ask of me things to come, concerning my ſons, and concerning the work of mine hands command you me.* God would be more poſitively, confidently and familiarity dealt with, about the concerns of his Sons, though they were things to come to paſs in after Ages. And indeed the prayers of the Church have a powerful and inviſible Efficacy on the great actions and overturnings which are in the World. The Being of the World is maintained by them from ſinking, according to the *Jews* ſaying, *ſine ſtationibus non ſubſiſteret mundus*; (ſtanding in prayer was their uſual prayer-geſture) And that they have actually ſuch a force is evident, *Rev.* 8. 3, 4. An Angel hath a golden Cenſer with Incenſe, to offer it with the prayers of the Saints, upon the Altar which was before the Throne. And *ver.* 5. the Cenſer wherein their prayers were offered, was filled with the fire of the Altar, and caſt into the Earth; and there were Voices, Thundrings, Lightnings, and Earthquakes. When the prayers of the Saints were offered to God, and aſcended up before him, that is (were very pleaſing to him:) The iſſue is, the Angel fills the Cenſer with fire of the Altar, and thereby cauſes great commotions and alterations in the World; ſignifying that the great changes of the World are an anſwer unto thoſe prayers which are offered unto God; for fire is taken from that altar upon which they were offered, and flung into the World. And it muſt needs be that the prayers of the Church ſhould have an influence on the government of the World.

1. *Becauſe God hath a mighty delight in the prayers of his people. The prayer of the upright is his delight*, and He loves to hear the Churches voice, *Cant.* 2. 14. *O my dove, let me hear thy voice, for ſweet is thy voice*, [Chaldee] thy voice is ſweet in prayer. In the times of the Goſpel God promiſes that the offerings of *Judah* and *Jeruſalem* ſhould be *pleaſant* to him, *Mal.* 3. 4. When Chriſt ſhall ſit as a refiner, *v.* 3. what is the iſſue of thoſe prayers? *v.* 5. *I will come near to you to Judgment, and I will be a ſwift witneſs againſt the Sorcerers*, &c. Prayer awakes Providence to judge the Enemies of the Church: A Parent delights not in the bare crying, or the voice of his child ſimply conſidered in it ſelf, but in the ſignifications and effects of it. He delights in the matter of their prayers, it being ſo agreable to his own heart and will, and in the ſence they have of the ſufferings of the whole body.

2. *Becauſe Prayer is nothing elſe but a pleading of Gods promiſes.* Unto this they are directed by that Spirit who knows the mind of God, and marſhals their *petitions according to his will.* Now as God turns his own decrees and purpoſes concerning his Church into promiſes to them, ſo the Church turns thoſe promiſes into Prayers for them: So that promiſes being for the good of the Church, and their being an exact harmony between thoſe promiſes and the Churches prayers, all thoſe Providences which are the iſſue of thoſe promiſes, and the anſwer of the Churches prayers, muſt needs be for the Churches good.

3. *Becauſe there are united ſupplications and pleadings both in Heaven and Earth*; all the hands of the whole Family in Heaven and Earth are concerned in their petitions.

1. *Chriſt intercedes for the Church*, who always deſires mercy and deliverance for them in the appointed time, *Zech.* 1. 12. *How long wilt thou not have mercy on Jeruſalem?* and the iſſue is always gracious: For, *v.* 13. God *anſwers* him with *good and comfortable words*; and thereupon *Carpenters* are raiſed to cut off the *horns which had ſcattered Judah*, v. 20.

2. *Angels in all probability plead for the Church*, as

we have already heard: 'Tis likely they offer and preſent that to God which makes for his glory, and that is the good of the *Church*. Angels ſurely
* *Zech.* 1. 12. deſire that which their Head doth, which is * deſcribed as one of their own Order, and called an Angel. Do they rejoyce at the repentance of a ſinner, and do they not likewiſe triumph at the happineſs of the Church, *which*, is part of that Family they are of? And we know, that the greatneſs of our joy is ſuited to the mercies of our deſires; where our joy is moſt triumphant, it implies that our deſires before were moſt vehement.

3. *Glorifyed Saints are not ſurely behind.* The rich man in the Parable deſired his Friend on Earth
† *Luk.* 16. 28. might not come into that place of torment †. If there be ſo much charity in Hell, can there be leſs in Heaven? If he deſired it, that by the preſence of his companions in ſin, his own torments might not be increaſed; Do not the Saints in Heaven deſire the preſence of the whole *Church*, that their happineſs in that of the whole body may be compleated? If the Head Chriſt be not compleat without the body, the members of the body cannot be compleat without one another. The Souls of them that were ſlain for the word of God, cry under the Altar for vengeance on them that dwell on the Earth, as *Rev.* 6. 9, and 10. *How long, O Lord holy and true, doſt thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the Earth?* Will not their kindneſs to their fellow members, be as ſtrong as their juſtice? And their love for the good of their friends draw out their prayers as well as their deſire of vengeance on their Enemies? Why may they not as well pray for us, as we praiſe God for them? Had they not ſome likeneſs to their great Maſter whilſt they were on Earth, and ſhall they not be more like to him now they are in Heaven, and behold his face, and feel all the ſtirrings of his heart? And if they have no ſence at all of the *Churches* ſufferings, how ſhall they be like to him who hath? As their bodies ſhall be like the glorious body of Chriſt at the reſurrection, are not their Souls now like his glorious Soul, merciful, and compaſſionate, and ſympathizing in all the afflictions of the *Church*? and can this be without ſome breathings for a full compleating of the *Churches* freedom? are ſuch deſires and pleas any hinderance to their preſent happineſs? 'Tis ſo far from that, that it doth rather further their glory, which cannot be compleat, as the glory of Chriſt, as head, is not mounted to the higheſt pitch of glory, till his myſtical body be all gathered in and lodged with him. If it be thus, will God do any thing prejudical to the *Church*, and contrary to the combin'd deſires of all thoſe that are ſo near him? If God doth ſometimes ſtir up himſelf upon the ſupplication of one man, and grant an order upon his petitions according to his mind; and if the prayers of one faithful *Moſes*, or *Elias*, or *Samuel* have ſuch a kind of Almighty power in them, much more is the joynt force of ſo many prayers twiſted together.

Uſe. *Uſe.* 1. *For Information.* Is it ſo that all Providence is for the good of the Church? Then,

1. *God will always have a Church in the World, he will have ſome to ſerve him.* The whole courſe of his Providence being deſigned for it? As long as the World, which is the object of his Providence doth endure, he will have a *Church*. God would otherwiſe loſe the end of the motion of his eyes *, the operation of his Providence, ſince it is to ſhew himſelf ſtrong for the *Church* and every member of it. As long as the candle and light of the Goſpel burns and ſhines, God will have a candleſtick to ſet the candle in †. His great deſign in making a World, was not to have Sun, Moon and Stars, but a *Church*, a company of men that might bear his mark, and honour him, to whom he might ſpeak, and extend his grace abroad, which he was ſo full of within. As a Limner, who would draw an excellent draught, draws his deſign in the midſt of the cloth, and fills the void places with clouds, and landskips, and other fancies at his pleaſure, which communicate ſome beauty and luſtre to the work: But that was not the principal deſign of the Workman. That Redeemer which bears the *Church* upon his heart, will create a ſtability for it; 'Tis a part of his Prieſtly Office to have a care of the Lamps: 'Tis one of his Titles; to be he that walks in the midſt of the Seven Golden Candleſticks ‖. Prieſts under the Law were to look to the great Candleſtick in the Temple, ſupply the Lamps with Oyl, and make them clean *. The *Church* indeed may be eclips'd, but not extinguiſhed; if it be not conſpicuous on the mountain, yet it ſhall be hid in the Wilderneſs. There ſhall be ſprinklings of profeſſors among all people. God will leaven the places where they are, into Chriſtianity, and cauſe them to fructify and grow up in purity and glory *: *And the remnant of Jacob ſhall be in the midſt of many people, as a dew from the Lord, as the ſhowers upon the graſs, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the Sons of men. It tarries not for man.* It attends not the power of man, the precepts of man, or inventions of man; but whoſe deſcent is from Heaven, and is carried on not by human power, but by the *divine Spirit* and *Providence*: It ſhall be firmer than all worldly power, and the ſtrongeſt Kings, *Iſa.* 2. 2. *And the mountain of the Lords houſe ſhall be eſtabliſhed upon the top of the mountains, and ſhall be exalted above the hills.* Above Mountains and Hills, to which ſometimes the powers of the World are compared, *Zach.* 4. 7. That Providence which gave the *Church* at firſt footing in the World upon a weak foundation to outward appearance, in ſpight of Men and Devils will preſerve it, and not ſuffer it to be blown up, he will ſhadow the *Church* with his wings in a perpetual ſucceſſion of the choiceſt mercies.

‖ *Revel.* 2. 1. * *Levit.* 24. 3, 4. *Chap.* 27. 20. *Chap.* 30. 8. * *Mich.* 5. 7. *Zach.* 4. 7.

2. *God will in the greateſt exigences find out means for the protection of his Church,* This will be till his Providence be at an end. When God hath removed one Inſtrument of his *Churches* Protection, he has his choice of others whom he can raiſe and ſpirit for his Work. *When thoſe upon whom the Churches hopes hang, are taken off, he can raiſe things that are unlikely to ſupply the place:* As the Luteniſt accidentally had a Graſshopper leapt upon his Inſtrument, to ſupply by its noiſe the place of a ſtring which had newly crackt, whereby his Muſick was continued without interruption. God can Spirit Men againſt their own natural Fears. It was very improbable, that *Nicodemus*, one of a fearful Diſpoſition, who came to our Saviour by night for fear of the *Jews*, ſhould have the Courage to aſſert his Cauſe in the face of a whole Council of *Phariſees*, contriving his *Death*, and at preſent blunt the edge of their Malice, tho we read of none at that time in the Council to ſecond him †: The Holy Ghoſt takes particular notice that *it was he that came to Jeſus by night.*

† *Joh.* 7. 50. 51.

Joſeph of *Arimathea*, whoſe Name we meet not with in the Catalogue of any of our Diſciples, till the time of his Death, and then he appears boldly to *beg the Body of Jeſus of Pilate.* God will never want Inſtruments for the preſerving *that Church which he owns as his.* 'Tis obſerv'd by ſome, that God ſo order'd it, that the ſame day that *Pelagius*, the great Poyſoner of the *Chriſtian Doctrine* was born in *Britain*, *Auſtin* the moſt famous defender of the truth was born in *Africk*; That the horn, which puſheth the truth, ſhould no ſooner appear, but the Carpenter to cut it off, ſhould be provided too. As it is obſerved where poyſons grow, Antidotes

* *The Text.*

† *Cham. les trais verit. liv.* 3 *Chap.* 1. *p.* 16.

grow

grow near them by the indulgent proviſion of the God of Nature.

As there is the Wiſdom of the Serpent againſt the *Church*, ſo there is the Wiſdom of God for it. Gods Goodneſs upon his *Church* in former Ages is not all laid out: He hath his Stores ſtill, neither is his Wiſdom non-pluſt, nor his Power weakned; neither is he, nor can he be weary of his care.

3. *The Church ſhall in the end prove Victorious againſt all its adverſaries*, or Providence muſt miſs of its Aim. The *Church* is compared to an Olive Tree, *Hoſ.* 14, 6. in reſpect of Beauty, *his Beauty ſhall be as the Olive Tree.* It is ſo alſo in reſpect of Victory. Olive Branches were uſed in Triumph. God is on the *Churches* ſide, and he is ſtronger than the ſtrongeſt, and wiſer than the wiſeſt, and *higher than the higheſt. Jeſus Chriſt is the Churches Head and General. Chriſt the Head watcheth for the good of the Church, the Body.* He muſt be deſtroy'd before the *Church* can. There is a mighty Arm, which tho it may for a time ſeem withered, will in the end be ſtretch'd out, and get it ſelf the Victory. Whilſt Chriſt is in the Ship, it may be toſs'd, but it ſhall not be ſunk; it may be beaten down, but like a Ball to rebound the *higher.* The young Tree that is ſhaken by the Wind, may loſe ſome Leaves, and ſome Fruit too, but the Root gets greater ſtrength and ſtrikes it ſelf deeper into the Earth, and *makes* the Branches more capable of a rich return of Fruit the following Year. The *Churches* Stature is compared to a Palm-Tree †, which cannot be depreſt by the Weights which hang upon it, but riſeth the *higher.* God uſes the ſame method in the *Churches*, as in Chriſts advancement. Our Saviour's Death was neceſſary to his Glory †, and the *Churches* Affliction ſometimes to its Exaltation. A Nation may loſe ſome Battels, and yet be Victorious: The *Church* may have many a Croſs, but in the end will ſurmount all Difficulties. Tho Judgments and Apoſtacies may be great in a Nation, yet God will have a care of his own Plants ‖. *There ſhall be a tenth; it ſhall return, the Holy Seed ſhall be the ſubſtance thereof:* As a Tree in Winter, which ſeems dead, but its Juice ſhall revive into rich and generous Bloſſoms. The Ark ſhall float above the Waters. *Babylon* ſhall fall, the Lamb ſhall ſtand upon Mount *Sion.* Men may as well ſtop the riſing of the Sun in its mounting to the *Meridian*, bridle in the Tyde of the Ocean, as hinder the Current of an Almighty Providence.

† Cant. 7. 7.

† Luk. 24. 26.

‖ Iſa. 4. 12, 13.

4. *The intereſt of Nations is to bear a reſpect to the Church, and countenance the Worſhip of God in it.* This is to concur with God's main end, and imitate him in his Providential Adminiſtrations. God's People (whatever their Enemies ſuggeſt to the contrary) are a Bleſſing in the midſt of a Land †; their Intereſt is greater than the Intereſt of all the World beſides; tho they be but a handful, their fruit ſhall ſhake like *Lebanon* †. The neglect of Religion is the ruine of Nations. 'Tis obſerv'd that *Cyrus* was ſlain in the War in *Scithia*, a little after he neglected the building of the Temple of *Jeruſalem* which he had begun. Thoſe *Perſian* Kings Reigned the longeſt, that favoured the *Jews* in that and their other juſt requeſts. God honoured or diſgraced them as they were kind or cruel to his People. And when any act for the good of his People, they ſhall not be without their Reward. When *Cyrus* ſhould let the *Jewiſh* Captives go free without Ranſom, he ſhould be no loſer by it. God would give him the labour of *Egypt*, the Merchandize of *Ethiophia*, and the ſtrength of the *Sabeans* into his hand for the price of his Peoples Delivery *. Thoſe Nations which ſhould ſhould favour them in the times of their Perſecutions and Flights, and give them ſhelter in their Countreys, ſhould thrive and proſper by the bleſſing of God upon them, If *Moab* give entertainment to the flying *Iſraelites* in the time of the Invaſion of *Salmanaſſer.*; God will preſerve their Land that the Spoyler ſhall not enter into the Confines of it, and they ſhall have Kings and Judges under the Protection of the Houſe of *David*; *i. e.* under the Kings of *Iſrael* (as ſome underſtand it *) Saints are the Guardians of the places where they live, their Prayers have a greater influence than the wiſeſt Counſels, or the mightieſt Force †. *And* Eliſha *cried, my Father, my Father, the Chariot of* Iſrael, *and the Horſmen thereof. The Chaldee* paraphraſeth thus. Thou art better to *Iſrael* by thy Prayers than *Chariots* and Horſmen. This is the Elogy of one ſingle Prophet, what influence then hath the whole *Church* of God in a place? The whole World is the better for the Church of God. The *Chaldee* Paraphraſe hath a notion upon that, *Pſal.* 22. 3. *But thou art holy, oh thou that inhabiteſt the Praiſes of Iſrael:* Thou that eſtabliſheſt the World for the Praiſes of *Iſrael.* God hath nothing to do in the World but the ſaving his People: When that is once done, he will put an end to this Frame of things: When he hath gathered his Wheat into his Garner, he will burn up the Chaff. His People are the Spirit and Quinteſſence of the World: When this is extracted, the reſt are flung upon the Dunghill, as a *Caput Mortuum.*

* Iſa. 45. 13, 14.

* Iſa. 16. 4, 5.

2 King. 2. 12.

† Pſal. 72. 16. *Broughton on Dan.* 10. 10.

† Iſa. 16. 24.

5. We may ſee hence the *ground of moſt the Judgments in the World.* Men by their rage againſt the *Church*, will not acknowledg God's Government of the World for the *Churches* good: Therefore the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 59. 13. *Conſume them in wrath, conſume them that they may not be, and let them know that God rules in* Jacob *unto the ends of the earth.* The *Church* is the Seat of his Government, and from thence he extends it to the uttermoſt parts of the Earth. In *Jacob* he rules, and for the ſake of *Jacob* he orders his Government to the ends of the Earth: The not acknowledging this brings wrathful Conſumptions upon men: And it is alſo the end of his Judgments, to make men know it. 'Tis likely enough the four Kings * might have gone clear away with all their Booty had not they laid their fingers upon *Lot*: But when they would pack him up among the reſt, they did but ſollicite their own Ruine, and arm the Almighty God againſt them. God did not think any of the People worth the mention, *verſe* 11. only *Lot*, a righteous perſon, *verſe* 12. he is named as having Gods eye only upon him. And when *Abraham* returns from the Victory, *v.* 16. the reſt of the delivered Captives are mentioned in the bulk, *Lot* only in particular, as though all that had been done, had been done by God only for *Lots* ſake. They might have preſerved the whole Prey to themſelves, had it not been for this Jewel too precious in Gods account for their Cuſtody. And the fearful Curſe that God pronounced againſt the *Ammonite* and *Moabite*, that they ſhould not come into the Congregation for ten Generations, though any of them turned Proſelytes, was becauſe they came not out with ſo much as Bread and Water to meet the *Iſraelites*, and becauſe they hired *Balaam* to Curſe them. The utter waſting of Nations and Kingdoms, is becauſe they will not ſerve the intereſt of God in his People. *Iſa.* 60. 12. *For the Nation and Kingdom that will not ſerve thee, ſhall periſh; yea thoſe Nations ſhall be utterly waſted:* God will bring an utter Conſumption upon thoſe people that refuſe to love them, much more upon thoſe that hate them.

* Gen. 14. 9.

Deut. 23. 3, 4.

6. *What eſteem then ſhould there be of the Godly in the World?* The Providence of God, being chiefly for the good of his people, cannot well fall upon them,

them, but ſome drops will fall upon thoſe involved with them in a common intereſt, When the Corn and Wine and Oyl here *Jezreel* (the Seed of God) and the Earth hears the Corn, and the Heavens hear
*Hoſ.2.21 the Earth, and God hears the Heavens *. When
22. their ſupplications come up to the great Superintendent of the World, many of the Wicked will fare the better for that Providence which is given only in anſwer to *Jezreels* Prayer: God cauſes his Sun to ſhine upon the unjuſt, upon them, not for their ſakes. When *Nebuchadnezzar* iſſu'd out that unjuſt order for the ſlaying the *Chaldeans* for not performing an impoſſible command in telling him the Dream he had forgotten, *Daniel* was ſought out to undergo the ſame fate: Yet by his Wiſdom God bends the heart of *Arioch* the Executioner of this Decree, to
* Dan. 2. ſtay his hand. * *Daniel* goes to the King, God ſtays
12. *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Fury, and moves his heart to give them time. The Providence is chiefly intended for the preſervation of *Daniel* and his Godly Companions, but the reſt of the wiſe men have the benefit of it. As the water with which a man waters his choiceſt Plants and Flowers in his Garden is intended only for them, yet ſome falling from off thoſe Flowers, refreſheth the Weeds that grow under them. If God had not had ſuch flowers as *Daniel* and his Companions, the Weeds in *Chaldea* had been plucked up. Yet the ungrateful World takes no notice of the benefits they receive from this Salt of the Earth, which preſerves them, and to whom they are all ſo much beholding. *Lot* had been the occaſion of reſtoring *Zoar* from Captivity, as I mentioned before, for the inhabitants of that City were engaged with thoſe of *Sodom* in the Fight againſt the four Kings; *And the King of* Bela, *the ſame is* Zoar. And per-
Gen. 14 haps were carried Captives with the reſt of their
8, Neighbours: And it had been ſaved from the Flames which fell upon *Sodom* meerly by *Lots* prayer, *Gen.*19. 24. *See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing, that I will not overthrow this City for the which thou haſt ſpoken*; yet he found them a ſurly people and was requited with a rude reception notwithſtanding his kindneſs, *verſe* 13. *He went up out of* Zoar, *for he feared to dwell in* Zoar: It was not likely he was ſo diſtruſtful of God, that he ſhould overthrow it, when he had abſolutely promiſed him the contrary: Therefore moſt likely for ſome churliſh threatnings from them. Nay, *Sodom* it ſelf was beholding to him for a ſmall reſpite of the Judgment intended againſt them. For God tells him he could do no-
* Gen.19. thing till he were come thither *. And it was ſo,
for *Lot* was entred into *Zoar* before a drop of Brim-
* Ver. 23. ſtone and Fire was rained down upon *Sodom* *.
24. *Then the Lord rained upon* Sodom; when? when *Lot* was entred into *Zoar*. This good the Wicked World get by Gods People, is ſo evident, that ſometimes wicked men cannot but take notice of it. *Laban*, a ſelfiſh Idolater, was ſenſible of it, *Gen.* 30. 27. *I have found by experience that the Lord hath bleſſed me for thy ſake.* It was a Leſſon ſo legible, that he might have learned it ſooner than in fourteen years. The Church is the chief object of preſervation, wicked men are preſerved for their ſakes; as Dung is preſerved, not for its own ſake, but for the manuring a fruitful field, and Thorns in the Hedge are preſerved for the Gardens ſake.

7. *'Tis then a very fooliſh thing for any to contend againſt the welfare of Gods People.* 'Tis to ſtrive againſt an Almighty and unwearied Providence. Men may indeed ſometimes be ſuffered by God for holy ends to have their Wills, in ſome meaſure upon the *Church*, but not altogether: They muſt firſt depoſe him from his Throne, blind his eyes, or hold his Arm. 'Tis as fooliſh as if a worm ſhould deſign to dig down a Mountain, or Chaff to Marſhal it ſelf in Battle-Array againſt the Wind, or for a poor Flye to ſtop the motion of a Milſtone.

1. 'Tis fooliſh, *Becauſe it is exceeding ſinful.* What is done againſt the *Church* is rather done againſt God than againſt it. Since all her Conſtitution, Worſhip, Obſervances, are directed to God as their ultimate end; ſo that to endeavour to deſtroy the *Church*, is to deny God a Worſhip, deprive him of his Sanctuary, break upon his Houſe, Raviſh his Spouſe, cut off Chriſt's Body, rob him of his Jewels, and will be ſo interpreted by God at the laſt, upon the ſcanning of things. If the *Church* be Gods houſe, the Enemies ſhall anſwer for every Invaſion, every forcible Entry, for the breaking down the Gates and Bars of it, God will ſue them at laſt for dilapidations.

2. *Very unſucceſsful.* Shall God be afraid of the multitudes and power of Men? *No more than a lyon, or a young lyon roaring after his Prey, when a multitude of Shepherds are called forth againſt them, ſhall he be afraid of their voice, or abaſe himſelf for their noiſe* *. * Iſa. 31.
Noiſe and Clamour is all they can do, and that not 4.
long: The fierceneſs of the Lyon quickly ſcatters them. The Aſſociations, and mens girding themſelves againſt the Church, is but a preparation to their own Ruine, *Iſa.* 8. 9. *Aſſociate your ſelves together oh ye people, and ye ſhall be broken in pieces*, three times repeated. Your Counſels, ſaith he, ſhall not ſtand againſt that preſence of God that is with us, *For God is with us.*

3. *It is very deſtructive too.* God will not alway be ſtill and refrain himſelf: he ſeems to do ſo for a while; but when he doth ariſe, he will deſtroy and devour at once *, he will make but one morſel of * Iſa. 42
them. When God is angry with his people, and 14.
gives them into the hands of men to execute his Juſtice upon them, and puniſh them, he will even puniſh thoſe enemies for their Cruelty, and going beyound their Commiſſion, in ſatisfying their own immoderate Paſſions upon them. Upon this account God threatens *Babylon*, Iſa. 47. 6. *I was wroth with my people, I have polluted mine Inheritance, and given them into thy hand, thou didſt ſhew them no mercy*; whereupon God threatens them afterwards, &c. ſo *Zach.*1.15. God was ſore diſpleaſed with the Heathen; for when he was but a little dilpleaſed with his people, they helped forward the affliction.

Uſe 2. Is *for Comfort.*

If all the Providence of God be for the good of the *Church*: If his eyes run to and fro to ſhew himſelf ſtrong for them it affords matter of great comfort. His Providence is continual for them *, he hath * Zech. 4.
ſeven Pipes to convey kindneſs to them, as well as 2.
ſeven Lamps whereby to diſcern their ſtreights. His Providence is as vaſt as his Omniſcience: The number of Pipes belonging to the Candleſtick of the *Church* is exact according to the number of Lamps. The *Churches* miſery cannot be hid from Gods eye, let it be in what part of the Earth ſoever, for his eyes run to and fro throughout the whole Earth, and his ſight excites his ſtrength. Upon the ſight of their diſtreſſed condition, he watches only for the fitteſt opportunity to ſhew himſelf ſtrong for them. And when that opportunity comes, he is ſpeedy in the Deliverance of them, *Pſal.* 18. 10. *He rode upon a Cherub and did flye, yea, he did flye upon the wings of the wind.* He doth not only ride upon a Cherub, but flye. His wings are nothing but wind, which hath the quickeſt and ſtrongeſt motion, which moves the greateſt bodies, and turns down all before it. What is for the good of the whole, hath an influence upon every Member of the Body.

1. *'Tis comfort in Duties and ſpecial Services.* Nothing ſhall be wanting for encouragement to Duty,

Duty, and ſucceſs in it, when God calls any to it, ſince all his Providence, is for the good of the *Church*. Let there be but ſincerity on our parts, in our attemps of Service upon Gods call, and we need not fear a want of Providence on Gods part: God never calls any to ſerve his Church in any ſtation, but he doth both ſpirit and encourage them. God hath in his common Providence ſuited the nature of every Creature to that place in which he hath ſet it in the World; and will he not much more in his ſpecial Providence ſuit every one to that place he calls them to, for the ſervice of his *Church*! He did not forſake Chriſt in redeeming his Church, neither will he forſake any in aſſiſting his *Church*. When *Joſeph* of *Arimathea* would boldly demand the body of our Saviour, Providence made the way plain before him, he meets with no check, neither from *Pilate* nor the Prieſts †.

† *Mat.* 27. 58.

2. *In meanneſs and lowneſs.* 'Tis one and the ſame God that rules the affairs of the whole World, of the *Church*, and of every particular Member of it. As it is the ſame Soul that informs the whole body, the meaneſt Member as well as that which is moſt excellent. Not the meaneſt ſincere Chriſtian but is under Gods eye for good. The Spirit acts and animates every Member in the *Church*, the weakeſt as well as the moſt towring Chriſtian. *Baruch* was but the Prophet *Jeremy*'s *Amanuenſis* or Scribe, and Servant to *Jeremy* (who was no great man in the World himſelf) yet God takes notice ſo of his Service, that he would particularly provide for him, and commands *Jeremy* in a way of Prophecy to tell him as much, *Jer.* 45. 5. *I will bring evil upon all fleſh, but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey, whitherſoever thou goeſt.*

Ma. 15. 43

3. *In the greateſt Judgments upon others.* In an Epidemical Judgment upon the whole Nation of the *Jews*, God would have a ſpecial care of *Baruch*. If he ſhould caſt his People far off among the Heathen, and ſcatter them among the Countries, yet even there he would be a little Sanctuary unto them. His own Preſence ſhould ſupply the want of a Temple, ſo he is pleaſed to expreſs himſelf *. But how is it poſſible the great God can be but a little Sanctuary? His eye is upon them to ſee their danger, and his hand upon them to ſecure them from it. His promiſe ſhall ſhield them, and his Wings ſhall cover them *. While he hath indignation, he hath a ſecret Chamber for their ſecurity *. An Almighty ſhadow, under which they may abide †. In times of the moſt devouring danger, he hath a Seal to ſet upon their foreheads as a mark of his ſpecial Protection. We never have ſo much experience of Gods care and ſtrength, as in times of Trouble, *Pſal.* 37. 39. *He is their ſtrength in time of Trouble.* He is a friend who is as able as willing, and as willing as able to help them, whoſe watchfulneſs over them is as much above their apprehenſion as it is above their merits.

Ezek. 11. 16.

* *Pſ.* 91. 4.

* *Iſ.* 26. 20.

† *Pſ.* 91. 1.

4. *In the greateſt extremities wherein his people may be*, there are promiſes of comfort *. Both in overflowing waters, and ſcorching fires, he will be with them. His Providence ſhall attend his Promiſe, and his truth ſhall be their Shield and Buckler, *Pſal.* 91. 4. That ſurely is a ſufficient ſupport; Chriſt thought it ſo, when he only ſaid to his diſciples, *'tis I, be not afraid* *. What though there be a Storm, a darkneſs and trouble, *'tis I am he.* The darkneſs of the night troubles not the Pilot whilſt he hath his Compaſs to ſteer by. If all his Providences be for the good of them that fear him, he can never want means to bring them out of trouble, becauſe he is always actually exerciſed in governing that which is for their good; and till he ſees it fit to deliver them, he will be with them. Great Mercies ſucceed the ſharpeſt Afflictions *. When there ſhould be a voice of trembling, and men with their hands upon their Loins as Women in Travel, and paleneſs in their Faces from the Exceſs of their Fears: In that Day God would break the Yoak from them, and they ſhould ſerve the Lord their God, and *David* their King. Though the night be never ſo dark, yet it is certain the Sun will riſe and diſperſe its light next morning, and one time or other ſhew its ſelf in its brightneſs. We have no reaſon to deſpond in great extremities, ſince he can think us into ſafety, *Pſal.* 40. 17. *Lord think on me*; much more look us into it; his thoughts and his eyes move together.

* *Iſa.* 43. 2.

* *Joh.* 6. 17, 18.

* *Jer.* 30. 5, 6, 7, &c.

5. *In fear of wants.* The power of the Governour of the World cannot be doubted. His love, as little as it ſeems, ſince it hath moved him to prepare Heaven to entertain his People at the end of their Journey, it will not be wanting to provide accommodation for them upon the way, ſince all things both good and bad are at his beck, and under the government of his gracious Wiſdom. His eyes run to and fro through the whole Earth, not only to defend them in dangers, but ſupply them in wants: for his ſtrength is ſhewed both ways. Doth he providentially regard them that have no reſpect for him, and will he not employ his Power for, and extend his Care to them that Adore and Love Him, and keep up his Honour in the World? He will not ſurely, be regardleſs of the Afflictions of his Creatures. His People are not only his Creatures, but his New Creatures, their bodies are not only created by him, but redeemed by his Son. The purchaſe of the Redeemer is joyned to the Providence of the Creator. If he took care of you when he might have damned you for your Sins, will he not much more, ſince you are Believers in Chriſt. And he cannot damn you Believing, unleſs he renounce his Sons Mediation and his own Promiſe. A natural man provides for his own, much more a Righteous man, *Prov.* 19. 22. *A good man leaves an Inheritance to his children*, much more the God of Righteouſneſs, a God who hath his eye always upon them. His eye will affect his heart, and his heart ſpirit the hand of his Power to relieve. He hath *prepared of his goodneſs for the poor.* Pſalm. 68. 10.

6. *'Tis comfort in the low eſtate of the Church at any time.* Gods eye is upon his *Church*, even whilſt he ſeems to have forſaken them. If he ſeems to be departed, it is but in ſome other part of the Earth, to ſhew himſelf ſtrong for them; where-ever his eye is fixed in any part of the World, his *Church* hath his heart, and his *Churches* relief is his end. Though the *Church* may ſometimes lye among the Pots, in a dirty condition, yet there is a time of Reſurection when God will reſtore it to its true glory, and make it as white as a Dove with its Silver wings *: The Sun is not always obſcur'd by a thick Cloud, but will be freed from the darkneſs of it. *God will judge his people, and repent himſelf concerning his Servants* †: 'Tis a comfort to God to deliver his people, and he will do it in ſuch a Seaſon when it ſhall be moſt comfortable, to his Glory, and their Hearts. The very name *Hieruſalem*, ſome derive from *Jireh Salem*, *God will provide in Salem.* The new *Jeruſalem* is the title given to Gods *Church*, *Rev.* 1. and is ſtill the object of his Providence, and he will provide for it at a pinch, *Gen.* 22. 14. *Jehovah Jireh*, God will raiſe up the Honour and Beauty of his *Church*: Great Men ſhall be ſervants to it, and employ their ſtrength for it when GOD ſhall have Mercy on it *: Yea, the Learning and Knowledge of the World ſhall contribute to the building of it, v. 13. *The glory of* Lebanon *ſhall*

* *Pſ.* 68. 13
† *Pſal.* 135. 14.

יתנחם *Comfort himſelf.*

come

come unto thee, the firr-tree, the pine-tree, and the box together, to beautifie the place of my sanctuary. It shall be called the city of the Lord, the Sion of the holy one of Israel, *that she may know that the Lord is her Saviour, and her Redeemer the mighty one of* Jacob. As Christ rose in his Natural, so he will in his Spiritual Body. If Christ when dead could not be kept from Rising, Christ now living shall not be hindered from raising and helping his *Church*. His own Glory is linked with his Peoples security; and though he may not be moved for any thing in them because of their sinfulness, he will for his own name, because of its Excellency *. *Ezek.* 36. 22. *I do not this, for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for my holy names sake,* As sorrows encreased upon the *Israelites*, the nearer their Deliverance approached.

*Ezek. 36.

Because this Method of God is the greatest startling even to good men, let us consider this a little; that God doth, and why God doth leave his *Church* to extremities before he doth deliver it.

Take the resolution of this in some propositions.

1. *'Tis indeed Gods usual method to leave the Church to extremity before he doth command help.* You never heard of any eminent Deliverance of the *Church* but was ushered in by some amazing distress. The *Israelites* were not saved till they were put in between Sea, Hills and Forts, that their Destruction was inevitable unless Heaven relieved them, *Pharaoh* resolves to have his will, and God resolves to have his; but he lets him come with his whole Force and open mouth at the *Israelites* backs, and then makes the Waters his Sepulcher. *Constantine*, the man-child in the Revelation, was preceded by *Diocletian* the sharpest Persecutor. When his People are at a loss, 'tis, his usual time to do his greatest works for them; God had promised Christ many ages, and yet no appearance of him; still Promise after promise, and no performance, *Psal.* 40. 8. It was then [*lo I come*] yet many hundred years rowl'd away, and no sight of him yet. Captivity and Affliction, and no Redeemer; but when the World was over-run with Idolatry, the *Jews* oppressed by the *Romans*, the Scepter departed from *Judah*, *Herod* an *Edomite*, and stranger, King, and scarce any Faith left, then, then he comes. The World will be in much the like case at his next coming, *Luke.* 18. 8. *When the Son of man comes, shall he find faith in the earth?* there shall be faintings, despondency, unbelief of his promise, as though he had cast off all care of his *Churches* concerns. 'Tis not meant of a Justifying Faith, but a Faith in that particular promise of his coming. The Faith of the *Israelites* must needs begin to flag, when they saw their Males murdered by the *Egyptians*; could they believe the Propagation of the Seed of *Abraham*, when murder took off the Infants, and Labour and Age would in time, the old ones? Whilst their Children were preserved, the Promise might easily be believed. But consider, this was but just before their deliverance; like a violent Crisis before Recovery. He doth then *judge his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he sees their power is gone, and there is none shut up or left* †: He doth so for the wicked many times, when the affliction of Idolatrous *Israel* was bitter, when there was not any shut up, nor any left, nor any helper for *Israel*, then he saved them by the hand of *Jeroboam* the Son of *Joash**. He doth so with private persons; *Peter* might have been delivered by God's Power out of Prison, when he was first sent thither, but God thought it fittest for him to lie in Chains, and free him but the night before his intended Execution †. *Lot* had his goods rifled, and carried away Captive, before God stirred up *Abraham* to rescue him. When the hand of the wicked lies heaviest upon the heads of the Righteous, and wrings the most mournful sighs from them; when they are needy, and the wicked securely puffing at them, as though they had brought them to so low a condition as to blow them away with a blast, now saith God will I arise, *Psal.* 12. 5. *For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise saith the Lord, I will set him at safety from him that puffeth at him. Now*, this is the time I watched for, as fittest for my own Glory and their safety. Then God disappoints them, when they seem to have got to the Goal with the Ball at their foot.

† Deut. 32. 36.

* 2 *Kings* 14. 26, 27.

† *Acts* 12. 6, 7.

Secondly. God hereby doth glorify himself. He then discovers that there is nothing too high for his power to check, nothing too subtil for his Wisdom to disappoint, nothing too low for his love to embrace. That is the season wherein his Mercy will be most prized, his Power most admired, his Wisdom most adored, and his Justice most cleared. God lets the concerns of his *Church* go backward, that he may bring them on with more Glory to himself, and satisfaction to his Creature. God will divide the benefit and the honour between himself and the Creature: He will have the holy Glory, and his Creature shall have the sensible advantage. They shall enjoy *Salvation*, there is their benefit; but not by *sword* or *bow*, but *by the Lord their God* †. Saved they should be, but in such a way wherein the honour of God might most appear without any mixture of the Creature.

† *Hos.* 1. 7.

1. *God glorifies his Power.* His eyes run to and fro to shew himself strong. He will then pitch upon such a season, when his strength may appear most illustrious, and none else have any pretence to claim an equal strength with him. A time of extremity is the fittest opportunity for this. When his power cannot be clouded by any interpositions of the creature for challenging a share in it. The greater the malice against the Church, the weaker the *Churches* ability to help it self, the more glorious is the Power of God magnified in deliverance; little dangers are not so suitable for the triumph of an Infinite strength. As God let Christ lye three dayes in the Grave, that his Resurection might be known to be the fruit of a Divine Power; for the same end he lets his mystical Body lye in the same condition. Had God brought *Israel* out of *Egypt* in the time of the Kings that were friends to them from a kindly remembrance of *Joseph*, there had been no character of a Divne Power, tho there had been a Divine truth apparent in the case; but he set apart that time for their deliverance, when he was to contest with the mightiest opposition from the whole Body of the *Egyptian* Nation, who had forgot *Joseph* their great Benefactor. Had not the Disciples been in a great Storm, ready to be cast away, and Christ a sleep, till they were in extremity, they had not seen such * visible marks of the extensiveness of their Masters Power. When the hearts of the strong men fainted, when the *Assyrians* would not hear the Embassadors of Peace, when they had broke their former Covenant, resolved to invade the Land; when their Calamity, and dispair had arrested all their hopes, *now*, when all things are in such a deplorable state, *will I rise, saith the Lord, now will I be exalted; now will I lift up my self.* God was not asleep or unconcerned, but he sate still watching for such a season; Now, is three times repeated. The Psalmist gives us a Record of this in his particular case. When the Waters of his affliction were many, the Enemy strong, and too strong for him, their strength edged with an intense hatred, then God appears to be his stay, and prevents them in the day of his Calamity, *Psal.* 18. 16, 17, 18.

* *Isa.* 33. 7, 8, &c.

God

God lets his Enemies be too ſtrong for him, that he might appear his only ſtay, without any mixture of *Davids* ſtrength in the caſe. When the *Jews* thruſt Chriſt out of *Nazareth*, led him to the Brow of the Hill, and were ready to caſt him down, then, and not till then, he frees himſelf out of their hands, and diſappoints the effects of their rage. As Chriſt dealt thus for himſelf, ſo he deals for his *Church* in all Ages.

2. *God glorifies his Wiſdom. His eyes run to and fro throughout the whole Earth to ſhew himſelf ſtrong*; 'tis not a bare ſtrength that God would ſhew, or ſuch a Power which we call in man a bruitiſh valour, without wit or skill; but to ſhew his ſtrength with Wiſdom, when all his other Attributes may be glorified with that of his Power. When all worldly helps are departed, we can as little aſcribe our ſecurity to our own wiſdom and induſtry, as to our own ſtrength and Power. The Phyſitians skill is beſt evidenced in maſtering a deſperate Diſeaſe. He will bring the Counſels of the Heathen to nought *. Pſal. 33. 10. He will let them counſel, he will let them deviſe and carry on their Counſels near to Execution, that he may ſhew, that as the ſtrength of Hell is no match for his Power, ſo the craft of Satan is no mate for his Wiſdom. But he raiſes the Trophies of his Wiſdom upon the ſubtil devices of his Enemies.

3. *God glorifies his care and compaſſion.* When his people are neareſt cruſhing, God is neareſt preſerving. Gods Mercy is greateſt when his Saints Miſery is deepeſt; when *Sion* is as an outcaſt, it ſhall be taken into Gods protection, *Jer.* 30. 16, 17. *I will heal thee of thy wounds, becauſe they called thee an Outcaſt, ſaying, this is* Sion *whom no man ſeeks after.* When none ſtood up to plead for her, when her Lovers, ſhe depended on, had forgotten and forſaken her, when they thought her caſt out of the care of any creature, the Creator would take her up. When the ruine was inevitable as to man, their preſervation was moſt regarded by God. Had God ſtopped *Pharaoh* at his firſt March, by raiſing ſome Mutiny in his Army, his mercy to his people, as well as his power againſt his Enemies, had not been ſo conſpicuous. The more deſperate things are, the fitter ſubject for the advancement of God's kindneſs. Had God conducted the *Iſraelites* through a rich and fruitful Country, it would have obſcured the glory of his care of them, which was more ſignal in directing them through a Barren Deſert, crowded with fiery Serpents, without Bread to nouriſh them, or Water to cool them, wherein he manifeſted himſelf to be both their Caterer and Phyſitian. *Moſes* was never more peculiarly under Gods protection, no not when he had the whole Guard of *Iſrael* about him in the Wilderneſs, than when his Mother had expoſed him to the River forlorn, in a pitched Ark, and forſaken by his Siſter, who ſtood aloof off to ſee how providence would conduct him. When *Laban* was poſſeſſed with Fury againſt *Jacob*, God countermands it, and iſſues out his own order to him, how he ſhould behave himſelf towards his Son *. * *Gen.* 31. 24. '29. God times his kindneſs, ſo that it may appear to be nothing elſe but Grace, Grace with a Witneſs; that his people may be able to underſtand the very particularities of it, *Iſa.* 30. 18. *Therefore will the Lord wait that he may be gracious unto you:* He leaves them therefore for a while to the will of their Enemies, verſe 17. *At the rebuke of five ſhall you flee, till you be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an enſign upon a Hill:* Never is Salvation, ſweeter, and Mercy better reliſht, than when it ſnatcheth us out of the teeth of danger. God would have his mercy valued, and 'tis fit it ſhould. And when is a Calm more grateful than after the bittereſt Storm, attended with the higheſt deſpair? God's mercy in ſparing *Iſaac*, after the knife was at his throat, was more welcome and more delicious both to Father and Son, than if God had revealed his intent to *Abraham* in the three days Journey to the Mount *Moriah*. But God ſuſpending his Soul in bitterneſs all that time, prepared his heart for the valuation of that mercy. When humane help forſaketh us, God moſt embraceth us, *Pſal.* 27. 10. *When my father and mother forſake me, then the Lord will take me up.*

4. *God glorifies his Righteouſneſs and Juſtice.* There is a meaſure of wickedneſs God ſtays for, which will be an object of his Juſtice without exception. When the meaſure of a peoples Covetouſneſs is come, then their end is come, and God will fill them with men as with Caterpillers, and they ſhall lift up a ſhout againſt them †. Hereby God clears † *Jer.* 51. 13, 14. the Juſtice of his proceedings, that he exerciſed Patience ſo long; that things were come to that paſs, that either his People or his Enemies muſt be deſtroyed. As the caſe was with the *Iſraelites*, had not God marvellouſly appeared, every man of them had been cut off or reduced to Slavery. The Dye was caſt, either the *Egyptians* or *Iſraelites* muſt be defeated: either God muſt appear for his *Church*, or none would be left in the World to profeſs him. In ſuch a caſe the Juſtice of God is more unexceptionable. No man has any ſemblance for complaining of him; For he ſtruck not till the ſafety of his Adverſaries was inconſiſtent with his own Honor and Intereſt of the World. When men come to ſuch a height, as to ſlight and reſolve to break the laws of God, then is the time for Honor of his Righteouſneſs in his own inſtitutions, to vex them in his ſore diſpleaſure, *Pſal.* 2. 3, 5. *Then ſhall he ſpeak to them in his wrath, and vex them, &c. When?* When they reſolve to *caſt away his bands and cords from them, ver.* 2. He is forced to raiſe them, when men make void his Law, and tread down the Honor of it; when they would not have God to have a ſtanding Law in the World, or a People to profeſs him, *Pſal.* 119. 126. *'Tis time for the Lord to work, for they have made void the Law.* When the Grapes of Wickedneſs are thus fully ripe, then is God's time for the honour of his Juſtice to caſt them into the Wine-preſs of his Wrath *. This is God's ſet * *Rev.* 14. 19, 20. time when he may glorify, without any exception, his Juſtice in puniſhing his enemies ſins, his Wiſdom in defeating his enemies Plots, his Power in deſtroying his enemies ſtrength, and his Mercy in relieving his Peoples wants.

Thirdly, Such extremities, and deliverance in them are moſt advantageous for his people.

1. *It being a ſeaſon to improve and know their intereſt.* Men do not uſually ſeek to God, or at leaſt ſo earneſtly, as when they are in diſtreſs; the time of the tempeſt was the time of the Diſciples praying to Chriſt: The *Iſraelites*, you ſcarce find them calling upon God but in times of danger and diſtreſs: hereby God doth incourage and give an argument for Prayer. The Pſalmiſt uſeth the extremity of the *Church* often as an Argument to move God to pity, *Pſal.* 123. 3. *Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us, for we are exceedingly filled with contempt.* We are glutted with contempt, as low as low can be, ſo *Pſal.* 44. 23, 24. *Awake, why ſleepeſt thou, O Lord, ariſe, caſt us not off for ever, our ſoul is bowed to the duſt.* That is the moſt ſucceſsful time for Prayer which is the time of the ſtirring of God's Bowels. He hath been *a ſtrength to the poor, a ſtrength to the needy in his diſtreſs, a refuge from the ſtorm, a ſhadow from the heat, when the blaſt of the terrible ones is as a ſtorm againſt the wall* *. They in ſuch a * *Iſa.* 25. 1. time find how conſiderable their intereſt is with

God, when upon their Prayer they ſhall find relief ſuitable to every kind of danger they are in: The Spirit of Prayer upon the Church is but the Preſage of their Adverſaries ruin. When God ſeeks to deſtroy the Nations that come againſt *Hieruſalem*, he will pour upon the Inhabitants of it, a *Spirit of Grace and of Supplication*, Zech. 12.9. *And in that day I will ſeek to deſtroy all the Nations that come againſt Jeruſalem, and I will pour upon the houſe of David and the Inhabitants of Jeruſalem the Spirit of Grace and of Supplication.* This time of extremity, when all their hands fail ſhould edge the *Churches* Prayers. Our great Interceſſor ſeems in this caſe to ſet us a Pattern, *Zech.* 1. 12. *O Lord of Hoſts, how long wilt thou not have mercy upon Jeruſalem?* [יהוה ſingle by it ſelf, not in an affix.] When all the Earth ſits ſtill and is at reſt, unconcerned in the affairs of thy *Church*, if thou wilt not have mercy on them in this ſtrait, who ſhall relieve them? none elſe have any mind to it; then iſſue out comfortable words to the Angel from the mouth of God. This is an advantage of extremity, it ſets Chriſt a Pleading, and the *Church* on Praying.

2. *As a ſeaſon for acting Faith at preſent, and an encouragement of relyance upon him in future ſtreights.* As a ſeaſon for acting Faith at preſent. Our Saviour lets *Lazarus* dye and ſtink in the Grave, before he raiſed him, that he might both confirm Faith in his Diſciples hearts, and ſettle it in the hearts of ſome of the *Jews* *. *I am glad for your ſakes that I was not there, to the intent that ye may believe.* What, let *Lazarus* die, one that he loved, one ſo ſtrongly pleaded for by two Siſters that he loved too, and ſolicited upon his friendſhip to relieve him? *v.* 3. *Behold he whom thou loveſt is ſick*; and our Saviour glad he was not there to prevent it? yes, not glad of *Lazarus* his extremity, nor of the Churches; But of the opportunity to give them greater ground of Faith and Encouragement to truſt him. The Churches Faith is Gods Glory: He that hath many things to truſt to, is in ſuſpence which he ſhould take hold of: But when there is but one left, with what greedineſs will he claſp about that! God cuts down worldly props, that we might make him our ſtay. How will the Church in extremity recollect all the deliverances of it in former ages, and put them up in pleas to God, for a renewal of his wonted kindneſs, and new ſucceſſions of deliverance, whereby God gets the glory of his former work, and his Church the preſent comfort in renewing fiducial acts upon him? How doth *Jehoſaphat* put God in mind of his gracious aſſiſtance acted ſome ages before, when he was in a ſtreight, by the Invaſion of a powerful Army, 2 *Chron.* 20. 7. *Art not thou our God that didſt drive out the Inhabitants of this Land before thy people* Iſrael? *v.* 12. *We know not what to do, but our eyes are upon thee:* Never are the Churches eyes ſo fixed upon God; never God eyes ſo fixed upon the Church, as in times of their diſtreſs. Then there is a ſweet Communion with, and recounting of all their former friendſhips: The Church then throws it ſelf wholly upon God: Its proſperity is but like a troubled Sea, its diſtreſs is the time of its reſt. So *Aſa*, when aſſaulted by a Million of men under *Zerah* the *Ethiopian*, how doth he throw himſelf and the whole weight of his concerns upon the hands of God, and makes his Cauſe Gods? 2 *Chron.* 14. 11. *Help us, O Lord our God, for we reſt on thee, oh Lord, thou art our God, let not man prevail againſt thee.* And there is an encouragement alſo in the deliverance for future Faith. It gives a ground for future Faith from the riches of the preſent experience; in ſuch diſtreſſes there is the higheſt experience of God, and hope is the fruit of experience; How apt are we to believe God in other ſtraits, when we have had aſſiſtance (like they that dream'd) come unexpectedly upon us. God overthrew *Pharaoh's* Hoſt in the Red Sea, when they were upon the heels of the affrighted *Iſraelites*, and ready to cruſh them, but God gave them *to be meat to the people inhabiting the Wilderneſs* †, as a ſtanding excellent diſh to feed their hope; for all future deliverances upon their truſt in God. And indeed that deliverance was an earneſt of their perpetual ſecurity, by ſpecial Providence in any ſucceeding trouble. And God often gives them a particular charge to remember that deliverance, with a practical remembrance, to ſtill their Fear, and ſupport their Faith, *Deut.* 7. 18. *Thou ſhalt not be afraid of them, but ſhalt well remember what the Lord thy God did unto* Pharaoh, *and to all the* Egyptians. He would have them remember it as a Covenant-mercy, *what the Lord thy God did*, thy God in Covenant; not what the Lord did barely by an arm of Power, but what he did by a vaſtneſs of affection, and as a God of truth and firmneſs in his Covenant.

† *Pſal.* 74. 14.

3. *In fitting them by the extremity for a holy reception of the Mercy intended.*

God keeps up the diſtreſs of his *Church* to expel ſelf-confidence. Truſt in earthly things are the great checks of God's Kindneſs. We hardly forſake this temper till we are forſaken by all thoſe things we confide in. Times of extremity make us more humble; and humility, like the Plow, fits us for the ſeed of mercy. The Gardners digging up the clods is but to prepare the earth for the receiving and nouriſhing ſome excellent Plants he intends to put into its Womb. There is a certain ſet time for Gods great actions. He lets the powers of darkneſs have their hour, and God will take his hour, *Pſal.* 102. 13. *Thou ſhalt ariſe and have mercy upon* Sion, *for the time to favour her, yea the ſet time is come.* He hath a ſet time for the diſcovery of his mercy, and he will not ſtay a jot beyond it. What is this time? *v.* 9, *&c.* When they *eat aſhes like bread, and mingle their drink with weeping.* When they are moſt humble, and when the ſervants of God have more affection to the *Church.* When their humble and ardent affections are ſtrong, even to the ruine and rubbiſh of it; when they have a mighty deſire and longing for the reparation of it, as the *Jews* in Captivity had for the very duſt of the Temple, *v.* 14. *For thy ſervants take pleaſure in her ſtones, and favour the duſt thereof. For*, there notes it to be a reaſon why the ſet-time was judged by them to be come. This is God's ſet time when the Church is moſt believing, moſt humble, moſt affectionate to God's intereſt in it, and moſt ſincere. Without Faith we are not fit to deſire mercy; without humility we are not fit to receive it, without affection we are not fit to value it, without ſincerity we are not fit to improve it. Times of extremity contribute to the growth and exerciſe of thoſe qualifications.

* John. 11. 15. 45.

4. *In ſecuring them againſt future ſtreights.* For God's diſappointing Enemies when they think themſelves ſure of all, is the higheſt diſcouragement to them, and thoſe of the like temper, to renew the like attempts; but if they do, it is an evidence they ſhall meet with the like ſucceſs; 'Tis the higheſt vexation to ſee their projects diverted, when they have lighted their match, and are ready to give fire. Men may better take notice how God loves his People, when he apprehends their adverſaries in the very Pinacle of their Pride, and flings them down from the Mount of their hopes. It doth not only daſh the preſent deſigns, but diſhearten future attempts. The *Egyptians*, after their overthrow at the Red Sea, never attempted to diſturb them in their journey in the Wilderneſs. It was a Bridle to all their enemies, except *Amalek*, upon whoſe Country they travelled in the Wilderneſs, when it was the

the interest of State in all those Nations to rout that swarm of People that must have some Seat to dwell in; and every Nation might justly fear to be dispossessed by them; yet we read of no League among those Nations bordering upon the Wilderness, such a terror did God strike into them by that relief he gave his People in their extremity at the Red Sea; whereby he provided for their future security in their whole Journey. It was this melted the hearts of the *Gibeonites*, one of the Nations of *Canaan*, and brought them to a submission to *Joshua*, as the sentiment of all their Neighbours, *Josh.* 9. 9. *We are come because of the name of the Lord thy God, for we have heard the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt.* And for this and other reasons it may be, that the times before the Churches last deliverance shall be sharper than any before; which our Saviour intimates, *Mat.* 24. 21. *For then there shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the World, no nor ever shall be.* In Discoursing his Disciples of the troubles at the destruction of *Jerusalem*, which was a type of the trouble preceding the end of the World, he adds a discourse of what shall be at the end of the World, in the last attempt of the enemies of the *Church*; for *ver.* 29. he saith, *immediately after the tribulation of those days*, he speaks of his coming in the Clouds of Heaven with great power and glory. And also in the Revelation, *Rev.* 16. 18. *And there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great.* This perhaps at the pouring out of the seventh Vail, may concern the Christian *Church* as well as the Antichristian Party. But the reason why it may be sharper just before that last deliverance, than it was in former ages, may be because it is the last effort the enemy shall make; the last demonstration of Gods power and wisdom for, and care of his *Church*, and of Justice upon his enemies in such cases. The last season for their multiplying their cries, and acting their Faith for such a concern.

3. *Use* of *Exhortation.*

If it be so, that the Providence of God is chiefly designed for the good of the *Church*:

First, *Fear not the enemies of the Church.* 'Tis a wrong to God. Fear of Man is always attended with a forgetfulness of God, *Isa.* 51. 12, 13. *I, even I am he that comforteth you, who art thou that art afraid of a man that shall dye, and of the son of man that shall be made as grass, and forgettest the Lord thy maker, who hath stretched forth the Heavens, &c?* 'Tis to value the power of grass above the power of the Creator, as though that had more ability to hurt, than God to help. As if men were as strong as Mountains, and God as weak as a Bulrush. 'Tis a wrong to his truth; hath he not *comforted* you in his Promise? What Creature should then deject you? 'Tis a wrong to his Mercy; Is he not the Lord thy maker? *Calvin* refers this to Regeneration, and not Creation, Hath he not renewed you by his Spirit? and will he not protect you by his strength? and that you may not question his power, look up to the Heavens which he hath stretched out, and the foundations of the Earth which he hath laid: And is that Arm which hath done such mighty works, too weak to defend that work which is choicer in his eye than either the extended Heaven, or the established Earth? We vilifie God, and defile his glory, when our fear of mans power stifles our Faith in God, *Isa.* 8. 12, 13. *Neither fear you their fear, nor be afraid, sanctifie the Lord of Hosts himself, and let him be your fear.* Let the wicked fear the *Assyrians*, and engage in confederacies against them; but let your eyes be lifted up to me and my Providence. God will either turn away the mouth of the Cannon from the *Church*, or arm it against the shot. Either preserve it from a danger protect it in it, or sanctifie it to the *Church*, and who need fear a Sword in a Fathers hand?

1. *Will you fear man, who have a God to secure you?* The *Church* belongs to God, not to man, as a just Propriety, *Isa.* 43. 1. *Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by my name; thou art mine, when thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, &c. Thou art mine*, not mans. Thou art mine, I am thine. I will be with thee as thine, I will secure thee as mine. Is my creating, is my forming, is my redeeming thee to no purpose? I will not secure you from trouble; but surely my redemption of you, the propriety I have in you, should secure you from fears in those troubles. None shall hurt you whilst I have power to defend you. *God with us*, if well considered and believed, is sufficient to still those fears which have the greatest outward objects for their encouragement, *Psal.* 27. 1. *The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid.* If God be our strength to support us, why should the weakness of dust and ashes scare us? Alliance to great men, and Protection of Princes, prop up mens hearts against the fears of others; and shall alliance to God be of a weaker efficacy? A † Heathen could so argue, that knew nothing of Redemption. Let the Counsels of Enemies be crafty *, yet they consult against Gods hidden ones, hidden by God whilst Plotted against by men: who would fear the stratagems of men, whilst protected in an impregnable Tower? God hides, when men are ready to seize the Prey. How did the Angel protect a sincere trembling *Lot* against the invasion of a whole City, and secured his person whilst he blinded his enemies eyes that they could not find the door. Instruments cannot design more maliciously, than Christ watches over them affectionately. Christ hath his Eye to see your works and danger where Satan hath his Throne.

† *Arram.* in Epist. lib. 1. c. 9.
* Psal. 83. 3.
Rev. 2. 13.

2. *Will you fear men, who have a God to watch over their motions?* What Counsels can prevail where God intends to over-rule their resolves? There is no place so close as to keep private resolutions from his knowledge. This was the thought of those Statesmen against whom the Prophet *Isaiah* thunders, *Isa.* 29. 15, 16. *Wo unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark; surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potters clay.* Their Counsels were as well known to him as the Potters Clay is to the Potter, which he can either frame into a vessel, or fling away into the Mass from whence he took it. God hath not displayed himself of his Government; nor will devolve his right upon any men to dispose of his concerns. When men think to act so secretly, as though they framed themselves, as though Gods eye were not upon them; He will watch and trace all their Motions, and make them insignificant to their purposes. Satan himself, the slyest and subtilest agent, is too open to God to hide his Counsels from him. Never fear man till the whole combined Policies of Hell can controul the resolves of Heaven. Till God wants Omniscence to dive into their secrets, skill to defeat their Counsels, and an arm to abate their power.

3. *Will you fear men or devils who have a God to restrain them?*

The great Dragon and General of the Serpents Seed is under a binding-power, who can bind him not only a Thousand Years, but a Thousand Ages †. Have his Seed more force to resist Almightiness, than their Captain? The Prophet speaking of the *Assyrians* threatning *Jerusalem*, and the confusion in some Cities for fear of them, Yet, saith he, he shall

† Rev. 20. 2.

remain at *Nob*, a City of the *Levites*, not far from *Jeruſalem*; where he might have a full proſpect of the City. He ſhall but ſhake his hand, he ſhall not gripe it in his Talons; He ſhall ſhew his teeth, but not bite, ſnarl but not worry, *Iſa.* 10. 32. God will let out ſo much of the enemies wrath, as may anſwer his gracious ends to the *Church* in purging of them, but the remainder of Wrath, which remains in their hearts for the *Churches* Deſtruction, he will reſtrain *. As a Phyſitian weighs out ſo much as may curb the Diſeaſe, not kill the Patient. The Chain of Providence controuls the Power of Satan, when it doth not change his deſires. The *Egyptians* Will againſt the *Iſraelites* was ſtrong, but his power was weak. Might and Power is only in the hand of God, who Reigns over all, 1 *Chron.* 29. 12. And God will exert ſo much of Power to bridle the inclinations of Nature in the wicked for the good of his People. He will give them ſo much line as may ſerve his holy purpoſes, but not ſo much as ſhall prejudice the *Churches* ſtanding. A Staff is not capable of giving a ſmart blow without the force of the hand that holds it. Wicked men are no more than a ſtaff in Gods hand, *Pſal.* 10. 5. *The Rod of my Anger, the Staff in their hand is my indignation*; he can either ſtrike with it, or break it in pieces. The Staff is ſtill in the hand of God, and can do no more than what his merciful Arm moves it to; as he can reſtrain it, ſo he can divert it. What ſhould we fear thoſe whoſe hearts are in Gods hands, whoſe enmity is under Gods reſtraint, who can change their fury into favour, or at leaſt bridle it as he doth the Waves of the Sea? No Enemies ſhot can exceed Gods Commiſſion. God often laughs when men Plot, and diſappoints when they begin to act. Sometimes he makes them act contrary to their intentions. *Balaam* comes to curſe the People, and God turns his tongue to bleſs them, which if guided by his own heart, would have poured out execrations upon them *. God puts the words into his mouth, but not in his heart *verſe.* 5. and makes him bleſs that which his heart hates.

* Pſal. 76. 9. 10.

* Num. 23. 7, 8.

4. *Will you fear them who have a God to ruin them?* Though the Beaſt in the *Revelations* hath ſeven heads, a reaching Wiſdom; and ten horns, a mighty power *, (both the numbers of ſeven, and ten, being numbers of perfection in Scripture) yet with all his Wiſdom and Strength, he ſhall tumble down to Deſtruction, they can no more reſiſt Gods power, than bluſtring Winds or raging Waves can croſs his Will. When the enemies of the *Church* are in Combination, like Thorns full of prickles *folded together*, then ſhall they *be conſumed like ſtubble that is dry*, Nahum 1. 10. God loves to defeat Pride, *Exod.* 18. 11. *In the thing wherein they dealt proudly, he was above them.* God waits but the time of their ſwelling to make them burſt, *Abſalom* kills his Brother, withdraws the people from their obedience to the King, ſtirs them up to revolt, enters *Jeruſalem* in his Fathers abſence, pollutes his Concubines, engages in deſigns againſt his life, raiſeth an Army againſt him, who would not ſay, *David* was in extremity, and *Abſalom* alone proſpering in his deſigns? but when *Abſalom* comes to open force, God ariſes, an Oak catches him, his Mule forſakes him, and *Joab* diſpatches him. *Senacherib* had proſpered in his Conqueſt of *Judea*, taken many ſtrong Towns, laid ſiege to *Jeruſalem*, ſolicites the People to revolt, blaſphemes the God of Heaven, and then an Angel comes and makes a dreadful ſlaughter in a night, and he returning to his own Countrey is killed by his own Sons *. Gods Arrows ſhall never miſs their mark, and he hath more than one to ſtrike into the hearts of his enemies, *Pſal.* 18. 14. *He ſent out his arrows and ſcattered them.* What reaſon then to fear even multitudes, who can never be too ſtrong for that God who gave them that little ſtrength they have!

*Rev. 17. 3.

* 2 Kings. 19. 7, 35, 36, 37.

Secondly, The ſecond Duty to which we are exhorted. If all Gods Providences tend to the good of his *Church* and People,

2. *Then cenſure not God in his dark Providences.* As we are often too haſty in our deſires for mercy, and are not content to ſtay Gods time; ſo we are too haſty in making conſtructions of Providence, and will not ſtay Gods leiſure of informing us. When God ſeems at the beginning of every Providence to ſpeak the ſame language as Chriſt did to *Peter* in waſhing his feet, *John* 13. 7. *What I do, thou knoweſt not now, but thou ſhalt know hereafter:* The Inſtruments are viſible, the action ſenſible, but the inward meaning ſtill lies obſcured from our view. We are too ſhort-ſighted to apprehend and judge of Gods Works: Man cannot underſtand his own way *; much leſs the ways of an infinite God. Gods Judgments are a great deep †, we may ſooner fathom the deepeſt part in the Sea, underſtand all the turnings of thoſe ſubterranean paſſages, lave out the Ocean with a ſpoon, or ſuck in, into our Bellies, that great maſs of Waters, than underſtand the ways of God with our ſhallow brains. He makes darkneſs his Pavilion: He is ſometimes very obſcure in his ways. Neither the greatneſs of his Means, nor the wiſdom of his workings, can be fully apprehended by men. We have ſence to feel the effects, but not heads to underſtand the reaſons and methods of the Divine Government. *Eccleſ.* 3. 11. *No man can find out the work that God makes from the begining to the end.* Though a man may ſee the beginning of Gods works, yet is he able to walk underſtandingly along with Divine Wiſdom in ever ſtep it takes? will he not loſe the Tract often before it comes to an end? 'Tis not the face, but the back-parts of Providence which we behold; why then ſhould we uſurp an authority beyond our ability, and make our ſelves Gods Judges; as if infinite Wiſdom and Power were bounded within the narrow compaſs of our purblind Reaſons? His ways are beyond our tracing, and his Councils too high for our ſhort meaſures. Since therefore God ſatisfies the Righteouſneſs of his own Will, let us ſubmit our curioſity to his Wiſdom, and forbear our Cenſures of that exact Righteouſneſs and ſuperlative wiſdom which we cannot comprehend.

* Prov. 20. 24.

† Pſal. 36. 6.

1. Therefore, *Firſt fix this in your minds, that God is Righteous, Wiſe and Good in every thing.* Good, therefore nothing can be hurtful to his People: Righteous, therefore nothing Unjuſt. Wiſe, therefore nothing in vain; our injurious thoughts of him make us ſo uncharitable towards him, and greater Cenſurers of his Righteous ways, than we are of mens wicked actions. Clouds and Darkneſs are about him: our eye cannot pierce through his darkneſs, or ſee the frame of his counſels, yet let theſe Principles be kept as the Center, that *Righteouſneſs and Judgment are the habitation of his Throne* *. He is Righteous in his darkneſs, wiſe in his cloudineſs; though his Judgments are unſearchable to us, and his ways paſt finding out by our moſt induſtrious inquiſitions; and a depth of knowledge and wiſdom there is in them, too deep for us to meaſure †. God was always Righteous, Wiſe, and Good, he is the ſame ſtill: Though the motions of the Planets be contrary, yet the Sphere where they are fixed, the natures wherewith they were created, are the ſame ſtill. Though the Providences of God have various motions, yet the Spring of his Counſel, the Rule of his Goodneſs, the Eye of his Wiſdom, the Arm of his Power are not altered: He acts by the ſame Rule, diſpoſeth by the ſame Wiſdom, orders ac-

* Pſal. 9. 2.

† Rom. 9. 33.

according to the ſame Righteouſneſs; he is unchangeable in the midſt of the changeable effects of Providence. The Sun is the ſame body, which admits of no inward alteration, keeps exactly its own motion, though its appearances are ſometimes ruddy, ſometimes clear, its heat ſometimes more faint, at another time more ſcorching; its diſtance ſometimes nearer, ſometimes farther off. He muſt be very ignorant that thinks the objects upon which we look through a Priſme or Trigonal Glaſs, change their colours as often as they are repreſented ſo, in the various turnings of the Glaſs. You ſee the undulations and wavings of a Chain which hangs prependicularly, one part moves this way, and another that way, but the hand that holds it, or the beam to which it is faſtned, is firm and ſteddy.

2. *Diſtinguiſh between preparations to the main work, and the perfection of the work*; between the motions of Gods eyes, and the diſcovery of his ſtrength, his eyes move before his Power. The neglect of this was the cauſe of the *Iſraelites* uncharitable Cenſures of the kindneſs of God: they interpret Gods reducing them into the Straits near the Red Sea, a deſign for their deſtruction, which was but the preparation for their compleat deliverance, in a way moſt glorious to God, and moſt comfortable and advantagious to themſelves.

Morn. de veris Rel. Chriſtian. *cap.* 12. p. 210. 211.

He that knows not the uſe of the Grape, would fooliſhly cenſure a man who ſhould fling them into a Winepreſs, and ſqueeze them into into maſh, which is but a preparation of them to afford that generous liquor which was the end of their growth. God treads his Grapes in a Winepreſs to draw from thence a delicate Wine, and preſerve the Juyce for his own uſe, which would elſe wither upon the ſtalk, and dry up to nothing. We judge not the Husbandman angry with his ground for tearing it with his Plow; nor cenſure an Artificer for hewing his Stones, or beating his Iron, but expect patiently the iſſue of the deſign. Why ſhould we not pay the ſame reſpect to God which we do to men in their Arts; ſince we are leſs capable of being Judges of his incomprehenſible Wiſdom, than of the skill of our fellow creatures? God in his croſs Providences prepares the *Church* for fruitfulneſs whilſt he Plows it. He may ſeem to be digging up the Bowels of the *Church*, while he is only preparing to lay the foundation in *Sion* for the raiſing a noble ſtructure; and in what ſhape ſoever he appears in his preparations, he will in his perfection of it appear in glory, *Pſal.* 102. 16. *When the Lord ſhall build up Sion, he ſhall appear in glory*, and evidence that he was reſtoring, whilſt we thought him deſtroying; and healing, whilſt we thought him wounding. As God hath ſetled a gradual Progreſs in his works of Creation, ſo by degrees he brings his everlaſting Counſels to perfection. The ſeaſons of the year are not jumbled together, but orderly ſucceed one another; and the coldneſs of the Winter is but a preparation for a ſeaſonable Spring, and a Summer Harveſt. We do not unrighteouſly accuſe God of diſorder in his common works, why ſhould we do it in his ſpecial works of Providence? Do we diſparage the Muſicians skill for the jarring and unintelligible touches in the tuning the Inſtrument, but rather wait for the Leſſon he intends to play? If we ſtay for Gods fuller Touches of this great Inſtrument of the World in the way of his Providence, it will, like *Davids* Harp, chaſe away that evil Spirit from us which is now too apt to cenſure him.

3. *Fix not your eye only upon the ſenſible operations of Providence, but the ultimate end.* As in a Watch the various Wheels have different motions, yet all ſubſervient to one end, to tell the true hour of the day, and the motion of the Sun; ſo are all the Providences of God. Should any have been preſerved in the Deluge upon ſome high Mountain, who had not known the deſign of the Ark, and had ſeen it floating upon ſuch a Maſs of Waters, he would have judged the People in it in a deplorable condition, and have concluded that it would have broke againſt the Mountain, or been overturned by the Wayes; yet that was *Noah's* preſervative. Had any of us been with Chriſt, and acknowledged him the Saviour of the World, and yet ſeen him Crucified in ſuch a manner by men, and judged only by that, what wiſe and what juſt conſtructions ſhould we have made of that Providence? much the ſame as ſome of his Diſciples did, *Luke* 24. 21. *We truſted that it had been he which ſhould have redeemed* Iſrael. But the whole deſign is ſpoiled, we were fools, and he an Impoſtor. Yet this which ſeemed to be the ruine of Redemption, was the neceſſary high-way to it by Gods conſtitution. No other way was it to be procured, *ver.* 26. *Ought not Chriſt to have ſuffered theſe things, and to have entred into his Glory?* His entrance into glory to perfect our Salvation, was the end of the ſenſible ſuffering wherein he laid the foundation; as they charge Chriſt with Impoſture, not conſidering the end, ſo do we God with unrighteouſneſs, when we conſider not his aim. The end both beautifies and crowns the work; The remarks of Gods Glory in the Creation are better drawn from the ends of the Creatures, and their joynt ſubſerviency to them, than from any one ſingle piece of the Creation. We muſt not only conſider the preſent end, but the remote end, becauſe God in his Providence towards his *Church* hath his end for after times. God acts for ends at a great diſtance from us, which may not be compleated till we are dead and rotten. How can we judge of that which reſpects a thing ſo remote from us, unleſs we view it in that Relation? Gods aims in former Providences were things to come, his aims in preſent Providences are things to come. As the matter of the *Churches* Prayers, ſo the objects of Gods Providences are things to come, *Iſa.* 45. 11. *Ask me of things to come, concerning my ſons.* The matter of their Prayers then were, that God would order all things for the coming of the *Meſſiah*. The matter of the Churches Prayer now is, that God would order all things for the prefecting the Meſſiah in his myſtical Body. The whole frame of Providence is for one intire deſign. 'Tis one intire Book with ſeven Seals †. The beginning of a Book as well as the middle hath relation to the end. The deſign of Gods Book of Providence is but one in all the ſeven Seals and periods of time.

Rev. 5. 1.

4. *Conſider not only one ſingle act of Providence, but the whole Scheme, to make a concluſion.* The motions of his eyes are various, but all ends in diſcoveries of his ſtrength. Men do not argue from one ſingle propoſition, but draw the concluſion from ſeveral propoſitions knit together. 'Tis by ſuch a Spiritual Logick we are to make our concluſions from the way of Providence; as in the reading Scripture, if we take not the whole Period, we may make not only non-ſenſe, but Blaſphemy, as in that of the Pſalmiſt, *Thou art not a God that hath pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs.* If a man ſhould read only, *thou art not a God*, and make a full ſtop there, it would be Blaſphemy; but reading the whole verſe, it it excellent ſence, and an honouable declaration of Gods holineſs. Such Errors will be committed in reading the Books of Providence, if we fix our eyes only in one place, and make a full ſtop where God hath not made any. We judge not of a Picture by the firſt draught, but the laſt lines; not by one ſhadow or colour, but by the whole compoſure. The Wiſdom of God is beſt judg'd of by the view of the harmony

harmony of Providence. The ſingle threads of Providence may ſeem very weak, or knotty and uneven, and ſeem to adminiſter juſt occaſion of cenſure; but will it not as much raiſe the admiration to ſee them all woven into a curious piece of branched work? Conſider therefore Gods ways of working, but fully judge nothing, till the concluſion, for that is to judge before the time. Judge not then of Providence at the firſt appearance, God may ſo loſe the glory of his work, and you the comfort.

Thirdly. The third Duty. *Inquire into Providence, and interpret all publick Providences by this Rule.* We muſt ſearch into it, though we are not able to find out all the reaſons of it. What can be a braver ſtudy than that which is the object of Gods eternal counſel? We are conformed to God in our Wills when we have the ſame ends in our motions; and we are conformed to God in our underſtandings when we have the ſame object of our thoughts; ſome Providences have their interpretation written in their foreheads, we may run and read; ſuch as his ſignal Judgments in the World, which expreſs the very ſin for which they are inflicted; others are wrapt up in a harder ſhell, and more covers, and therefore more labour to reach the kirnel; ſome are too high for our knowledge, nc r our enquiry. 'Tis our duty to ſeek after Gc , though we can never arrive to a perfect knowledg of him. *Job.* 11. 7. *Canſt thou by ſearching find out God? canſt thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?* He prohibits not the ſearching, though he aſſerts the impoſſibility of finding him out to perfection. What hath God given us faculties for, but to ſearch after him? and we muſt not do it to ſatisfie our curioſity, but to encreaſe our knowledge, and conſequently our admiration of his wiſe and powerful care. Diligence muſt be uſed too. Our firſt thoughts about things of concernment, are uſually confuſed; ſo are our firſt ſights of Providence. Providence is a great deep, deep things are not ſeen without ſtooping down. We muſt παρακύπτειν, as the Angels do when they ſearch into the things of the Goſpel *, But let this aim of God at the good of his *Church* be the rule of your interpretation. Without this Compaſs to ſteer our judgments by, we may both loſe and rack our ſelves in the Wilderneſs of Providence, and fortify our natural Atheiſm and Ignorance inſtead of our Faith. I muſt confeſs the ſtudy of Providence is in ſome reſpect more difficult than in the former Ages of the World, becauſe God ſeems to manage things in the *Church* more by his Wiſdom than Power, which is not ſo intelligible by men as the ſenſible effects of his ſtrength. That Attribute he manifeſted moſt in Miraculous ways, and the viſible Miniſtry of Angels, as we read in Scripture ſtories; now he employs his Wiſdom more in ordering ſecond cauſes in ordinary ways to his own high, merciful, and juſt ends. Yet ſince the diſcovering of Chriſt, God hath given us a rule whereby we may diſcern much of his Wiſdom in the knowledge of his end, as the knowledge of Chriſt removes the Veil from the Scripture in our reading of it *. *The ſame Veil remains in the reading of the Old Teſtament, which Veil is done away in Chriſt,* (which Veil is ſtill upon the *Jews*) and makes us underſtand thoſe parts of the Old Teſtament, which otherwiſe would be utterly obſcure; ſo in the reading the Books of Providence, the knowledge of this end of God in them, will help us to underſtand the meaning of that which otherwiſe would non-plus the Reaſon of man. He that knows the end of one that is making a watch, will not wonder at his framing ſmall wheels, and filing little pins; but he that underſtands nothing of the deſign, would count it ridiculous for a man ſo to trifle away his time. Without the knowledge of this end, we ſhall expoſe our ſelves to miſerable miſtakes. As *Plutarch* miſtook the cauſe of the ceaſing of Oracles, aſcribing it to the change of the nature of the Soil, not affording thoſe exhalations as formerly; or the death of the Demons which gave thoſe Oracles. He had judg'd otherwiſe, had he known or believed the riſing of a Higher Power, the Sun of Righteouſneſs in the World, who impoſed ſilence upon thoſe Angels of darkneſs; the moſt famous Oracle in the World ceaſing about the time of Chriſt. To imagine to interpret the motions of Providence without a knowledge of Chriſt and the deſign of God for his *Church*, is as vain as to imagine we can paint a ſound, or underſtand a colour by our ſmell; Correct Senſe by Reaſon in this work, and Reaſon by Faith. To what end hath God preſcribed Faith to ſuccour us in the weakneſs of Reaſon, if it had been capable to underſtand his ways without it, and if we make no uſe of it upon ſuch occaſions?

Fourthly, A fourth Duty. *Conſider the former Providences God hath wrought for the Church in the paſt ages.* Let him not loſe the preſent glory of his paſt works, *Pſal.* 102. 18. *This ſhall be written for the generation to come, and the people which ſhall be created ſhall praiſe the Lord.* Even for that work of his which is written to be done in former Ages. God loves to have his former works read and pleaded. 'Tis a keeping a ſtanding praiſe of him in the World. We have had the benefit of them, it is fit God ſhould have the glory of them from us, as well as from thoſe who immediately injoyed them. Our good was bound up in every former preſervation of the *Church.* If the Candleſtick had been broken, where had the Candle been? Had the *Church* been deſtroyed, how could the Goſpel have been tranſmitted to us? let the Duty we owe to Gods Glory engage us to a conſideration of them; and the benefit we have had by them alſo incite us; we uſually forget not things that are ſtrange, nor things that are profitable; His works of old have been works of Wonder in themſelves, and profitable to us. To what end are the Praiſes of God diſcovered to the Generations to come, but that they ſhould reflect thoſe Praiſes to Heaven again, and convey them down to the Generations following? *Pſal.* 78. 4. *Shewing to the generation to come the Praiſes of the Lord.*

1. *This will help us in our inquiries in preſent Providences.*

There is a beautiful connexion between former and latter Providences; they are but ſeveral links of one Chain. The Principle and End is the ſame; That God from whence they come, that Chriſt to which they tend, *is the ſame yeſterday, to day, and for ever.* What God doth now, is but a Copy of what he pourtray'd in his Word as done in former Ages; There are the ſame goodneſs, the ſame deſign in both. The Births of Providence are all of a like temper and diſpoſition. We cannot miſs of the underſtanding of 'em, if we compare 'em with the ancient Copies: For God is in the Generation of the Righteous, the ſame God ſtill. God is the ſame, his ends are the ſame, the events will be the ſame.

2. *It will ſupport our Faith.* The reaſon of our diffidence of God in the cauſe of the *Church*, is the forgetfulneſs of his former appearances for her. O! if we did remember his former goodneſs, we ſhould not be ſo ready to doubt of his future care. This was the Pſalmiſts care in diſpondencies, and in his overwhelming troubles of ſpirit, *Pſal.* 77. 9. *Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger ſhut up his tender mercies*; but *verſ.* 10. He concludes it his *infirmity*, and reſolves upon a review of the Records of Gods ancient works for his People, *and the years of the right hand of the moſt High?* theſe times wherein he

* 1 Pet. 1. 12.

* 2 Cor. 3. 14, 15, 16.

he declared his Power and his glory, and ſo proceeds to the top of all their deliverances, *viz.* that out of *Egypt*. Doth Gods Wiſdom decay? or his Power grow feeble? Is not his Intereſt the ſame? Is he not a God ſtill like himſelf? Is not his glory as dear to him as before? Hath he caſt off his affection to his own name? Why ſhould not he then do the ſame works, ſince he hath the ſame concern? God himſelf, to encourage us, calls them to our remembrance, *Iſa.* 50. 2. *Is my hand ſhortned that I cannot redeem, or have I no power to deliver? behold, at my rebuke I do dry up the ſea, I make the Rivers a Wilderneſs*, &c. Am not I the ſame God that dried up the Sea, that wrought thoſe ancient wonders which amaz'd the World? What doth your diſtruſt ſignifie but the impair of my power? Rouſe up your ſelves to a conſideration of them! And thence gather freſh ſupplies to ſtrengthen you in your preſent dependence upon me! He puts us in mind of them, becauſe we are apt to forget them. *Gen.* 15. 6. When it is ſaid *Abraham* believed in the Lord, and it was accounted to him for Righteouſneſs; God anſwered him, *v.* 7. *I am the Lord that brought thee out of* Ur *of the Caldees*, keep up thy Faith and to that end, remember what I did for thee before in calling thee! caſt thy eye upon that place whence I delivered thee! either from the Idolatries of the place, or the perſecution he was in for the true Worſhip of God. And as God puts him in mind of his Mercy he had ſhewn to him before for the encouragement of his Faith; ſo the people of God have made uſe of them to this end. *Goliah*'s Sword was counted by *David* the fitteſt for his defence in his flight, becauſe it had been a Monument of Gods former deliverance of him, 1 *Sam.* 21. 9. When he asks for a Sword or Spear, *Abimelech* ſaid, *the Sword of* Goliah *whom thou ſleweſt, is here*; and David *ſaid, there is none like that, give it me.* How haſty he catches at it! There is none like that Sword that hath ſo ſignal a mercy writ upon it. That very Sword will not only defend me againſt my Enemies, but guard my Faith againſt thoſe Temptations that would invade it. This encouragement of Faith and Hope is the end of God in his tranſmiſſion of the Records of his former Providences to us, *Pſal.* 78. 6, 7. *That the generation to come might know them, and declare them to their children*; From one Poſterity to another, *that they might ſet their hope in God.*

3. *It will Enliven our Prayer.*

'Tis a mighty Plea in Prayer. How often doth *David* urge it? Thou haſt been my help, thou haſt delivered my Soul from Death, wilt thou not deliver my feet from falling? but in the Churches concerns too, 1 *Chron.* 16. 11, 12. *Seek the Lord and his ſtrength, ſeek his face continually: remember the marvellous works that he hath done.* A reflection upon what God hath done, ſhould be enjoyned with our deſires of what we would have God to do for us. When *Moſes* was praying upon the top, while *Iſrael* was fighting with *Amalek* at the foot of the hill; he had the Rod of God in his hand, *Exod.* 17. 9. That miraculous Rod which had amazed *Pharaoh*, whoſe motion ſummoned all the Plagues upon them. That Rod which had ſplit the Sea for their paſſage, broached the Rock for their thirſt, and had been inſtrumental in many Miracles: certainly *Moſes* ſhewed this Rod to God, and pleaded all thoſe wonderful deliverances God had wrought inſtrumentially by it. No doubt but he carried it with him to ſhew to God for a Plea, as well as to the *Iſraelites* to ſpirit their Reſolutions againſt their Enemies.

4. *It will Prevent much Sin.*

A forgetfulneſs of his former works is one cauſe of our preſent Provocations. It was ſo in the caſe of the *Iſraelites* ſin, *Pſal.* 106. 7. *They remembred not the multitude of thy mercies, but provoked Him at the Sea, even at the Red Sea*: they had loſt the memory of ſo many Miracles in *Egypt*, and which aggravated their Sin, *they provoked him at the Sea, at the Red Sea*; they provoked him under a preſent indigency, as well as againſt former mercy: they provoked him in that place of ſtreights where all the powers on Earth could not have relieved them, had Heaven neglected them. The Provocation you may ſee, *Exod.* 14. 11, 12. which ſprang from a forgetfulneſs of his kindneſs ſo lately ſhewed to them. How apt are we to forget old Mercies, when we are ſo naturally apt to blot out of our memories mercies newly received? If this were well conſidered by men, it would prevent their enterprizes againſt the *Church*, and conſequently their ſhame and ruine. Are their Records of any who have hardened themſelves againſt God and proſpered *. How might in that reflection be ſeen the fruſtrations of Counſels, diſgracing of attempts, ſhowers of Fury and Vengeance from Heaven upon the heads of ſuch? The reaſon why the wonderful works of God were to be made known to poſterity, was, that they might not be as their Fathers, a Stubborn and Rebellious Generation * of men. If they did conſider thoſe tranſactions of God in and for his *Church*, they could no more think to ſtop the breath of perpetual powerful Providence, than to bridle in a Storm, or ſtop the motion of the Sun. To conclude this: Gods Providential Judgments are to be remembred: though they are for the puniſhment of the age that feel them, they are alſo for the inſtruction of the age which ſucceeds them; *tell* מרר number, be as exact as in your Accounts, wherein you take notice of every number, minute, and cipher. The works of Providence, as well as the Doctrine of God, are parts of a Childs Catechiſm, they are to keep up the conſideration of them in themſelves, and hand them in inſtruction to their Children.

* Job. 9. 4.

* Pſal. 78. 6, 8.

Fifthly, The fifth Duty. *Act faith on God's Providence.*

Times of trouble ſhould be times of confidence; fixedneſs of heart on God would prevent fears of heart. *Pſal.* 112. 7. *He ſhall not be afraid of evil tydings, his heart is fixed*; how? *truſting in the Lord: his heart is eſtabliſhed, they ſhall not be moved.* Otherwiſe without it we ſhall be as light as a Cock moved with every blaſt of evil tydings, our hopes will ſwim or ſink according to the news we hear. Providence would ſeem to ſleep, unleſs Faith and Prayer awakened it. The Diſciples had but little Faith in their Maſters account, yet that little Faith awakened him in a Storm, and he relieved them. Unbelief doth only diſcourage God from ſhewing his power in taking our parts. *Every one will walk in the name of his God, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever, Micah.* 4. 5. Heathens will truſt in their Idols, and ſhall not we in that God that lives for ever? Have we any reaſon to have a leſs eſteem of our confidence in God, than Heathens had of and in their Idols? we ſhould do our duty, which is Faith and Hope, and leave God to do his work, which is mercy and kindneſs. By unbelief we deny his Providence, diſparage his Wiſdom, and ſtrip him of his Power; we have none elſe to truſt, no creature can order any thing for the Churches good without God's commiſſion and direction; what ſhould we truſt him for? for that wherein his glory is concerned, which is more worth to him than all the World beſides. Truſt him moſt when inſtruments fail. God takes them off ſometimes, to ſhew that he needs not any, and to have

our

our confidence rightly place on him, which ſtaggered before between him and the Creature.

1. *All the godly formerly did act Faith on a leſs foundation.* The godly Patriarchs who lived eight or nine hundred years, depended upon Providence that long time, and ſhall not we for ſeventy years, the uſual term of mans life! They had Promiſe to ſupport them, we have not only the ſame Promiſe, but the Performances of them too. They had Providences, we have the ſame and more, all upon Record in Scripture, all ſince the Canon of Scripture was cloſed; whatſoever God hath remarkably done for his people in all ages. *Adam* had but one Promiſe, and but little experience of Gods Providence, yet no doubt truſted in him. We have a multitude of Promiſes, not only pronounced, but ſealed, confirmed by many repetitions, which are freſh obligations laid by God upon himſelf. The experience of all the Providences of God towards his *Church* for above five thouſand years; and ſhall our Faith ſtagger when upon us are come the ends of the World? doth it become us to have our Obligations to Faith ſo ſtrong, and our Exerciſe of it ſo weak? **Iſa. 7. 14.* The promiſe of Chriſt * that a Virgin ſhould bring forth a Son, was thought by God a ſufficient ſecurity to ſupport their confidence in him againſt the fury of their enemies; It being a greater wonder that a Virgin without loſs of her Virginity ſhould bring forth a Son, than the routing of an Hoſt of Enemies. Is not then the performance oft his God's actual ſending his Son to us through the Womb of a Virgin, higher ground of confidence for the Churches ſucceſs in every thing elſe, than barely the Promiſe could be? All creatures in danger have a natural confidence in God, *He is the confidence of all the ends of the earth*; but the *Churches* confidence may be more firmly placed in him, becauſe he is particularly the God of their Salvation, *Pſal.* 65. 5. *By terrible things, in Righteouſneſs, wilt thou anſwer us, O God of our ſalvation, who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth.*

2. *'Tis your only way to have mercy for the Church, and for our ſelves.*

If he *take pleaſure in them that hope in his mercy*, as it is in *Pſal.* 147. 11. He will take pleaſure to relieve them, He will *ſtrengthen the bars of their gates, verſe* 13, If he take pleaſure in them that hope in his mercy, then the ſtronger and more lively their hope is, the more intenſe is Gods pleaſure in them. If they do not hope in his Mercy, he hath no pleaſure in them, and no delight to them. He hath goodneſs laid up for them that fear him, and he will lay it out too for them that truſt in him, *Pſal.* 31. 15. *O how great is thy goodneſs which thou haſt laid up for them that fear thee, which thou haſt wrought for them that truſt in thee before the ſons of men?* 'Tis laid up for all that fear him, but it is wrought for them that truſt in him. It is manifeſted upon ſpecial acts of truſt and relyance, and wrought before the ſons of men. Thoſe that own God publickly in a way of relyance, God will own them publickly in a way of kindneſs. Faith is the key that unlocks the Cabinet of ſpecial Providence. Thoſe eyes which move about all the World, are fixed upon thoſe that truſt in him, *Pſal.* 33. 18. *The eye of the Lord is upon them that hope in his mercy.*

The ſixth Duty. *Wait upon God in the way of his Providence.* Wait upon him as he is a faithful Crea- ** 1 Pet. 4. 19.* tor *, much more ſince the title of being our Redeemer is added to that of our Creator, which ſtrengthens his Relation to us. Not to wait, diſparageth his care, bounds his power, or reflects upon his Wiſdom, as if he had ſtript himſelf of his immenſe goodneſs, and forgot both his Promiſe and his People; as if he had cancelled the Covenant, and given up his whole intereſt to the Luſts of men. Wait in the ſaddeſt appearances; the hour of Chriſts Death was diſmal in the World, and darkneſs upon the Earth; A Miraculous Eclipſe of the Sun taken notice of by the very Heathens; yet were we never nearer to happineſs than in that dreadful time when our Saviour was moſt dyed in his own Blood. The Sanguine Complexion of the Evening sky, is a preſage of a fair ſucceeding Morning; ſo many times is the red Veſture of the Church.

1. *Wait upon him obedientially.*

Commit your ſouls to God, but *in well doing* *. * 1 Pet. 4. 19.* Uſe no indirect means; a contempt of the precept cannot conſiſt with Faith in either Promiſe or Providence. The obeying part is ours, the governing part is Gods, *Prov.* 23. 17. *Let not thine heart envy Sinners; but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long; for ſurely there is an end, and thine expectation ſhall not be cut off.* God will govern all the day, but we muſt fear him all the day. When fear on our part attends Government on Gods part, there will be an end of our carnal fears, and a good iſſue of our hopes. The greateſt deliverances of his Church have been when his People has ſtood ſtill. *Exod.* 14. 13. As that deliverance was a type of all future, and a ground of Faith; ſo the carriage God injoyned was a rule to his People in all future ſtraits. 'Tis againſt the Laws of God's Government for thoſe liſted in his Service to ſtir without order. The Law is our ſtanding-Rule of Duty. Providence cannot be a ſtanding viſible Rule, becauſe of the variety and ſeeming croſſneſs of it ſometimes to our apprehenſions. Do not preſume to lead God, but be led by him: 'Tis our ſafety to follow him, 'tis our ſin and danger to preſume to be his Director. We may loſe our ſelves when we are our own blind guides, and fall into a ditch; but when we follow God, he hath Wiſdom to foreſee the Precipices we may ſtumble into, and goodneſs to divert us from them. By interpoſing carnal devices, men may prehaps have their ends, but with little comfort, perhaps much bitterneſs to themſelves. *Jacob* by his haſty uſing his own and his Mothers ſinful project for the Bleſſing, got it indeed, but a croſs too, for he was a man of Sorrow all his days. By waiting in God's way, we ſhall have our ends with more ſweetneſs, becauſe purely a fruit of God's care and goodneſs.

2. *Wait Patiently.* How often are our Spirits troubled about future events, and are afraid of the evil which threatens us, as if we were in pain for God, and in doubt of his wiſe Conduct? Think not God's time too long. He waits as much for a fit opportunity to ſhew his Mercy, as you can wait for the enjoyment of it, *Iſa.* 13. 18. *Therefore will the Lord wait that he may be gracious unto you; bleſſed are all they that wait for him.* 'Tis a part of our bleſſedneſs to wait for God, ſince it is a part of God's kindneſs to wait for a fit ſeaſon to be gracious to us. 'Tis not for us to preſcribe Rules to God, but follow the Rules he preſcribes to us. He hath freely made his Promiſe, let him be Maſter of his own time to make it good. He will ſhew as much Wiſdom in accompliſhing, as he did Mercy in declaring it. God can do things in a moment, but is it his Wiſdom to take time, that his People may have time to exerciſe their truſt, their hope, and their patience. He will take time in the ways of his Providence, as well as he did in the works of Creation.

tion. He allotted six days to that which he could have framed in a minute. He is Judge of what is needful for us, and when it is needful for us. If God should give us that, which is a mercy in its own nature, many times when we desire it, it might not be a mercy. If we will trust the skill of his Wisdom for the best season, it cannot but be a mercy, for he will give it us with his own glory, and grace wrapt up in it, which will make it sweeter to himself when his Wisdom is honoured, and sweeter to us when our good is promoted. God's methods appear in the end both wiser and better than our frames. Infinite goodness aims more at our welfare, than our shallow self-love; and infinite Wisdom can conduct things to our welfare better than our short-sighted skill. He that knows all the moments of time, knows best how to time his actions. As God staid for a fulness of time to bring the great Redemption by Christ into the World, so he stays for a fulness of time to bring all the great consequences and appendices of it unto his Church. *Every thing is beautiful in his time.* In its own time; In God's time, not in ours*, &c.

* Eccles. 3. 11.

3. *Wait constantly.* Though the Wheels of Providence seem sometimes to stand still *, and God seems to put a period to the care of his Church, yet let not us neglect our Duty. Wait a while, and the Wheels will be put upon their former rolling. Some particular passages of Providence may trouble us for a while, but in the issue God may answer our desires above our expectation, and thereby confute our fears. His Providences are sometimes like Rivers that run under ground, out of sight, but will rise again with a delightful Stream, with some new Medicinal quality, contracted from the Earth by the way. *Joseph*, a Prisoner, waits upon God for his Liberty, and God gives him freedom with preferment. God can bring about his Peoples safety by unexpected ways. Who would have imagined before, that his own Dream should make him a Captive, and *Pharaoh*'s Dream make him a Favourite? The chief Butler remembers him not till he was in an exigencie, and the divining skill of the Wise men of *Egypt* confounded. *Joseph* lost nothing by waiting upon God, who made so many circumstances concur to promote his Honour. Wait therefore upon him in the sorest afflictions. The *Church* is only afflicted in Mercy, but the Enemies of it are pulled up by the roots, *Jer* 30. 11. *I am with thee to save thee; though I make a full end of the Nations whether I have scattered thee, yet I will not make a full end of thee, but I will correct thee in measure.* God deals with his People as a Father, who corrects to reform, not to destroy; but with his enemies he deals as a Judge. God's Providence, like *Moses* his Rod, may seem sometimes a devouring Serpent, but it is to convince the *Egyptians*, and deliver the *Israelites*.

* Ezek. 1. 21.

4. *Wait in the use of lawful means for preservation*; Not to use means, is to slight his Providence; not to trust it. It seems not to consist with the Wisdom of God to order things always so, as to be necessitated to put forth an extraordinery power in things which his creatures by a common Providence can naturally accomplish. God saves by natural means; when they will not serve the turn, he will save by supernatural. God chose an Ark to preserve *Noah* in. He did not want supernatural means for his preservation. He might have catched him up in a Cloud, and continued him their till the drying of the waters. *Noah* doth not dispute the business with God, but prepares an Ark according to his order, and he was Righteous in his obedience as well as in his trust. God would not preserve our Saviour by a Miracle, when ordinary means would serve the turn. He commands *Joseph* by his Angel to flee into *Egypt* with the Child *: *Joseph* desires not God to preserve him by an extraordinary power to serve his Pains of Travelling; he submits to God's order, and God quickly clears the way for his return. Indeed sometimes the Wheels of Providence are lifted up from the Earth, and do not go in the ordinary tracts *; but Miracles must be left to God's Pleasure, for us to desire them is to tempt our great Governor.

* Mat. 2. 13.

* Ezek. 1. 19.

The Seventh Duty. *Pray for the Church.*

'Tis an encouragement that our Suit in this case will not be denied. The desire of welfare is conformable to his Counsel, which shall stand notwithstanding the Devices of men. His Counsel in particular concerns of men shall stand, much more is the stability of his Counsel for the Church. He is a God hearing Prayer in a way of common Providence, and a God hearing Prayer in a way of special attention, *Psal.* 61. 1. *Hear my cry, O God, attend unto my Prayer.* *David* desires that God would hear him, as more particularly concerned in his case. He is so in the concerns of his *Church*; will he hear an *Ishmael* crying for himself, and young Lyons roaring for their Prey, and stop his Ears to the voice of his own Spirit in his People, pleading for the *Church*, dearer to him than the whole mass of Nature? We have greater Arguments to use than in any other case. The Relation the *Church* hath to God; The affection God hath to the *Church*. *Lazarus whom thou lovest is sick*, was *Martha*'s argument to Christ. What greater encouragement to our petitions, than God's affection, than God's Relation? God loves to have our affection comply with his; God loves others the better for soliciting its welfare. *Moses* had the greatest manifestation of God's Love after he had prayed for the *Israelites* *, though in a case of sin, and presently after in *Exod.* 33. 11. God speaks with him *face to face as a man speaks to his friend*; and in the same chapter, and the beginning of *Exod.* 34. God shews him *his glory* as much as he was capable to bear. *Daniel* was a great Petitioner for the *Church* *. He was God's great favourite upon that account, and had the clearest and highest Revelations made to him of the course of Providence in the World.

Prov. 19. 21.

* Exod. 32. 32.

* Dan. 9. 3, 21. Dan. 10. 2, 5.

The eighth Duty. *When you receive any mercy for the Church in answer of Prayer, give God the glory of it.*

The varity of his Providences gives us matter for new songs and compositions. What Volleys of joyful shouts? what Hallelujahs to God do we find upon the Ruine of Antichrist, *Rev.* 19. 1, 2, 3. God calls for Praise out of the Throne, *vers.* 5. And the *Church* returns it, *verse* 6, 7. 'Tis God rides upon the Cherub, 'Tis God that sits upon the wings of the Wind, 'tis God who is in all Instruments to quicken their motions, and direct them to their scope.

Psal. 149. 1.

Psal. 18. 10.

The ninth Duty. *Imitate God in his affections to the Church.*

Christ did what he did for the good of his *Church*: God doth what he doth for the advantage of the *Church*. Let the same mind be in us that was in Christ; let the same end be ours which is the end of God. Thus we shall be like our Creator, thus we shall be like our Governor, thus we shall be

like our Redeemer, Men take it kindly from others that love thoſe they have a reſpect for. God loves all that love his People, and bleſſes them that bleſs them, *Gen.* 12. 3. *I will bleſs them that bleſs thee, and curſe them that curſe thee.*

The tenth Duty. *Look after ſincerity before God.*

'Tis for the ſecurity of ſuch that God ſhews himſelf ſtrong. No man that fully believes and underſtands this Doctrine, but ſhould be glad to be of that happy Society, that Aſſembly of the firſt born, who are under the care of a watchful eye, and the mighty power of the God of the whole Earth. When God choſe *Iſrael*, the very ſtrangers ſhould for their own Intereſt joyn with them *. And to ſuch as *take hold of his covenant* he promiſes to *give a name in his houſe, that ſhall not be cut off* *. Yea even *to the ſons of the ſtrangers that ſhould joyn themſelves to the Lord. v.* 6. Let this encourage us to Chriſtanity. God never encouraged men to be Chriſtians by Promiſes of Worldly greatneſs, but by Promiſes of a conſtant care of them for their happineſs, by Promiſes of making all things work together for their good. If God will ſhew himſelf ſtrong for thoſe that are perfect in heart towards him, then he hath no ſtrength for thoſe that are unſound and falſe in heart towards him. No man hath an intereſt in his ſpecial Providence without Faith. The Power, Knowledg, Wiſdom of God, are all ſet againſt him. Though the whole World be in commotions, the Earth be removed, and the Mountains caſt into the depths of the Sea, there is no ground of fear to Faith; but what Buckler againſt them hath Unbelief and Hypocriſie? What ſecurity againg Wrath can Riches give you? What defence againſt his power can your Potſherd ſtrength afford you? It was not for *Jobs* wealth that God made his boaſts of him, but for his ſincerity, *Job* 1. 8. *Haſt thou conſidered my ſervant* Job, *that there is none like him in the Earth. A perfect and an upright man*? And for the want of this he loaths a World. Labour therefore for ſincerity towards God, beg it of God. Get the evidence of it, and preſerve it.

* Iſa. 14. 1.

* Iſa. 56. 4, 5.

FINIS.

A SUPPLEMENT To the ſeveral DISCOURSES Upon Various Divine Subjects.

By the Late Learned Divine *STEPHEN CHARNOCK*, B. D.

A DISCOURSE OF THE Sinfulneſs and Cure of Thoughts.

Gen. 6. 5. *And God ſaw that the wickedneſs of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*

I Know not a more lively deſcription in the whole Book of God, of the Natural Corruption derived from our firſt Parents, than theſe words; wherein you have the Ground of that *grief*, which lay ſo cloſe to God's Heart, *v.* 6. and the Reſolve thereupon to deſtroy Man, and whatſoever was ſerviceable to that ungrateful Creature. That muſt be highly offenſive, which moved God to repent of a Fabrick ſo pleaſing to him at the Creation: Every Stone in the Building being at the firſt laying pronounced *good* by Him, and upon a review at the finiſhing the whole, He left it the ſame Character with an Emphaſis; † *very good*. There was not a Pin in the whole Frame but was * *very beautiful*, and being wrought by infinite ‖ *wiſdom*, it was a very comely piece of Art. What then ſhould provoke him to repent of ſo excellent a work? *The wickedneſs of Man, which was great in the Earth.* How came it to paſs, that Man's wickedneſs ſhould ſwell ſo high? Whence did it ſpring? From the *Imagination.* Tho' theſe might be ſinful Imaginations, might not the ſuperior faculty preſerve it ſelf untainted? Alas! That was defiled; *The imagination of the Thoughts* was Evil. But tho' running Thoughts might wheel about in his Mind, yet they might leave no ſtamp or impreſſion upon the Will and Affections. Yes, they did, *The imagination of the Thoughts of his Heart was evil.* Surely all could not be under ſuch a blemiſh: Were there not now and then ſome pure flaſhes of the Mind? No not one; *Every Imagination.* But granting that they were evil, might there not be ſome fleeting good mixed with them: As a poyſonous Toad hath ſomething uſeful? No, *Only evil.* Well, but there might be ſome intervals of Thinking, and tho' there was no good Thought, yet evil ones were not always rouling there. Yes, they were *Continually*; not a moment of Time that Man was free from them. One would ſcarce imagine ſuch an inward neſt of wickedneſs, but God hath affirmed it; and if any Man ſhould deny it, his own Heart would give him the lye.

† Gen. 1. 31.

*Ec. 3. 11.

‖ Pſal. 104. 24.

Πεϱιϕαλλὴς τεχνήγημα. *Euſeb. Præpar. Evang.*

Let us now conſider the words by themſelves.

יצר *Imagination*, properly ſignifies *figmentum*, of יצר to afflict, preſs or form a thing by way of compreſſion. And thus 'tis a *metaphor* taken from a *Potters* framing a *Veſſel*, and extends to whatſoever is fram'd inwardly in the Heart, or outwardly in the work. 'Tis uſually taken by the Jews for that fountain of ſin within us: † *Mercer* tells us, it is always uſed in an evil ſenſe: But there are two places (if no more) wherein it is taken in a good ſenſe, *Iſa.* 26. 3. * *Whoſe mind is ſtayed*; and 1 *Chro.* 29. 18. where *David* prays, that a diſpoſition to offer

† *Alii rectius dicunt non eſſe* יצר *niſi in malum.* Merc. in loc.

יצר מסור
יצר הרע
יצר הטוב
Maimon. More Nevoch. Par. 3. c. 22. Amam. Cenſur. in ocum.

offer willingly to the Lord might be preserved in the *Imagination of the Thoughts of the Heart of the People.* Indeed, for the most part 'tis taken for the evil Imaginations of the Heart, as *Deut.* 31. 21. *Psal.* 103. 14. *&c.* The Jews make a double figment, a good and bad; and fancy two Angels assign'd to Man, one bad, another good: Which *Maimonides* interprets to be nothing else but natural Corruption, and Reason. This word *Imagination* being joyn'd with *Thoughts*, implies not only the compleat Thoughts, but the first motion or formation of them to be evil.

The word *Heart* is taken variously in Scripture. It signifies properly that inward Member, which is the seat of the vital Spirits: But sometimes it signifies, 1. The *Understanding* and *Mind*, *Psal.* 12. 2. *With a double Heart do they speak*; *i. e.* With a double Mind, *Prov.* 8. 5. 2. For the Will, 2 *Kings* 10. 30. *All that is in my Heart*; *i. e.* in my Will and Purpose. 3. For the *Affections*; as, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart*; *i. e.* with all thy Affections. 4. For *Conscience*, 2 *Sam.* 24. 5. *David's Heart smote him*; *i. e.* his Conscience check'd him. But *Heart* here is used for the whole Soul, because (according to *Pareus* his note) the Soul is chiefly seated in the Heart, especially the Will, and the Affections her Attendants; because when any Affection stirs, the chief motion of it is felt in the Heart. So that by the *Imaginations of the thoughts of the Heart* are here meant all the inward operations of the Soul, which play their part principally in the Heart: whether they be the acts of the Understanding, the resolutions of the Will, or the blu-strings of the Affections.

Only evil.] The Vulgar mentions not the exclusive Particle רק, and so enervates the sense of the place. But our Neighbour Translations either express it as we do, *Only*; or to that sense that they were *Certainly*, or *no other than Evil.*

כל היום *Continually.*] The Hebrew, *All the day* or *every day.* Some Translations express it *verbatim* as the Hebrew. Not a moment of a Man's Life, wherein our hereditary Corruption doth not belch out its froth, even from his Youth, as God expounds it, *Gen.* 8. 21. to the end of his Life.

Whether we shall refer the general wickedness of the Heart in the Text to that Age, as some of the *Jesuits* do, because after the Deluge God doth not seem so severely to censure it: Or rather take the Exposition the learned *Rivet* gives of it, referring the first part of the Verse [*and God saw that the wickedness of Man was great in the Earth*] to those Times; and the second part to the universal Corruption of Man's Nature, and the root of all sin in the World. The *Jesuits* argument will not be very valid, for the extenuation of original Corruption, from *Gen.* 8. 21. For if Man's Imaginations be evil *from his Youth*, what is it but in another Phrase to say they were so *continually?* But suppose it be understood of the Iniquity of that Age, may it not be applied to all Ages of the World? *David* complains of the wickedness of his own time, *Psal.* 14. 3. *Psal.* 5. 9. Yet St. *Paul* applies it to all Mankind, *Rom.* 3. 12. Indeed it seems to be a description of Man's natural Pravity, by God's words after the Deluge, *Gen.* 8. 21. which are the same in sense, to shew that Man's Nature, after that destroying Judgment, was no better than before. Every word is emphatical, exaggerating Man's defilement; Wherein consider, the Universality

1. Of the Subject, *Every Man.*
2. Of the Act, *Every Thought.*
3. Of the Qualification of the Act, *Only Evil.*
4. Of the Time, *Continually.*

Gen. 8. 21. *Rivet. in Gen. exercit.* 51.

The words, thus opened, afford us this Proposition:

That the Thoughts and inward operations of the Souls of Men, are naturally universally evil, and highly provoking.

Some by *Cogitation* mean not only the acts of the Understanding, but those of the Will, yea, and the sense too. But indeed that which we call Cogitation, or *Thought*, is the work of the Mind; *Imagination*, of the fancy. 'Tis not properly thought, till it be wrought by the Understanding; because the Fancy was not a Power designed for Thinking, but only to receive the Images impress upon the sense, and concoct them, that they might be fit matter for Thoughts; and so 'tis the *Exchequer*, wherein all the acquisitions of sense are deposited, and from thence received by the intellective Faculty. So that Thoughts are *inchoative* in the Fancy, *consummative* in the Understanding, *terminative* in all the other Faculties. Thought first engenders *Opinion* in the *Mind*; Thought spurs the *Will* to *consent* or *dissent*; 'tis *Thought* also which Spirits the *Affections.*

Cartes. Princip. Philos. Part I. *Sect.* 9.

I will not spend time to acquaint you with the Methods of their Generation. Every Man knows he hath a thinking Faculty, and some inward Conceptions, which he calls Thoughts, he knows that he thinks, and what he thinks; though he be not able to describe the manner of their formation in the Womb, or remember it any more than the species of his own Face in a Glass.

In this Discourse let us first see what kind of Thoughts are Sins.

1. Negatively. *A simple apprehension of sin is not sinful.* Thoughts receive not a sinfulness barely from the Object: That may be unlawful to be acted, which is not unlawful to be thought of. Though the Will cannot will Sin without Guilt, yet the Understanding may apprehend Sin without Guilt; for that doth no more contract a pollution by the bare apprehension, than the Eye doth by the reception of the species of a loathsome Object. Thoughts are morally Evil, when they have a bad *Principle*, want a due *end*, and converse with the Object in a wrong *manner.* Angels cannot but understand the Offence which displaced the *Apostate Stars* from Heaven; but they know not sin *cognitione practicâ:* Glorified Saints may consider their former Sins, to enhance their admirations of pardoning Mercy. *Christ* himself must needs understand the matter of the Devil's Temptation; yet Satan's Suggestions to his Thoughts were as the Vapours of a Jakes mixed with the Sun-beams, without a defilement of them. Yea, God himself, who is infinite Purity, knows the Object of his own Acts, which are conversant about sin; as his Holiness in forbidding it, Wisdom in permitting, Mercy in pardoning, and Justice in punishing. But thoughts of sin in Christ, Angels, and glorified Saints, are accompanied with an abhorrency of it, without any combustible Matter in them to be kindled by it. As our Thoughts of a divine Object are not gracious, unless we love and delight in it; so a bare apprehension of Sin is not positively criminal, unless we delight in the Object apprehended. As a sinful Object doth not render our Thoughts evil, so a divine Object doth not render them good; because we may think of it with undue circumstances, as unseasonably, coldly, *&c.* And thus there is an imperfection in the best thought a regenerate Man hath; for though I will suppose he may have a sudden ejaculation, without the mixture of any positive Impurity, and a simple apprehension of sin, with a detestation of it, yet there is a defect in each of them; because 'tis not with

with that raiſed Affection to God, or intenſe abhorrency of Sin, as is due from us to ſuch Objects, and whereof we were capable in our primitive ſtate.

2. Poſitively. Our Thoughts may be branched into firſt Motions, or ſuch that are more voluntary.

1. *Firſt Motions:* Thoſe unfledg'd Thoughts, and ſingle Threads, before a multitude of them come to be twiſted and woven into a Diſcourſe: Such as skip up from our natural Corruption, and ſink down again as Fiſh in a River. Theſe are Sins, though we conſent not to them; becauſe, though they are without our *Will*, they are not againſt our *Nature*, but ſpring from an inordinate Frame, of a different hue from what God implanted in us. How can the firſt Sprouts be good if the Root be evil? Not only the Thought formed, but the very formation or firſt imagination is evil. Voluntarineſs is not neceſſary to the *eſſence* of a Sin, though it be to the aggravation of it. 'Tis not my Will or Knowledge which doth make an Act ſinful, but God's prohibition. *Lot*'s Inceſt was not uſhered by any deliberate conſent of his Will; yet who will deny it to be a ſin, ſince he ſhould have exerciſed a ſeverer Command over himſelf, than to be overtaken with Drunkenneſs, which was the occaſion of it? Original Sin is not *effective* voluntary in Infants; becauſe no act of the Will is exerted in an Infant about it: Yet it is voluntary *ſubjective*; becauſe it doth *inhære voluntati*. Theſe Motions may be ſaid to be voluntary *negatively*, becauſe the Will doth not ſet bounds to them, and exerciſe that ſovereign dominion over the operations of the Soul, which it ought to do, and wherewith it was at his firſt Creation inveſted. Beſides, though the Will doth not immediately conſent to them, yet it conſents to the Occaſions, which adminiſter ſuch Motions; and therefore, according to the Rule, that *cauſa cauſæ eſt cauſa cauſati*, they may be juſtly charged upon our ſcore.

Gen. 19. 33, 35.

2. *Voluntary Thoughts*, which are the bloſſoms of theſe Motions. Such that have no lawful Object, no right end, not governed by Reaſon, eccentrick, diſorderly in their Motions, and like the jarring Strings of an untun'd Inſtrument. The meaneſt of theſe floating Fancies are Sins; becauſe we act not in the production of them as rational Creatures: And what we do without Reaſon, we do againſt the law of our Creation, which appointed Reaſon for our Guide, and the underſtanding to be τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν, the governing power in our Souls.

Theſe may be reduced to three Heads,

1. In regard of God. 2. Of our ſelves. 3. Of others.

I. In regard of God.

1. *Cold Thoughts of God*; When no Affection is raiſed in us by them. When we delight not in God, the object of thoſe Thoughts, but in the Thought it ſelf, and operation of our Mind about Him, conſiſting of ſome quaint Notion of God, of our own conceiving. This is to delight in the *act* or *manner* of thinking, not in the *object* thought of; and thus theſe Thoughts have a folly and vanity in them. They are alſo ſinful in a regenerate Man, in reſpect of the faintneſs of the Underſtanding, not acting with that vigour, and ſpritelineſs, nor with thoſe raiſed and ſpiritual Affections, which the worth of ſuch an Object doth require.

2. *Debaſing Conceptions, unworthy of God.* Such are called in the Heathen *Vain Imaginations* *; who, as they *glorified not God, as God*, ſo they did not think of God as God, according to the *dignity* of a *Deity*. Such a *mental Idolatry* may be found in us, when we dreſs up a God according to our own Humours, humanize Him, and aſcribe to Him what is grateful to us, though never ſo baſe †. Which is a groſſer degrading of the Deity, than any repreſentation of Him by material Images; becauſe it is directly againſt his *Holineſs*, which is his *Glory*, applauded chiefly by the Angels; and an Attribute, which He *ſwears* by, as having the greateſt regard to the Honour of it. Such an Imagination *Adam* ſeemed to have, conceiting God to be ſo mean a Being, that he, a Creature not of a Day's ſtanding, could mount to an equality of Knowledge with Him.

* Rom. 1. 21. διαλογισμοῖς, *their reaſonings about God.*

† Pſal. 50. 21. *Thou thoughteſt that I was altogether ſuch a one as thy ſelf.* Ex. 15. 11. Iſa. 6. 3. Pſa. 89. 35.

3. *Accuſing Thoughts of God:* Either of his Mercy, as in Deſpair; or of his Juſtice, as too Severe, as in *Cain* ‖. Of his Providence: *Adam* conceited, yea and charged God's Providence to be an occaſion of his Crime *: His Poſterity are no juſter to God, when they accuſe him as a negligent Governour of the World, *Pſal.* 94. 11. *The Lord knoweth the Thoughts of Man that they are vanity.* What Thoughts? Injurious Thoughts of his Providence, *v.* 7. as though God were ignorant of Men's Actions; or, at beſt, but an idle Spectator of all the Unrighteouſneſs done in the World, not to *regard* it, though He did *ſee* it. And they in the Prophet were of the ſame ſtamp, That ſaid in their Hearts, *The Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil.* From ſuch kind of Thoughts moſt of the Injuries from Oppreſſors, and Murmurings in the Oppreſſed, do ariſe.

‖ Ge. 4. 13.

* Ge. 3. 12. *The woman whom thou gaveſt to be with me.*

Zep. 1. 12.

4. *Curious Thoughts about things too high for us.* 'Tis the frequent buſineſs of Mens Minds to flutter about things without the bounds of God's Revelation. Not to be content with what God hath publiſhed is to accuſe Him, in the ſame manner as the *Serpent* did to our firſt Parents, of envying us an intellectual Happineſs. Yet how do all *Adam*'s Poſterity long after this forbidden Fruit!

Gen. 3. 5. *God knows that your Eyes ſhall be opened.*

II. *In regard of our ſelves*; Our Thoughts are proud, ſelf-confident, ſelf-applauding, fooliſh, covetous, anxious, unclean; and what not?

1. *Ambitious:* The aſpiring Thought of the firſt Man runs in the Veins of his Poſterity. God took notice of ſuch ſtrains in the King of *Babylon*, when he ſaid in his Heart, *I will exalt my Throne above the Stars of God: I will aſcend above the heights of the Clouds; I will be like the moſt High* *. No leſs a Charge will they ſtand under, that ſettle themſelves upon their own bottom, *eſtabliſh their own Righteouſneſs, and will not ſubmit to the Righteouſneſs of God's appointment* †. The moſt forlorn Beggar hath ſometimes Thoughts vaſt enough to graſp an Empire.

* Iſa. 14. 13, 14.

† Ro. 10. 3.

2. *Self-confident* ‖: *Edom*'s Thoughts ſwelled him into a vain confidence of a perpetual proſperity. And *David* ſometimes ſaid in the like ſtate, that he ſhould never be moved.

‖ Obad. 3. *That ſaith in his heart Who ſhall bring me down to the ground?*

3. *Self-applauding:* Either in the vain remembrances of our former Proſperity, or aſcribing our preſent happineſs to the dexterity of our own wit. Such flaunting Thoughts had *Nebuchadnezzar*, at the conſideration of his ſetling *Babylon* the Head, and *Metropolis* of ſo great an Empire. Nothing more ordinary among Men, than over-weaning Reflections upon their own parts, and * *thinking of themſelves above what they ought to think.*

Dan 4. 30. *Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the houſe of the Kingdom,* &c.

* Rom. 12. 3.

4. *Ungrounded Imaginations of the events of things, either preſent or future:* Such wild Conceits, like *Meteors* bred of a few Vapours, do often friſk in our Minds. 1. *Of things preſent:* 'Tis likely *Eve* fooliſhly imagin'd ſhe had brought forth the *Meſſiah*, when ſhe brought forth a *Murderer*, *Gen.* 4. 1. *I have gotten a Man the Lord* (as in the Hebrew) believing (as ſome interpret) that ſhe had brought forth the promiſed Seed. And ſuch a briſk conceit *Lamech*

אִישׁ אֶת־יְהוָה

Ge.5.29. Exth. 6.6. ſeems to have had of *Noah* †. 2. *Of things to come*, either in beſpeaking falſe Hopes, or antedating improbable Griefs. Such are the jolly Thoughts we have of a happy Eſtate in Reverſion, which yet we may fall ſhort of. *Haman*'s Heart leap'd at the King's Queſtion, (*What ſhall be done to the Man whom the King delighteth to Honour?*) fancying himſelf the mark of his Prince's Favour, without thinking that a Haltar ſhould ſoon choak his Ambition. Or perplexing Thoughts at the fear of ſome Trouble, which is not yet fallen upon us, and perhaps never may. How did *David* torture his Soul by his unbelieving Fears, that *he ſhould one day periſh by the hand of Saul*? Theſe foreſtalling Thoughts do really affect us: We often feel caprings in our Spirits upon imaginary Hopes, and ſhiverings upon conceited Fears. Theſe pleaſing Impoſtures, and ſelf-afflicting Suppoſitions are ſigns either of an idle or indigent Mind, that hath no will to work, or only rotten materials to work upon.

1 Sa 27. 1. *And David ſaid in his Heart*, &c.

5. *Immoderate Thoughts about lawful things:* When we exerciſe our Minds too thick, and with a fierceneſs of Affection above their Merit: Not in ſubſerviency to God, or mixing our Cares with dependencies on Him. Worldly concerns may quarter in our Thoughts; but they muſt not poſſeſs all the room, and thruſt Chriſt into a Manger: Neither muſt they be of that value with us, as the Law was with *David*, ſweeter than the Honey or the Honey-comb.

III. *In regard of others*; All Thoughts of our Neighbour againſt the Rule of Charity. *Such that imagine evil in their Hearts, God hates* *. Theſe principally are, 1. *Envious*, when we torment our ſelves with others Fortunes. Such a Thought in *Cain*, upon God's acceptance of his Brother's Sacrifice, was the Prologue to, and foundation of that curſed Murder. 2. *Cenſorious*, Stigmatizing every Freckle in our Brother's Converſation. 3. *Jealous and evil Surmiſes*, contrary to Charity, *which thinks no evil*. 4. *Revengeful*; ſuch made *Haman* take little content in his Preferments, as long as *Mordecai* refuſed to court him. And *Eſau* thought of the days of Mourning for his Father, that he might be revenged for his Brother's Deceits.

*Zec.8.17

Gen. 4. 5. 1 Tim 6.4. 2 Co 13.5.

Eſth. 5.13. Ge. 27.41. *Eſau ſaid in his heart*, &c.

There is no Sin committed in the World, but is hatched in one or other of theſe Thoughts. But beſide theſe, there are a multitude of other volatile Conceits, like ſwarms of Gnats buzzing about us, and preying upon us, and as frequent in their Succeſſions, as the curlings of the Water upon a ſmall breath of Wind, one following another cloſe at the Heels. The Mind is no more ſatisfied with Thoughts, than the firſt Matter is with Forms, continually ſhifting one for another, and many times the nobler for the baſer: As when upon the Putrefaction of a human Body, part of the Matter is endued with the form of Vermin. Such changeable things are our Minds, in leaving that which is good for that which is worſe, when they are enveigled by an active Fancy, and Bedlam Affections. This *Madneſs is in the Hearts of Men while they live*, and ſtarts a thouſand Frenzies in a Day. At the beſt, our Fancy is like a *Carrier's Bag*, ſtuffed with a world of Letters, having no dependance upon one another; ſome containing Buſineſs, and others nothing but Froth.

Eccleſ.9.3

In all theſe Thoughts there is a further Guilt in three reſpects, *viz.* 1. *Delight*, 2. *Contrivance*, 3. *Re-acting*.

1. *Delight* in them. The very tickling of our Fancy by a ſinful Motion, though without a formal Conſent, is a Sin; becauſe it is a degree of complacency in an unlawful Object. When the Mind is pleaſed with the ſubject of the Thought, as it hath a tendency to ſome ſenſual Pleaſure, and not ſimply in the Thought it ſelf, as it may enrich the Underſtanding with ſome degree of Knowledge. The thought indeed of an evil thing may be without any delight in the evil of it; as Philoſophers delight in making experiments of poyſonous Creatures, without delighting in the Poyſon, as it is a noxious quality. We may delightfully think of Sin without Guilt, not delighting in it as Sin, but as God by his wiſe providential ordering extracts Glory to himſelf, and good to his Creature. In this caſe, though a ſinful act be the *material object* of this pleaſure, yet 'tis not the *formal object*; becauſe the delight is not terminated in the ſin, but in God's ordering the event of it to his own Glory. But an Inclination to a ſinful Motion, as it gratifies a corrupt Affection, is ſin: Becauſe every Inclination is a malignant tincture upon the Affections, including in its own nature an averſion from God, and teſtifying Sin to be an agreeable Object. And without queſtion, there can be no inclination to any thing, without ſome degree of pleaſure in it: Becauſe it is impoſſible we can incline to that, which we have a perfect abhorrency of. Hence it follows, that every inclination to a ſinful Motion is *Conſenſus inchoatus*, or a Conſent in *Embryo*: Though the Act may prove abortive. If we think of any unlawful thing with pleaſure, and imagine it either in *fieri* or *facto eſſe*, it brings a guilt upon us, as if it were really acted. As when upon the conſideration of ſuch a Man's being my Enemy, I fancy Robbers riſling his Goods, and cutting his Throat, and rejoyce in this revengeful Thought, as if it were really done, 'tis a great Sin: Becauſe it teſtifies an approbation of ſuch a Butchery, if any Man had Will and Opportunity to commit it. And though it be a Suppoſition, yet the act of the Mind is really the ſame it would be, if the ſinful act I think of were performed. Or when a Man conditionally thinks with himſelf, I would ſteal ſuch a Man's Goods, or kill ſuch a Perſon, if I could eſcape the Puniſhment attending it, it is as if he did rob and murder him; becauſe there is no impediment in his Will to the commiſſion of it, but only in the outward Circumſtances. Nay, though it be a meer *Ens intentionale*, or *rationis*, which is the object of the Thought, yet the act of the Mind is real, and as ſignificant of the inclination of the Soul, as if the Object were real too: As if a Man hath an unclean Motion at the ſight of a Picture, which is only a Compoſition of well-mixed and well-ordered Colours: Or at the appearance of the Idea of a Beauty fram'd in his own Fancy: 'Tis as much Uncleanneſs as if it were terminated in ſome ſuitable Object, the hindrance being not in the Will, but in the inſufficiency of the Object to concur in ſuch an Act. Now, as the more delight there is in any Holy Service, the more precious it is in it ſelf, and more grateful to God: ſo the more pleaſure there is in any ſinful Motion, the more malignity there is in it.

2. *Contrivance*. When the delight in the thought grows up to the contrivance of the act, (which is ſtill the work of the thinking Faculty:) When the Mind doth brood upon a ſinful Motion, to hatch it up, and invents methods for performance: which the Wiſe Man calls *artificial Inventions*. So a learned Man interprets διαλογισμοὶ πονηροὶ, *Mat.*15.19. of contrivances of Murder. Adultery, *&c.* And the Word ſignifies properly *reaſonings*. When Mens Wits play the Devils in their Souls, in inventing *ſophiſtical* Reaſons for the commiſſion and juſtification of their Crimes, with a mighty jollity at their own Craft. Such Plots are the Trade of a wicked

Eccl.7.29. חשבנות Dr. Hammond on Mat.15.9.

wicked Man's Heart. A covetous Man will be working in his inward Shop from Morning till Night to ſtudy new Methods for Gain *: and voluptuous and Ambitious Perſons will draw Schemes and Models in their Fancy, of what they wou'd outwardly accompliſh: *They conceive miſchief, and bring forth vanity, and their belly prepares deceit,* Job 15. 35. Hence the Thoughts are called the *counſels* † and *devices* * *of the heart:* when the Heart ſummons the Head, and all the Thoughts of it, to ſit in debate, as a private Junto, about a ſinful Motion.

*2Pet.2.14 καρδίαν γεγυμνασμένην πλεονεξίας, a heart exercis'd in covetous practices.

†1Cor.4.5

*Iſa. 32. 7, 8.

3. *Re-acting Sin after 'tis outwardly committed.* Though the individual Action be tranſient, and cannot be committed again: yet the Idea and Image of it remaining in the Memory, may by the help of an apiſh fancy, be repeated a thouſand times over with a rarify'd pleaſure: As both the Features of our Friends, and the agreeable Converſations we have had with them, may with a freſh reliſh be repreſented in our Fancies, tho' the Perſons were rotten many Years ago.

Kimchi in 66.Pſal. as quoted by Grotius in Mat.5.20. Ut jam ſervaris bene corpus adultera meus eſt. Nec cuſtodiri, ni velit, ille poteſt. Nec mentem ſervare potes, licet omnia claudas: Omnibus occluſis intus adulterit, Ovid Amor. l. 3. Eleg. 3. v. 5, &c.

Having thus declar'd the nature of our Thoughts, and the degrees of their Guilt; the next thing is to prove that they are Sins.

The *Jews* did not acknowledge them to be Sins, unleſs they were blaſphemous, and immediately againſt God himſelf. Some Heathens were more Orthodox, and among the reſt *Ovid*, whoſe amorous Pleaſures, one would think, ſhou'd have ſmother'd ſuch ſentiments in him. *The Lord* (whoſe Knowledge is infallible) *knows the thoughts of men that they are vanity, Pſal.* 94. 11. Yea, and of the *wiſeſt* Men too, according to the Apoſtle's Interpretation, 1 *Cor.* 3. 20. And who were they that *became vain in their Imaginations,* but the wiſeſt Men the carnal World yielded? The *Grecians* the greateſt Philoſophers, the *Ægyptians* their Tutors, and the *Romans* their Apes. The elaborate Operations of an unregenerate Mind are *fleſhly, Rom.* 8. 5, 7. If the whole Web be ſo, needs muſt every Thread. *The thought of fooliſhneſs is ſin,* * (*i. e.* a fooliſh Thought; not objectively a Thought of folly, but one formally ſo) yea, *an abomination to God* †. As good Thoughts and purpoſes are Acts in God's account, ſo are bad ones. *Abraham*'s intention to offer *Iſaac* is accounted as an actual Sacrifice ‖: that the ſtroke was not given, was not from any reluctance of *Abraham*'s Will, but the gracious indulgence of God. *Sarah* had a deriding Thought, and God chargeth it as if it were an outward Laughter, and a ſcornful Word *. Thoughts are the Words of the Mind, and as real in God's account, as if they were expreſſed with the Tongue.

*Prov.24. 9.

†Prov.15. 26.

‖ Heb. 11. 17.

Jam. 2.21.

*Gen. 18. 12, 15. *Therefore* Sarah *laughed within her ſelf ſaying,* בקרבה *in viſceribus ſuis, Targum.*

Rom.7.7. *I had not known luſt, except the Law had ſaid, Thou ſhalt not covet.*

There are three Reaſons for the proof of this, that they are Sins.

1. *They are contrary to the Law,* which doth forbid the firſt foamings and belchings of the Heart; becauſe they ariſe from an habitual corruption, and teſtifie a defect of ſomething which the *Law* requires to be in us, to correct the Excurſions of our Minds. Doth not the *Law* oblige Man as a *Rational* Creature? Shall it then leave that part, which doth conſtitute him Rational, to fleeting and giddy Fancies? No, it binds the Soul as the principal Agent, the Body only as the Inſtrument. For if it were given only for the ſenſitive part, without any reſpect to the rational, it wou'd concern Brutes as well as Men, which are as capable of a rational Command, and a voluntary Obedience, as Man without the conduct of a rational Soul. It exacts a conformity of the whole Man to God, and prohibits a diſformity; and therefore engageth chiefly the inward part, which is moſt the Man. It muſt then extend to all the Acts of the Man, conſequently to his Thoughts, they being more the Acts of the Man than the Motions of the Body. *Holineſs* is the prime excellency of the *Law*, a Title aſcribed to it twice in one Verſe, *Rom.* 7. 12. *Wherefore the Law is holy, and the Commandment holy, juſt, and good.* Could it be *holy*, if it indulged looſeneſs in the more noble part of the Creature? Could it be *juſt*, if it favour'd inward unrighteouſneſs? Could it be *good*, and uſeful to Man, which did not enjoyn a ſuitable conformity to God, wherein the Creature's Excellency lies? Can that deſerve the Title of a *Spiritual* Law, that ſhou'd only regulate the bruiſh part, and leave the Spiritual to an unbounded licentiouſneſs? Can *Perfection* be aſcrib'd to that Law, which doth countenance the unſavoury breathings of the Spirit, and lay no ſtricter an Obligation upon us than the Laws of Men? Muſt not God's Laws be as ſuitable to his Sovereignty, as Mens Laws are to theirs? Muſt they not then be as extenſive as God's Dominion, and reach even to the privateſt Cloſets of the Heart? 'Tis not for the honour of God's holineſs, righteouſneſs, goodneſs, to let the Spirit, which bears more flouriſhing Characters of his Image than the Body, range wildly about without a legal Curb.

Mat.5.28.

2. *They are contrary to the order of Nature, and the deſign of our Creation.* Whatſoever is a ſwerving from our primitive Nature, is Sin, or at leaſt a conſequent of it. But all Inclinations to ſin are contrary to that Righteouſneſs wherewith Man was firſt endued. Man was created both with a diſpoſition and ability for holy Contemplations of God; the firſt Glances of his Soul were pure; he came every way compleat out of the Mint of his infinitely wiſe and good Creator; and when God pronounc'd all his Creatures good, he pronounc'd Man very good amongſt the reſt. But Man is not now as God created him, he is off from his End, his Underſtanding is filled with Lightneſs and Vanity. This *Diſorder* never proceeded from the God of *order*; infinite Goodneſs could never produce ſuch an evil Frame; none of theſe looſe Inventions were of God's planting, but of Man's ſeeking. No, God never created the intellective, no, nor the ſenſitive part, to play *Domitian*'s Game, and ſport it ſelf in the catching of Flies. *Man that is in honour, and underſtands not* that which he ought to underſtand, and thinks not that which he ought to think, *is like the Beaſts that periſh:* he plays the Beaſt, becauſe he acts contrary to the Nature of a rational and immortal Soul. And ſuch Brutes we all naturally are, ſince the firſt Woman believ'd her Senſe, her Fancy, her Affection in their directions for the attainment of Wiſdom, without conſulting God's Law, or her own Reaſon. The Fancy was bound by the right of Nature to ſerve the Underſtanding: 'Tis then a ſlighting God's Wiſdom to invert this Order, in making that our Governour which he made our Subject. 'Tis injuſtice to the dignity of our own Souls, to degrade the nobler part to a ſordid Slavery; in making the Brute have Dominion over the Man; as if the Horſe were fitteſt to govern the Rider. 'Tis a falſeneſs to God, and a breach of truſt, to let our Minds be impoſed upon by our Fancy; in giving them only Feathers to dandle, and Chaff to feed on, inſtead of thoſe braver Objects they were made to converſe withal.

Eccleſ. 7. 29. *God made man perfect; but they have ſought out many inventions.*

Pſ. 49. 20. Gen. 3. 6.

3. *We are accountable to God, and puniſhable for Thoughts.* Nothing is the meritorious Cauſe of God's Wrath but Sin. The Text tells us, that they were once the Keys, which opened the Floudgates of

of Divine Vengeance, and broach'd both the upper and nether Cisterns, to overflow the World.

* Acts 8. 22. *If perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee.* *Prov. 12. 2. אישׁ מזמות *A man of thoughts, i. e.* evil thoughts: the word being usually taken in an ill sense. Κεκακὸς.

If they need a pardon *, (as certainly they do) then, if Mercy doth not pardon them, Justice will condemn them. And 'tis absolutely said, that *a Man of wicked devices* * [or Thoughts] *God will condemn.* 'Tis God's Prerogative, often mentioned in Scripture, *to search the heart.* To what purpose if the Acts of it did not fall under His Censure, as well as His Cognizance; *He weighs the Spirits, Prov.* 16. 2. in the Ballance of His Sanctuary, and by the Weights of His Law, to sentence them, if they be found too light. The Word doth discover, and judge them; *Heb.* 4. 12, 13. *It divides asunder the soul and spirit,* the sensitive part the Affections, and the rational the Understanding and Will; both which it doth dissect, and open, and judge the Acts of them, even the *Thoughts* and *Intents,* ἐνθυμήσεων καὶ ἐννοιῶν, whatsoever is within the θυμὸς and whatsoever is within the νὸς, the one referring to the Soul, the other to the Spirit: These it passeth a Judgment upon; as a Critick censures the *Errata's,* even to Syllables and Letters, in an old *Manuscript.* These we are to render an account of, (as the *Syriack* renders those Words, *v.* 13. *with whom we have to do.*) Of what? Of the first Bubblings of the Heart, the Motions and Intents of it. The least Speck and Atome of Dust in every Chink of this little World is known and censured by God. If our Thoughts be not judged, God wou'd not be a righteous Judge. He wou'd not judge according to the merit of the Cause, if outward Actions were only scann'd, without regarding the Intents, wherein the Principle and End of every Action lies, which either swell or diminish the malignity of it. Actions in kind the same, may have different Circumstances in the Thoughts to heighten the one above the other; and if they were only judged, the most painted Hypocrite might commence a blessed Spirit at last, as well as the exactest Saint. 'Tis necessary also for the Glory of God's *Omniscience.* 1 Cor 4. 5. 'Tis hereby chiefly that the extensiveness of God's Knowledge is discover'd, and that in order to the *praise,* or dispraise of Men, *viz.* To their Justification or Condemnation. Those very Thoughts will accuse thee before God's Tribunal, which accuse thee here before Conscience, His Deputy, *Rom.* 2. 15, 16. *Their Thoughts the mean while (i. e.* in this life, while Conscience bears witness) *accusing, or excusing one another; in the day when God shall judge the secrets of Men, i. e.* and also at the Day of Judgment, when Conscience shall give in its final testimony, upon God's Examination of the secret Counsels. This place is properly meant of those Reasonings concerning good and evil in Men's Consciences, agreeable to the Law of Nature imprinted on them, which shall excuse them, if they practise accordingly, or accuse them, if they behave themselves contrary thereunto. But it will hold in this Case; for if those inward approbations of the Notions of Good and Evil will accuse us for our contrary Practices, they will also accuse us for our contrary Thoughts. Our good Thoughts will be our Accusers for not observing them, and our bad Thoughts will be Indictments against us for complying with them. 'Tis probable the Soul may be bound over to answer chiefly for these at the last Day; for the Apostle charg-eth *Simon's* Guilt upon his *Thought,* not his Word, and tells him, *pardon* must be principally granted for that. The Tongue was only an Instrument to express what his Heart did think, and wou'd have been wholly innocent, had not his Thoughts been first criminal. What therefore is the principal Subject of Pardon, wou'd be so of Punishment: as the first Incendiaries in a Rebellion are most severely dealt with. And if (as some think) the fallen Angels were stript of their primitive Glory, only for a conceiv'd Thought, how heinous must that be, which hath inrolled them in a remediless Misery?

Non solum opus, sed mali operis cogitatio famas luet. Hieron in Hosea 7. Acts 8. 22.

Having proved that there is a sinfulness in our Thoughts, let us now see what *provocation* there is in them: Which, in some respects, is greater than that of our *Actions.* But we must take *Actions* here in *sensu diviso,* as distinguished from the inward *Preparations* to them. In the one there is more of *scandal*; in the other more of *odiousness* to God. God indeed doth not punish Thoughts so visibly, because, as He is Governour of the World, His Judgments are shot against those sins that disturb Humane Society: But He hath secret and spiritual Judgments for these, suitable to the nature of the sins.

Now Thoughts are greater in respect,

1. *Of fruitfulness. The wickedness that God saw great in the Earth* was the fruit of *Imaginations.* They are the immediate Causes of all Sin. No Cockatrice but was first an Egg. It was a Thought to be as God *, that was the first breeder of all that Sin, under which the World groans at this Day; For *Eve's Mind* was first *beguiled* in the alteration of her Thought. Since that the Lake of inward Malignity acts all its evil by these smoaking Steams. Evil Thoughts lead the Van in our Saviour's Catalogue, as that which spirits all the black Regiment which march behind. As good Motions cherish'd will spring up in good Actions, so loose Thoughts favour'd will break out in visible Plague-sores, and put fire unto all that Wickedness which lies habitually in the Heart; as a Spark may to a whole stock of Gunpowder. The *vain babblings* of the Soul, as well as those of the Tongue, *will encrease to more ungodliness.* Being thus the Cause, they include virtually in them all that is in the effect; as a Seed contains in its little Body the Leaves, Fruit, Colour, Scent, which afterward appear in the Plant. The Seed includes all, but the Colour doth not virtually include the Scent, or the Scent the Colour, or the Leaves the Fruit: So 'tis here, One Act doth not include the formal Obliquity of another: but the Thought which caused it, doth seminally include both the formal and final Obliquity of every Action; both that which is in the Nature of it, and in the End to which it tends. As when a Trades-man cherisheth immoderate Thoughts of Gain, and in the attaining it runs into *many foolish and hurtful Lusts,* there is cheating, lying, swearing, to put off the Commodity: all these several Acts have a particular sinfulness in the nature of the Acts themselves, besides the tendency they have to the satisfying an inordinate Affection; all which are the Spawn of those first immoderate Thoughts stirring up greedy Desires.

* Gen. 3. 5. 2 Cor. 11. 3. Matt. 15. 19. 2 Tim. 2. 16. 1 Tim. 6. 9

2. In respect of *Quantity.* Imaginations are said to be *continually* evil. There is an infinite variety of Conceptions, as the *Psalmist* speaks of the Sea, *wherein are all things creeping innumerable, both small and great,* and a constant Generation of whole shoals of them; that you may as well number the Fish in the Sea, or the Atomes in the Sun-beams, as recount them.

There is a greater *number* in regard of the *Acts,* and in regard of the *Objects.*

1. In regard of the *Acts of the Mind.*

1. *Antecedent Acts.* How many preparatory Motions of the Mind are there to one wicked external

"Αν ὃ σαυτὸν ἔγκλειον ἀνοίξῃς ᾧ ἄνθρωπε, πύλον καὶ πολυπαθὲς τραμεῖον κακῶν ἐφήσεις καὶ σημεῖα, &c. *Plutarch. Moral. p.* (*mihi*) 500

nal Act*? Yea, how many ſinful Thoughts are twiſted together to produce one deliberate ſinful Word? All which have a diſtinct guilt, and, if weigh'd together, wou'd outweigh the Guilt of the Action abſtractedly conſider'd. How many repeated Complacencies in the firſt Motion, degrees of Conſent, reſolved Broodings, ſecret Plottings, Propoſals of various Methods, ſmoothering contrary Checks, vehement Longings, delightful Hopes, and foreſtall'd Pleaſures in the Deſign? All which are but Thoughts aſſenting or diſſenting in order to the Act intended. Upon a diſſection of all theſe ſecret Motions by the critical power of the Word, we ſhould find a more monſtrous Guilt, than would be apparent in the ſingle Action, for whoſe ſake all theſe Spirits were rais'd. There may be no Sin in a material Act, conſider'd in it ſelf, when there is a provoking Guilt in the mental Motion. A Hypocrite's Religious Services are materially good, but poiſoned by the Imagination skulking in the Heart, that gave birth unto them. 'Tis the wicked Mind or Thought makes the *Sacrifice* (a commanded Duty) *much more an abomination* to the Lord.

Pro. 21. 27 בזמה *with a wicked thought.* Eccl. 23. 3, 19. *Yet ſhe multiplied her whoredoms in calling to remembrance the days of her youth,* &c. v. 21. *the lewdneſs of her youth.*

2. *Conſequent Acts.* When a Man's Fancy is pregnant with the delightful Remembrance of the Sin that is paſt, he draws down a freſh Guilt upon himſelf: as they did in the Prophet, in reviving the concurrence of the Will to the Act committed, making the Senſual Pleaſure to commence Spiritual, and (if ever there were an aking Heart for it) revoking his former Grief by a renewed Approbation of his darling Luſt. Thus the Sin of Thoughts is greater in regard of *duration.* A Man hath neither Strength nor Opportunity always to act, but he may always think; and *Imagination* can ſupply the place of *Action.* Or if the Mind be tir'd with ſucking one Object, it can with the Bee preſently faſten upon another. Senſes are weary, till they have a new recruit of Spirits; as the poor Horſe may ſink under his Burden, when the Rider is as violent as ever. Thus old Men may change their outward Profaneneſs into mental Wickedneſs; and as the Pſalmiſt *remembred* his old Songs, *Pſal.* 77. 5, 6. ſo they their calcin'd Sins in the *Night,* with an equal Pleaſure. So that you ſee there may be a thouſand Thoughts as Uſhers and Lacqueys to one Act, as numerous as the Sparks of a new-lighted Fire.

2. In regard of the *Objects* the Mind is converſant about. Such Thoughts there are, and attended with a heavy Guilt, which cannot probably, no nor poſſibly deſcend into outward Acts. A Man may in a complacent Thought commit Fornication with a Woman in *Spain,* in a covetous Thought rob another in the *Indies,* and in a revengeful Thought ſtab a third in *America*; and that while he is in this Congregation. An *unclean Perſon* may commit a mental Folly with every Beauty he meets. A *covetous* Man cannot plunder a whole Kingdom; but in one twinkling of a Thought he may wiſh himſelf the poſſeſſor of all the Eſtates in it. A *Timon,* a μισάνθρωπος cannot cut the Throats of all the World; but, like *Nero,* with one Glance of his Heart he may chop off the Heads of all Mankind at a blow. An *Ambitious* Man's Practices are confin'd to a ſmall Spot of Land, but with a caſt of his Mind he may graſp an Empire as large as the four Monarchies. A Beggar cannot aſcend a Throne; but in his Thoughts he may paſs the Guards, murder his Prince, and uſurp the Government. Nay further, an *Atheiſt* may think *there is no God, Pſal.* 14. 1. *i. e.* (as ſome interpret it) wiſh there were no God, and thus in Thought undeifie God himſelf; though he may ſooner daſh Heaven and Earth in pieces, than accompliſh it. The Body is confin'd to one Object, and that narrow and proportionable to its Nature: But the Mind can wing it ſelf to various Objects in all parts of the Earth. Where it finds none, it can make one; For Fancy can compact ſeveral Objects together, coyn an Image, colour a Picture, and commit Folly with it when it hath done; It can neſtle it ſelf in Cobwebs ſpun out of its own Bowels.

3. In reſpect of *Strength.* Imaginations of the Heart are *only, i. e.* purely evil. The nearer any thing is in union with the Root, the more radical Strength it hath. The firſt Ebullitions of Light and Heat from the Sun are more vigorous than the remoter Beams: And the Steams of a Dunghil more noyſom next that putrefy'd Body, than when they are dilated in the Air. Grace is ſtronger in the Heart-operations, than in the outward Streams; and Sin more foul in the Imagination of the thoughts of the Heart, than in the Act. In the *Text* the outward *Wickedneſs* of the World is paſs'd over with a ſhort Expreſſion; but the Holy Ghoſt dwells upon the deſcription of the *wicked Imagination,* becauſe there lay the Maſs. Man's * *inward part is very wickedneſſes,* a whole Neſt of Vipers. Thoughts are the immediate Spawn of the original Corruption, and therefore partake more of the ſtrength and nature of it. Acts are more diſtant, being the Children of our Thoughts, but the Grandchildren of our natural Pravity. Beſides, they lie neareſt to that Wickedneſs in the inward part, ſucking the Breaſt of that poyſonous Dam that bred them. The ſtrength of our Thoughts is alſo reinforc'd by being kept in, for want of opportunity to act them; as Liquors in cloſe Glaſſes ferment and encreaſe their Spritelineſs. Muſing either Carnal or Spiritual, makes the † Fire burn the hotter; as the fury of Fire is doubl'd by being pent in a Furnace. Outward Acts are but the Sprouts; the Sap and Juice lies in the wicked Imagination or Contrivance, which hath a ſtrength in it to produce a thouſand Fruits as poyſonous as the former. The Members are the Inſtruments or * *Weapons* of unrighteouſneſs; now the whole Strength which doth manage the Weapon, lies in the Arm that weilds it; the Weapon of it ſelf could do no hurt without a force impreſt. Let me add this too, that Sin in Thoughts is more ſimply Sin. In Acts there may be ſome occaſional good to others, for a good Man will make uſe of the ſight of Sin committed by others to encreaſe his Hatred of it: But in our ſinful Thoughts there is no occaſion of good to others, they lying lock'd up from the view of Man.

* Pſal. 5. 9. קרבם הוות

† Pſal. 39. 3

* Rom. 6. 13. ὅπλα.

4. In reſpect of *Alliance.* In theſe we have the neareſt communion with the Devil. The Underſtanding of Man is ſo tainted, that his † *Wiſdom,* the chiefeſt Flower in it, is not only *earthly* and *ſenſual,* (it were well if it were no worſe) but deviliſh too. If the Flower be ſo rank, what are the Weeds? Satan's *Devices* and our *Thoughts* are of the ſame nature, and ſometimes in Scripture expreſt by the ſame Word, νοήματα. As he hath his Devices, ſo have we againſt the Authority of God's Law, the power of the Goſpel, and the Kingdom of Chriſt. The Devils are call'd *Spiritual Wickedneſſes,* becauſe they are not capable of carnal Sins. Prophaneneſs is an Uniformity with the World, and intellectual Sins are an Uniformity with the God of it, *Epheſ.* 2. 2, 3. There is a double walking, anſwerable to a double pattern in *v.* 2. *Fulfilling the deſires of the fleſh* is a *walking according to the courſe of this world,* or making the World

† Jam. 3. 15

1 Cor. 2. 11
2 Cor. 10. 5

Eph. 6. 12.

World our Copy; and *fulfilling the Deſires of the Mind* is a *walking according to the Prince of the Power of the Air*, or a making the Devil our Pattern. In carnal Sins Satan is a *Tempter*, in mental an *Actor*. Therefore in the one we are conformed to his Will; in the other we are transform'd into his Likeneſs. In outward we evidence more of Obedience to his Laws; in inward more of Affection to his Perſon, as all Imitations of others do. Therefore there is more of Enmity to God, becauſe more of ſimilitude and love to the Devil; a nearer Approach to the Diobolical Nature implying a greater Diſtance from the Divine. Chriſt never gave ſo black a Character as that of the Devil's Children, to the profane World, but to the Phariſees, who had left the Sins of Men to take up thoſe of Devils, and were moſt guilty of thoſe high Imaginations which ought to be brought into captivity to the obedience of Chriſt.

Rom. 8. 7. 5. In reſpect of *contrariety and odiouſneſs to God.* Imaginations were *only evil*; and ſo moſt directly contrary to God, who is *only good*. Our natural *enmity againſt God* is ſeated in the Mind. The ſenſitive part aims at its own Gratification; and in Mens *ſerving* their *Luſts* they ſerve their *Pleaſures*; but the τὸ ἡγεμονικὸν, the Prince in Man, is poſſeſt with Principles of a more direct contrariety; whence it muſt follow, that all the Thoughts and Counſels of it are tinctur'd with this Hatred. They are indeed a defilement of the higher part of the Soul, and that which belongs more peculiarly to God. And the nearer any part doth approach to God, the more abominable is a Spot upon it; as to caſt Dirt upon a Prince's Houſe is not ſo heinous as to deface his Image. The Underſtanding, the Seat of Thoughts, is more excellent than the Will; both becauſe we know and judge before we will, or ought to will only ſo much as the Underſtanding thinks fit to be willed; and becauſe God hath beſtowed the higheſt Gifts upon it, adorning it with more lively Lineaments of his own Image, *Col.* 3. 10. *Renewed in Knowledge after the Image of Him that created him*; implying, that there was more of the Image of God at the firſt Creation beſtow'd upon the Underſtanding, the Seat of Knowledge, than on any other part; yea, than on all the Bodies of Men diſtill'd together.

Titus 3. 3. *Serving diverſ Luſts and Pleaſures.*

Heb. 12. 9. *Father of Spirits* is one of God's Titles: To beſpatter His Children then, ſo near a Relation, the Jewel that he is choice of, muſt needs be more heinous. He being the Father of Spirits, this ſpiritual Wickedneſs of nouriſhing evil Thoughts, is a caſhiering all Child-like likeneſs to him. The traiterous Acts of the Mind are moſt offenſive to God: as 'tis a greater deſpite for a Son, to whom the Father hath given the greater Portion, to ſhut him out of his Houſe, only to revel in it with a Company of Rioters and Strumpets, than in a Child who never was ſo much the ſubject of his Father's Favour. And 'tis more heinous and odious, if theſe Thoughts, which poſſeſs our Souls, be at any time converſant about ſome Idea of our own framing. It were not altogether ſo bad, if we lov'd ſomething of God's creating, which had a phyſical goodneſs, and a real uſefulneſs in it to allure us: But to run wildly to embrace an *Ens rationis*, to prefer a thing of no exiſtence, but what is coloured by our own Imagination, of no vertue, no uſefulneſs, a thing that God never created, nor pronounc'd good, is a greater Enmity, and a higher ſlight of God.

Αὐτόχθονας παιδὰς ἢ κακίας, Plutarch Moral. Τάχιστον μὲν γὰρ, διὰ παντὸς δὲ τρέχει. Thales. Ding. Laert.

6. In reſpect of *Connaturalneſs and Voluntarineſs.* They are the Imaginations of the Thoughts of the *Heart*, and they are *continually* evil. They are as natural as the æſtuations of the Sea, the bubblings of a Fountain, or the twinklings of the Stars. The more natural any Motion is, ordinarily the *quicker* it is. Time is requiſite to Action, but Thoughts have an inſtantaneous Motion. The Body is a heavy piece of Clay, but the Mind can ſtart out on every occaſion. *Actions* have their ſtated *times* and *places*; but theſe ſollicit us, and are entertain'd by us at all *Seaſons*. Neither Day nor Night, Street nor Cloſet, Exchange nor Temple, can privilege us from them; We meet them at every Turn, and they ſtrike upon our Souls as often as light upon our Eyes. There is no *reſtraint* for them; the Laws of Men, the Conſtitution of the Body, the Intereſt of Profit or Credit, are mighty Bars in the way of outward Profaneneſs: but nothing lays the Reins upon Thoughts but the Law of God; and this Man is *not ſubject to, neither can be*, *Rom.* 8. 7. Beſides, the natural *Atheiſm* in Man is a ſpecial Friend and Nurſe of theſe; few firmly believing either the Omniſcience of God, or his Government of the World; which the Scripture ſpeaks of frequently, as the cauſe of moſt Sins among the Sons of Men. † Actions are done with ſome *reluctance*, and nips of natural Conſcience. Conſcience will ſtart at a groſs Temptation, but it is not frighted at Thoughts. Men may commit ſpeculative Folly, and their Conſcience look on, without ſo much as a Nod againſt it: Men may tear out their Neighbours Bowels in ſecret Wiſhes, and their Conſcience never interpoſe to part the Fray. Conſcience indeed cannot take notice of all of them; they are too ſubtil in their Nature, and too quick for the obſervation of a finite Principle. They are *many*, † and they are nimble too; like the bubblings of a boyling Pot, or the riſing of a Wave, that preſently ſlides into its Level; and as *Florus* ſaith of the *Ligurians*, the difficulty is more to find than conquer them. They are ſecret Sins, and are no more diſcern'd than Motes in the Air, without a ſpiritual Sun-beam; whence *David* cries out, *Pſal.* 19. 12. *Cleanſe me from ſecret Sins*; which ſome explain of Sins of Thoughts that were like ſudden and frequent Flaſhes of Lightning, too quick for his Notice, and unknown to himſelf. There is alſo more *delight* in them. There is leſs of Temptation in them, and ſo more of Election; and conſequently more of the Heart and Pleaſure in them, when they lodge with us. Acts of Sin are *troubleſome*, there is Danger as well as Pleaſure in many of them: but there is no outward Danger in Thoughts; therefore the Complacency is more compact, and free from Diſtraction. The Delight is more unmixed too; as intellectual Pleaſures are more refined than ſenſual. All theſe Conſiderations will enhance the Guilt of theſe inward Operations.

† Iſa. 29. 15. Ezek. 9. 9. Job 22. 13, 14.

† Pr. 19. 21. *There are many Devices in a Man's Heart.* Florus l. 2. c. 3. *Major aliquanto labor erat invenire, quam vincere.*

The Uſes ſhall be Two, tho' many Inferences might be drawn from the Point.

1. *Reproof.* What a Maſs of Vanity ſhould we find in our Minds, if we could bring our Thoughts in the ſpace of one Day, yea but one Hour, to an account? How many fooliſh Thoughts with our Wiſdom, ignorant with our Knowledge, worldly with our Heavenlineſs, hypocritical with our Religion, and proud with our Humiliations? Our Hearts wou'd be like a *Grott*, furniſhed with monſtrous and ridiculous Pictures: Or as the Wall in *Ezekiel*'s Viſion, pourtray'd with every Form of creeping Things, and abominable Beaſts; a greater Abomination than the Image of Jealouſie at the outward Gate of the Altar. Were our Inwards opened, how ſhould we ſtand gazing both with Scorn, and wonder at our being ſuch a Pack of Fools? Well may we cry out with *Agur*, *We have*

Ez. 8. 5, 10.

Prov. 30. 2.

not

not the Underſtandings of Men; We make not the uſe of them as is requiſite for rational Creatures; becauſe we degrade them to attendances on a brutiſh Fancy. I make no queſtion, but were we able to know the Fancies of ſome irrational Creatures, we ſhould find them more noble, heroick, and generous *in ſuo genere*, than the Thoughts of moſt Men; more agreeable to their Natures, and ſuited to the Law of their Creation †. How little is *God in any of our Thoughts*, according to His Excellency? No, our Shops, our Rents, our Backs and Bellies uſurp God's room. If any thoughts of God do ſtart up in us, how many covetous, ambitious, wanton, revengeful Thoughts are jumbled together with them? Is it not a monſtrous Abſurdity to place our Friend with a Crew of Vipers, to lodge a King in a Sty, and entertain him with the Fumes of a Jakes and Dunghil? *A wicked Man's Heart is little worth*; all the pedling Wares and Works in his inward Shop are not valuable with one Silver Drop from a gracious Man's Lips. It was an invincible Argument of the *Primitive Chriſtians* for the purity of the *Chriſtian Religion* above all others in the World, that it did prohibit evil Thoughts: And is it not as unanſwerable an Argument that we are no Chriſtians, if we give liberty to them? What is our moral Converſation outwardly, but only a bare abſtinence from Sin, not a diſaffection? Were we really and altogether Chriſtians, would not that which is the chiefeſt purity of Chriſtianity, be our pleaſure? And wou'd we any more wrong God in our ſecret Hearts, than in the open Streets? Is not Thought a Beam of the Mind, and ſhall it be enamour'd only on a Dunghil? Is not the Underſtanding the Eye of the Soul, and ſhall it behold only gilded Nothings? 'Tis the Flower of the Spirit, ſhall we let every Caterpillar ſuck it? 'Tis the Queen in us, ſhall every Ruffian deflore it? 'Tis as the Sun in our Heaven, and ſhall we beſmear it with miſty Fancies? It was created ſurely for better Purpoſes than to catch a thouſand weight of Spiders, (as *Heliogabalus* employ'd his Servants.) It was not intended to be made the Common-ſewer of Filthineſs, or ranked among thoſe ζῶα πάμφαγα, which eat not only Fruit and Fleſh, but Flies, Worms, Dung, and all ſorts of loathſom Materials. Let not therefore our Minds wallow in a Sink of fantaſtical Follies, whereby to rob God of his Due, and our Souls of their Happineſs.

† Pſal. 10. 4. *God is not in all his Thoughts.*

Pro. 10 20. *The Tongue of the Juſt is as choice Silver*, &c.

Apud nos & cogitare peccare eſt. Minucius Fœlix.

Ἀνθ' ὧν ἁ ψυχῆς. *Plat.*

Lampridius.

Ariſt. Hiſtor. animal. l. 8

2. *Exhortation.* We muſt take care for the ſuppreſſion of them. All Vice doth ariſe from Imagination: Upon what Stock doth Ambition and Revenge grow, but upon a falſe Conceit of the Nature of Honour? What engenders Covetouſneſs, but a miſtaken Fancy of the excellency of Wealth? *Thoughts* muſt be *forſaken* as well as our *way*; we cannot elſe have an evidence of a true Converſion: And if we do not diſcard them, we are not like to have an *abundant Pardon*; and what will the Iſſue of that be, but an *abundant Puniſhment*? Mortification muſt extend to theſe: *Affections* muſt be *crucify'd*, and all the little Brats of Thoughts, which beget them, or are begotten by them. Shall we nouriſh that which brought down the Wrath of God upon the old World; as though there had not been already ſufficient Experiments of the Miſchief they have done? Is it not our higheſt Excellency to be conform'd to God in Holineſs, in as full a meaſure as our finite Natures are capable? And is not God Holy in his Counſels and inward Operations, as well as in his Works? Hath God any Thoughts but what are righteous and juſt? Therefore the more fooliſh and vain our Imaginations are, the more are we *alienated from the Life of God*. The Gentiles were ſo, becauſe they *walked in the vanity of their Mind*; and we ſhall be ſo, if Vanity walk and dwell in ours. As the Tenth Commandment forbids all unlawful Thoughts and Deſires; ſo it obligeth us to all Thoughts and Deſires, that may make us agreeable to the Divine Will, and like to God himſelf. We ſhall find great Advantage by ſuppreſſing them: We can more eaſily reſiſt Temptations without, if we conquer Motions within. Thoughts are the Mutineers in the Soul, which ſet open the Gates for Satan: He hath held a ſecret Intelligence with them (ſo far as he knows them) ever ſince the Fall; and they are his Spies to aſſiſt him in the execution of his Devices. They prepare the Tinder, and the next fiery Dart ſets all on a Flame. Can we cheriſh theſe, if we conſider that Chriſt dy'd for them? He ſhed his Blood for that which put the World out of order? which was accompliſhed by the ſinful Imagination of the firſt Man, and continu'd by thoſe Imaginations mention'd in the Text. He dy'd to reſtore God to his Right, and Man to his Happineſs: neither of which can be perfectly attained, till thoſe be thrown out of the poſſeſſion of the Heart.

Eph. 4. 17, 18.

That we may do this, Let us conſider theſe following Directions, which may be branched into theſe Heads: 1. For the raiſing good Thoughts. 2. Preventing bad. 3. Ordering bad when they do intrude. 4. Ordering good when they appear in us.

1. For raiſing good Thoughts.

1. *Get renewed Hearts.* The Fountain muſt be cleanſed which breeds the Vermin. Pure Vapours can never aſcend from a filthy Quagmire. What Iſſue can there be of a vain Heart, but vain Imaginations? Thoughts will not become new, till a Man is in Chriſt. We muſt be holy before we can think holily. Sanctification is neceſſary for the diſlodging of vain Thoughts, and the introducing of good. A ſanctified Reaſon would both diſcover, and ſhame our natural Follies. As all animal Operations, ſo all the ſpiritual Motions of our Heads, depend upon the Life of our Hearts * as the *principium originis*. As there is a *Law in our Members* to bring us into Captivity to the *Law of Sin*, *Rom.* 7. 23. ſo there muſt be a *Law in our Minds* to bring our Thoughts to the *obedience of Chriſt*, 2 *Cor.* 10. 5. We muſt be renewed in the *Spirit of our Minds*, *Epheſ.* 4. 23. in our Reaſonings and Thoughts, which are the Spirits whereby the Underſtanding acts; as the animal Spirits are the Inſtruments of corporeal Motion. Till the Underſtanding be born of the Spirit †, it will delight in, and think of, nothing but things ſuitable to its fleſhly original: But when 'tis ſpiritual, it receives new Impreſſions, new Reaſonings and Motions, ſuitable to the Holy Ghoſt, of whom it is born. A Stone, if thrown upwards a thouſand times, will fall backward; becauſe 'tis a forc'd Motion: But if the nature of this Stone were chang'd into that of Fire, it would mount as naturally upward, as before it it ſunk downward. You may force ſome Thoughts toward Heaven ſometimes, but they will not be natural, till Nature be chang'd. Grace only gives *ſtability* †, and prevents Fluctuation, by fixing the Soul upon God as its chief End: And what is our End will not only be firſt in our Intentions, but moſt frequent in our Conſiderations. Hence a ſanctified Heart is called in Scripture a *ſtedfaſt Heart*. There muſt be an Enmity againſt Satan put into our

Mirandul. de Imaginat. c. 7.

† Iſa. 55. 7. *Let the wicked forſake his Way, and the Unrighteous Man his Thoughts*, &c.

Gal. 5. 24.

2 Co. 5. 17. Jer. 4. 14. *Waſh thy Heart from wickedneſs*, &c. *How long ſhall thy vain Thoughts lodge within thee?*

* Pro. 4. 23.

† John 3. 6. *That which is born of the Fleſh is Fleſh; and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit.*

† Heb. 13. 9. *It is a good thing that the Heart be eſtabliſhed with Grace.*

our Hearts, according to the firſt Promiſe, before we can have an enmity againſt his Imps, or any thing that is like him.

2. *Study Scripture.* Original Corruption ſtuffs us with bad Thoughts, and Scripture-knowledge would ſtock us with good ones; for it propoſeth things in ſuch terms, as exceedingly ſuit our imaginative Faculty, as well as ſtrengthen our Underſtanding. *Judicious knowledge* would make us *approve things that are excellent*: And where ſuch things are approved, Toys cannot be welcome. Fulneſs is the cauſe of ſtedfaſtneſs. The cauſe of an intent and piercing Eye is the multitude of Animal Spirits. Without this Skill in the Word we ſhall have as fooliſh conceits of Divine things, as ignorant Men, without the Rules of Art have of the Sun and Stars, or things in other Countries which they never ſaw. The Word is call'd, a *Lamp to our Feet, i. e.* the Affections: A *Light to our Eyes, i. e.* the Underſtanding. It will direct the glances of our Minds, and the motions of our Affections. It *enlightens the Eyes*, and makes us have a new proſpect of things: As a Scholar newly entred into Logick, and ſtudied the Predicaments, *&c.* looks upon every thing with a new Eye, and more rational Thoughts, and is mightily delighted with every thing he ſees; becauſe he eyes them as clothed with thoſe Notions he hath newly ſtudied. The Devil had not his Engines ſo ready to aſſault Chriſt, as Chriſt from his Knowledge had Scripture-Precepts to oppoſe him. As our Saviour by this means ſtifled Thoughts offered, ſo by the ſame we may be able to ſmother Thoughts ariſing in us. Converſe therefore often with the Scripture, tranſcribe it in your Heart, and turn it *in ſuccum & ſanguinem*; whereby a vigour will be derived into every part of your Soul, as there is by what you eat to every Member of your Body. Thus you will make your Mind Chriſt's Library, as *Hierom* ſpeaks of *Nepotianus*.

Ph. 1. 9, 10.

Pſal. 119. 105.

Pſa. 19. 8. *Enlightens the Eyes.*

Lectione aſſidua & meditatione diuturna pectus ſuum bibliothecam Chriſti fecerat Hierom Ep. 3.

3. *Reflect often upon the frame of your Mind at your firſt Converſion.* None have more ſettled, and more pleaſant Thoughts of Divine Things than new Converts, when they firſt claſp about Chriſt; partly becauſe of the novelty of their State, and partly becauſe God puts a full Stock into them; and diligent Trades-men at their firſt ſetting up have their Minds intent upon improving their Stock. Endeavour to put your Mind in the ſame poſture it was then. Or if you cannot tell the time when you did firſt cloſe with Chriſt, recollect thoſe Seaſons wherein you have found your Affections moſt fervent, your Thoughts moſt united, and your Mind moſt elevated; as when you renewed Repentance upon any fall, or had ſome notable chearings from God; and conſider what Matter it was which carried your Heart upward, what employment you were engaged in, when good Thoughts did fill your Soul; and try the ſame Experiment again. *Aſaph* would oppoſe God's ancient Works to his murmuring Thoughts: He would remember his Song in the Night, *i. e.* the Matter of his Song, and read over the Records of God's kindneſs. * *David* too would never forget, *i. e.* frequently renew the remembrance of thoſe *Precepts*, whereby God had particularly *quicken'd him* †. Yea, he would reflect upon the places too, where he had formerly Converſed with God, to reſcue himſelf from dejecting Thoughts; *therefore will I remember thee from the Land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the Hill Miſſar* ‖. Some Elevations ſurely *David* had felt in thoſe places, the remembrance whereof would ſweeten the ſharpneſs of his preſent Grief. When our former Sins viſit our Minds, pleading to be ſpeculatively reacted, let us remember the Holy Diſpoſitions we had in our Repentance for them, and the thankful Frames, when God pardoned them. The Diſciples at Chriſt's ſecond appearance reflected upon their own warm Temper, at his firſt diſcourſe with them in a Diſguiſe, to confirm their Faith, and expel their unbelieving Conceits. Strive to recollect Truths, Precepts, Promiſes, with the ſame affection which poſſeſt your Souls, when they firſt appeared in their glory and ſweetneſs to you.

* Pſal. 77. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.
† Pſa. 119. 93
‖ Pſ. 42. 6.

Lu. 24. 32. *Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?*

4. *Ballaſt your Heart with a Love to God. David* thought *all the Day of God's Law*, as other Men do of their Luſts, becauſe he unexpreſſibly *loved* it *. This was the ſucceſsful means he uſed to ſtifle *vain Thoughts*, and excite his hatred of them, 'Tis the property of Love *to think no Evil*, 2 Cor. 13. 5. It thinks good and delightful thoughts of God; friendly and uſeful thoughts of others. It fixeth the Image of our beloved Object in our Minds, that 'tis not in the power of other Fancies to diſplace it. The beauty of an Object will faſten a rolling Eye. 'Tis difficult to divorce our Hearts and Thoughts from that which appears lovely and glorious in our Minds, whether it be God or the World. Love willi by a pleaſing Violence bind down our Thoughts, and hunt away other Affections. If it doth not eſtabliſh our Minds, they will be like a Cork, which with a light Breath, and a ſhort curl of Water, ſhall be toſſed up and down from its Station. Scholars that love Learning, will be continually hammering upon ſome Notion or other, which may further their Progreſs, and as greedily claſp it, as the Iron will its beloved Loadſtone. He that is wing'd with a divine Love to Chriſt, will have frequent glances and flights towards him, and will ſtart out from his worldly buſineſs ſeveral times in a Day, to give him a viſit. Love in the very working is a ſettling Grace; it encreaſeth our delight in God, partly by the ſight of his amiableneſs, which is clear'd to us in the very act of loving, and partly by the recompences he gives to the affectionate carriage of his Creature; both which will ſtake down the Heart from Vagaries, or giving entertainment to ſuch looſe Companions, as evil Thoughts are. Well then, if we had this heavenly Affection ſtrong in us, it would not ſuffer unwholſom Weeds to grow up ſo near it; either our Love would conſume thoſe Weeds, or thoſe Weeds will choak our Love.

* Pſal. 119. 97, 113. *O how I love thy Law! it is my meditation all the day.* v. 113. *I hate vain thoughts, but thy Law do I love.*

Æneas ceſſus ſemper vigilantis inhæret, Æneam animo vixque dieſque refert. Ovi. Ep. 7.

Ὁ ὄρνις τὸ ἑαυτοῦ ἐρωτικὸν ἔχει. Luc. Dialog. Πτερωθεὶς ἐρωτικῷ ἔρωτι. Chryſoſt.

5. *Exerciſe Faith.* As the habit of Faith is attended with habitual Sanctification, ſo the acts of Faith are accompanied with a progreſs in the degrees of it. That Faith which brings Chriſt to dwell in our Souls, will make us often think of our Inmate. Faith doth reallize divine Things, and make abſent Objects as preſent; and ſo furniſheth Fancy with richer Streams to bathe it ſelf in, than any other Principle in the World. As there is a neceſſity of the uſe of Fancy, while the Soul is linked to the Body; ſo there is alſo a neceſſity of a Corrective for it. Reaſon doth in part regulate it, but 'tis too weak to do it perfectly, becauſe Fancy in moſt Men is ſtronger than Reaſon; Man being the higheſt of imaginative Beings, and the loweſt of intelligent; Fancy is in its exaltation more than in Creatures beneath him, and Reaſon in its detriment more than in Creatures above him; and therefore the Imagination needs a more ſkilful guide than Reaſon. Fancy is like Fire, a good Servant but a bad Maſter; if it march under the conduct of Faith, it may be highly ſerviceable, and by putting lively Colours upon divine Truth may ſteal away our Affections to it. *Faith is the evidence of things not ſeen*, viz. not by a corporeal, but intellectual Eye; and ſo it will ſupply the

Mirand. de Imaginat. c. 11. 12.

the office of ſence: *'Tis the ſubſtance of things hoped for*; and if Hope be an attendant on Faith, our Thoughts will ſurely follow our Expectations. The remedy *David* uſed, when he was almoſt ſtifled with diſquieting Thoughts, was to excite his Soul to a hope and confidence in God, *Pſal.* 42. 5. and when they return'd upon him, he uſeth the ſame diverſion, *v.* 11. *The Peace of God, i. e.* the Reconciliation made by a Mediator between God and us believingly apprehended, will *keep* [or garriſon] *our Hearts and Minds* [or Thoughts] againſt all anxious Aſſaults both from within and without †. When any vain Conceit creeps up in you, act faith on the interceſſion of Chriſt; and conſider, Is Chriſt thinking of me now in Heaven, and pleading for me, and ſhall I ſquander away my Thoughts on Trifles, which will coſt me both Tears and Bluſhes? Believingly meditate on the Promiſes; they are a means to *cleanſe us from the filthineſs of the Spirit*, as well as that of the *Fleſh* *. If the having them be a Motive, the uſing them will be a means to attain this end. *Looking at the things that are not ſeen*, preſerves us from *fainting*, and *renews the inward Man day by day* †. Theſe inviſible things could not well keep our Hearts from fainting, if Faith did not firſt keep the Thoughts from wandring from them.

Pſal. 42. 5. *Why art thou caſt down, O my Soul? and why art thou diſquieted within me? Hope thou in God.*

† Ph. 4. 6, 7. φρουρήσει τὰ νοήματα ὑμῶν.

* 2 Cor. 7. 1. *Having therefore theſe Promiſes, let us cleanſe our ſelves*, &c.

† 2 Cor. 4. 16, 18. *Intus exiſtens prohibet alienum*

6. *Accuſtom your ſelf to a ſerious Meditation every Morning.* Freſh airing our Souls in Heaven will engender in us purer Spirits, and nobler Thoughts. A Morning ſeaſoning would ſecure us for all the Day. Though other neceſſary Thoughts about our Callings will, and muſt come in, yet when we have diſpatch'd them, let us attend our Morning Theme as our chief Companion. As a Man that is going with another about ſome conſiderable buſineſs, ſuppoſe to *Weſtminſter*, though he meets with ſeveral Friends in the way, and ſalutes ſome, and with others with whom he hath ſome Affairs, he ſpends a little Time, yet he quickly returns to his Companion, and both together go their intended Stage. Do thus in the preſent Caſe. Our Minds are Active, and will be doing ſomething though to little purpoſe; and if they be not fixed upon ſome noble Object, they will like Mad-Men and Fools be mightily pleaſed in playing with Straws. The thoughts of God were the firſt Viſiters *David* had in the Morning; God and his Heart met together as ſoon as he was awake, and kept Company all the Day after. In this Meditation look both to the Matter and Manner.

Pſal. 139. 17, 18.

1. *Look to the Matter of your Meditation.* Let it be ſome Truth, which will aſſiſt you in reviving ſome languiſhing Grace, or fortifie you againſt ſome triumphing Corruption; for 'tis our darling ſin which doth moſt envenom our Thoughts †. As if you have a thirſt for Honour, let your Fancy repreſent the Honour of being a Child of God, and Heir of Heaven. If you are inclined to Covetouſneſs, think of the Riches ſtored up in a Saviour, and diſpenſed by him. If to Voluptuouſneſs, fancy the Pleaſures in the ways of Wiſdom here, and at God's right-hand hereafter. This is to deal with our Hearts as *Paul* with his Hearers, to *catch* them with *guile*. Stake your Soul down to ſome ſerious and profitable Myſtery of Religion; as the Majeſty of God, ſome particular Attribute, his condeſcenſion in Chriſt, the love of our Redeemer, the value of his Sufferings, the vertue of his Blood, the end of his Aſcenſion, the work of the Spirit, the excellency of the Soul, beauty of Holineſs, certainty of Death, terror of Judgment, torments of Hell, and joys of Heaven. Why may not that which was the ſubject of God's *innumerable Thoughts*, be the ſubject of ours? God's Thoughts and Counſels were concerning Chriſt, the end of his Coming, his Death, his Precepts of Holineſs, and promiſes of Life; and that not only ſpeculatively, but with an infinite pleaſure in his own Glory, and the Creatures good to be accompliſhed by him. Would it not be work enough for our Thoughts all the Day, to travel over the length, breadth, height, and depth of the love of Chriſt? Would the greatneſs of the Journey give us leiſure to make any ſtarts out of the way? Having ſettled the Theme for all the Day, we ſhall find occaſional Aſſiſtances, even from worldly Buſineſſes; as Scholars, who have ſome Exerciſe to make, find helps in their own courſe of Reading, tho' the Book hath no deſign'd reſpect to their proper Theme. Thus by imploying our Minds about one thing chiefly, we ſhall not only hinder them from vain excurſions, but make even common Objects to be Oyl to our good Thoughts, which otherwiſe would have been Fuel for our bad. Such generous Liquor would ſcent our Minds and Converſations all the Day; that whatſoever Motion came into our Hearts, would be tinctured with this Spirit, and ſavour of our Morning Thoughts: As Veſſels having been filled with a rich Wine, communicate a reliſh of it to the Liquors afterward put into them. We might alſo more ſteadily go about our worldly Buſineſs, if we carry God in our Minds; as one Foot of the Compaſs will more regularly move about the Circumference, when the other remains firm in the Center.

† Pro. 23. 7. *As a Man thinks in his Heart, ſo is he.*

The heads of the Catechiſm might be taken in order, which would both encreaſe and actuate our knowledge.

Pſal. 40. 5.

2. *Look to the Manner of it.*

1. Let it be *intent.* Tranſitory Thoughts are like the glances of the Eye, ſoon on, and ſoon off; they make no clear diſcovery, and conſequently raiſe no ſprightly Affections. Let it be one principal Subject, and without ſlitting from it; for if our Thoughts be unſteady, we ſhall find but little warmth: A Burning-Glaſs often ſhifted fires nothing. We muſt *look* at the things that are not *ſeen*, as wiſtly as Men do at a mark they ſhoot at. Such an intent Meditation would *change* us into the *Image*, and caſt us into the Mould of thoſe Truths we think of; it would make our Minds more buſie about them all the Day: As a glaring upon the Sun fills our Eyes for ſome time after with the Image of it. To this purpoſe look upon your ſelves as deeply concern'd in the things you think of. Our Minds dwell upon that whereof we apprehend an abſolute neceſſity. A condemned Perſon would ſcarce think of any thing but procuring a Reprieve, and his earneſtneſs for this would bar the door againſt other Intruders.

2 Co. 4. 18. σκοπούντων 2 Co. 3. 18.

2. Let it be *affectionate and practical.* Meditation ſhould excite a ſpiritual Delight in God, as it did in the *Pſalmiſt* †; and a divine Delight would keep up good Thoughts, and keep out Impertinencies. A bare ſpeculation will tire the Soul, and without application, and preſſing upon the Will and Affections, will rather chill, than warm Devotion. 'Tis only by this means, that we ſhall have the efficacy of Truth in our Wills, and the ſweetneſs in our Affections, as well as the notion of it in our Underſtandings. The more operative any Truth is in this manner upon us, the leſs power will other Thoughts have to interrupt, and the more diſdainfully will the Heart look upon them, if they dare be impudent. Never therefore leave thinking of a ſpiritual Subject, till your Heart be affected with it. If you think of the evil of Sin, leave not till your Heart loath it; if of God, ceaſe not till it mount up in admirations of him. If you think of his Mercy, melt for abuſing it; if of his Soveraignty, awe your Heart into obedient Reſolutions; if of his Preſence, double your watch

† Pſa. 104. 34. *My meditation of him ſhall be ſweet: I will be glad in the Lord.*

over your ſelf. If you meditate on Chriſt, make no end till your Hearts love him; if of his Death, plead the value of it for the juſtification of your Perſons, and apply the vertue of it for the ſanctification of your Natures. Without this practical ſtamp upon our Affections, we ſhall have light Spirits, while we have opportunity to converſe with the moſt ſerious Objects. We often hear fooliſh Thoughts breathing out themſelves in a Houſe of Mourning, in the midſt of Coffins, and trophies of Death, as if Men were confident they ſhould never die; whereas none are ſo ridiculous as to aſſert they ſhall live for ever. By this inſtance in a Truth ſo certainly aſſented to, we may judge of the neceſſity of this direction in Truths more doubtfully believed.

7. Draw ſpiritual Inferences from occaſional Objects. Pſa. 8. 3,4. *David* did but wiſtly conſider the Heavens, and he breaks out in ſelf-abaſement, and humble admirations of God. Glean matter of Inſtruction to your ſelves, and Praiſe to your Maker, from every thing you ſee: It will be a degree of reſtoration to a ſtate of Innocency, ſince this was *Adam*'s Task in Paradiſe. Dwell not on any created Object only as a *Virtuoſo*, to gratifie your rational Curioſity, but as a *Chriſtian* call Religion to the Feaſt, and make a ſpiritual Improvement. No Creature can meet our Eyes, but affords us Leſſons worthy our Thoughts, beſides the general notices of the Power and Wiſdom of the Creator. Thus may the Sheep read us a Lecture of Patience, the Dove of Innocence, the Ant and Bee raiſe Bluſhes in us for our ſluggiſhneſs, and the ſtupid Oxe, and dull Aſs correct and ſhame our ungrateful Ignorance. And ſince our Saviour did ſet forth his own Excellency in a ſenſible Dreſs, the conſideration of thoſe Metaphors by an acute Fancy, would garniſh out divine Truths more deliciouſly, and conduct us into a more inward knowledge of the Myſteries of the Goſpel. He whoſe Eyes are open, cannot want an Inſtructer, unleſs he wants a Heart. Thus may a Tradeſman ſpiritualize the Matter he works upon, and make his Commodities ſerve in wholſome Meditations to his Mind, and at once enrich both his Soul and his Coffers; yea, and, in part, reſtore the Creatures to the happineſs of anſwering a great end of their Creation, which Man depriv'd them of when he ſubjected them to Vanity. Such a view of ſpiritual Truths in ſenſible Pictures would clear our Knowledge, purifie our Fancies, animate our Affections, encourage our Graces, diſgrace our Vices, and both argue and ſhame us into Duty; and thus take away all the Cauſes of our wild wandring Thoughts at once. And a frequent exerciſe of this Method would beget and ſupport a habit of thinking well, and weaken, if not expel, a habit of thinking ill.

2. The ſecond ſort of Directions are for the preventing bad Thoughts. And to this purpoſe,

Pro. 30. 32. *1. Exercije frequent Humiliations.* Pride expoſeth us to impatient and diſquieting Thoughts; whereas Humility clears up a calm and ſerenity in the Soul. 'Tis *Agur*'s Advice to be humbled particularly for evil Thoughts. Frequent Humiliations will deaden the Fire within, and make the ſparks the fewer. The deeper the Plough ſinks, the more the Weeds are killed, and the Ground fitted for good Grain. Men do not eaſily fall into thoſe ſins, for which they have been deeply humbled. Vain Conceits love to reſide moſt in jolly Hearts: But Eccl. 7. 3,4. *by the ſadneſs of the Countenance the Heart is made better.* There is more of Wiſdom, or wiſe Conſideration in a compoſed and graciouſly mournful Spirit, whereas Carnal Mirth and Sports cauſe the Heart to evaporate into Lightneſs and Folly. The more we are humbled for them, the more our hatred of them will be fomented; and conſequently the more prepared ſhall we be to give them a repulſe upon any bold intruſion.

2. *Avoid entangling your ſelves with the World.* This Clay will clog our Minds, and a dirty Happineſs will engender but dirty Thoughts. Who were ſo fooliſh to have *inward thoughts that their Houſes ſhould continue for ever*, but thoſe that *truſted in their Riches* *? If the World poſſeſs our Souls, it will breed carking Thoughts: Much Buſineſs meets with Croſſes, and then it breeds murmuring Thoughts; and ſometimes it is crown'd with Succeſs, and then it ſtarts proud and ſelf-applauding Thoughts. *Thoſe that will be Rich, fall into many fooliſh and hurtful Luſts*; ſuch Luſts that make Men Fools; and one part of Folly is to have wild and ſenſleſs Fancies. Miſts and Fogs are in the lower Region near the Earth, but reach not that next the Heavens. Were we free from Earthly Affections, theſe groſs Vapours could not ſo eaſily diſturb our Minds; but if the World once ſettle in our Hearts, we ſhall never want the Fumes of it to fill our Heads. And as covetous Deſires will ſtuff us with fooliſh Imaginations, ſo they will ſmother any good Thought caſt into us; as the *Thorns* of worldly Cares *choak'd the good Seed*, and made it *unfruitful*, Matth. 13. 12. As we are to rejoyce in the World as though we rejoyced not; ſo, by the ſame reaſon, we ſhould think of the World as though we thought not. A conformity with the World in Affection is inconſiſtent with a change of the frame of the Mind.

Lutea facilitas. Aug. de Civ. Dei. l. 10.

* Pſal. 49. 6, 11.

1 Tim. 6. 9.

Rom. 12. 2

3. *Avoid Idleneſs.* Serious Callings do naturally compoſe Mens Spirits; but too much Recreation makes them blaze out in Vanity. Idle Souls, as well as idle Perſons, will be ranging. As Idleneſs in a State is both the Mother and Nurſe of Faction; and in the natural Body gives birth and encreaſe to many Diſeaſes, by enfeebling the natural Heat: So it both kindles and foments many light and unprofitable Imaginations in the Soul, which would be ſufficiently diverted, if the active Mind were kept intent upon ſome ſtated work. So truly may that which was ſaid of the Servant, be applied to our nobler part, that it will be *wicked*, if once it degenerates into *ſloathfulneſs* in its proper Charge. As empty Minds are the fitteſt Subjects for extravagant Fooleries; ſo vacant Times are the fitteſt Seaſons. While we ſleep, the importunate *Enemy* within, as well as the envious Adverſary without us, will have a ſucceſsful opportunity to ſow the *Tares*; whereas a conſtant Imployment fruſtrates the Attempt, and diſcourageth the Devil, becauſe he ſees we are not at leiſure. Therefore when any ſinful Motion ſteps in, double thy Vigour about thy preſent buſineſs, and the fooliſh Impertinent will ſneak out of thy Heart at this diſcountenance. So true is that in this Caſe, which *Pharaoh* falſly imagined in another, that the more we *Labour*, the leſs we ſhall *regard vain words* †. As Satan is prevented by diligence in our Callings, ſo ſometimes the Spirit viſits us, and fills us with holy Affections at ſuch Seaſons; as Chriſt appeared to *Peter* and other Diſciples, when they were a Fiſhing †; and uſually manifeſted his Grace to Men, when they were engaged in their uſeful Buſineſſes, or Religious Services. But theſe Motions (as we may obſerve by the way) which come from the Spirit, are not to put us out of our way, but to aſſiſt us in our walking in it, and further us both in our Attendance on, and ſucceſs in our Duties. To this end look upon the work of your Callings as the work of God, which ought to be done in Obedience to Him; as He had ſent you to be uſeful in the

Matt. 25. 26. *Thou wicked and ſloathful ſervant.*

Matt. 13. 25.

† Exo. 5. 9.

† John 21. 3, 4.

the Community. Thus a holy Exerciſe of our Callings would ſanctifie our Minds, and by prepoſſeſſing them with ſolid Buſineſs, we ſhould leave little room for any Spider to weave its Cobwebs.

4. *Awe your Hearts with the thoughts of God's Omniſcience, eſpecially the diſcovery of it at the laſt Judgment.* We are very much *Atheiſts* in the Concern of this Attribute: for though it be notionally believ'd, yet for the moſt part it is practically deny'd. God *underſtands all our Thoughts afar off* †: As He knew every Creature which lay hid in the *Chaos*, and undigeſted Lump of Matter. God *is in us all** ; as much in us all, as He is above us all; yea in every Creek, and Chink, and Point of our Hearts. Not an Atom in the Spirits of all Men in the World, but is obvious to that All-ſeeing Eye, which *knows every one of thoſe things that come into our Minds* †. God knows both the Order and Confuſion of them, and can better tell their Natures one by one, than *Adam* named the Creatures. Fancy then, that you hear the ſound of the laſt Trumpet, that you ſee God's Tribunal ſet, and His Omniſcience calling out ſingly all the Secrets of your Heart. Would not the Conſideration of this allay the heat of all other Imaginations? If a fooliſh Thought break in, conſider, What if God, who knows this, ſhould preſently call me to Judgment for this ſinful Glance? Say with the Church, *Shall not God ſearch this out?* Is it fit either for God's Glory, or our Intereſt, that when he comes to make inquiſition in us, He ſhould find ſuch a naſty Dunghil, and ſwarms of *Ægyptian* Lice and Frogs creeping up and down our Chambers? Were our Heads and Hearts poſſeſt by this ſubſtantial Truth, we ſhould be aſhamed to think what we ſhall be aſhamed to own at the laſt Day.

†Pſ.139.2.
*Eph.4.6.
† Ez.11.5.
Pſ. 44. 21.

5. *Keep a conſtant Watch over your Hearts.* *David* deſires God to ſet a *Watch before the Door of his Lips*; much more ſhould we deſire that God would keep the Door of our Hearts. We ſhou'd have Grace ſtand Sentinel there eſpecially; for Words have an outward Bridle, they may diſgrace a Man, and impair his Intereſt and Credit; but Thoughts are unknown, if undiſcover'd by Words. If a Man knew what time the *Thief would come* to rob him, he would *watch*. We know we have Thieves within us to ſteal away our Hearts; therefore when they are ſo near us, we ſhou'd watch againſt a Surprize, and the more carefully, becauſe they are ſo extraordinary ſudden in their Riſe, and quick in their Motion. Our Minds are like idle School-boys, that will be friſking from one place to another, if the Maſter's Back be turned, and playing inſtead of learning. Let a ſtrict hand be kept over our *Affections*, thoſe *wild Beaſts* within us; becauſe they many times force the Underſtanding to paſs a Judgment according to their Pleaſure, not its own Sentiment. *Young Men* ſhou'd be moſt intent upon their Guard, becauſe their Fancies gather Vigor from their Youthful Heat, which fires a world of Squibs in a Day, (which Mad-men, and thoſe which have hot Diſeaſes are ſubject to, becauſe of the exceſſive Inflammation of their Brains:) and partly becauſe they are not ſprung up to a maturity of Knowledge, which wou'd breed and foſter better Thoughts, and diſcover the plauſible Pretences of vain Affections. There are particular *Seaſons* wherein we muſt double our Guard; as when Incentives are preſent, that may ſet ſome inward Corruption on a Flame. *Timothy*'s Office was to exhort the younger as well as elder Women: And the Apoſtle wiſheth him to do it with all *Purity* and Chaſtity, that a Temptation, lying in ambuſh for him, might not take his Thoughts and Affections unguarded. Engage thy Diligence more at *ſolitary times*, and in the Night, wherein freedom from Buſineſs gives an opportunity to an unſanctified Imagination, to conjure up a thouſand evil Spirits: Whence perhaps it is that the *Pſalmiſt* tells us, God had *try'd him in the Night*, and found him Holy. The ſolitary Cave tainted *Lot* with Inceſt, who had preſerv'd himſelf freſh in the midſt of the Salt Luſts of *Sodom*. In *ill Company*, wherein we may be occaſionally caſt, there is need of an exacter Obſervation of our Hearts, leſt corrupt Steams which riſe from them, as Vapours from Lakes and Minerals, being breath'd in by us, may tincture our Spirits; or as thoſe μιάσματα, which (as Phyſicians tell us) exhaling from conſumptive Perſons, do by inſpiration ſteal into our Blood, and convey a Contagion to us. And though above all keepings and watchings we are to keep and watch our Hearts, becauſe *out of them are the Iſſues of Life*; yet we muſt walk the Rounds about our Senſes, and Members of the Body, as the Wiſe Man there adviſeth, *v.* 24. the Mouth which utters Wickedneſs; the Eyes, *v.* 25. which are Brokers to make Bargains for the Heart; and *v.* 26. the Feet, which are Agents to run on the Errands of Sin. And the rather muſt we watch over our Senſes, becauſe we are naturally more ready to follow the Motions of them, as having had a longer Acquaintance and Familiarity with them before we grew up to the uſe of Reaſon. Beſides, moſt of our Thoughts creep in firſt at the Windows of Senſe. The Eye and the Ear robb'd *Eve* of Original Righteouſneſs; and the Eye rifled *David* both of his Juſtice and Chaſtity. If *the Eyes behold ſtrange Women, the Heart will utter perverſe things*, *Prov.* 23. 33. Perverſe Thoughts will ſparkle from a rolling Eye. Revel-rout is uſual where there is a negligent Governour. *He that hath no rule over his own Spirit, is like a City that is broken down, and without Walls* †, where any Thieves may go in and out at pleaſure.

Pſ. 141. 3.
Θηεία ἡ ψυχὴ. *Plato.*
1 Tim. 5. 2 Ἐν πάσῃ ἁγνείᾳ.
Pſ. 42. 11. *Why art thou diſquieted, O my Soul?*
Pſal. 17 3. *Ge.* 19. 30. *Cellulam mearum cogitationum pertimeſcebam.* Hieron.
Pro. 4. 23.
Plotinus deſcribes Thoughts thus; τὰ ἔξω πρὸς τὰ ἔνδον ὁμοίωσις καὶ κοινωνία. *Enead.* 1. *lib. Cor & oculi ſunt proxenete peccati.*
†Prov. 25. 28.

3. The third ſort of Directions are for the ordering of evil Thoughts, when they do intrude; and,

1. *Examine them.* Look often into your Heart to ſee what it is doing; and what Thoughts you find dabling in it, call to an account: enquire what Buſineſs they have, what their Errand and Deſign is, whence they come, and whither they tend. *David* askt his Soul the reaſon of its troubled Thoughts; ſo ask thy Heart the reaſon why it entertains ſuch ill Company, and by what Authority they come there, and leave not chiding, till thou haſt put it to the bluſh. Bring every Thought to the teſt of the Word. *Aſaph* had envious Thoughts at the proſperity of the Wicked, *Pſal.* 73. 2, 3. which had almoſt tript him up, and laid him on his Back. And theſe had blown up Atheiſtical Thoughts that God did not much regard whether his Commands were kept or no; as though God had untied the Link between Duty and Reward, and the Breach of his Laws were the readieſt Means to a favourable Recompence; *v.* 13. *I have cleanſed my Hands in vain.* But when he weighed things in the Ballance of the Sanctuary, by the holy Rules of God's Patience and Juſtice, *v.* 17. He ſees the brutiſhneſs of his former Conceits; *v.* 22. *So fooliſh was I and ignorant, I was as the Beaſt before thee*; and *v.* 25. he makes an Improvement of them to excite his Deſire for God, and Delight in him. Let us compare our Thoughts with Scripture-rules. Comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual, is the way

way to understand them; comparing spiritual Sins with spiritual Commands, is the way to know them; and comparing spiritual Vices with spiritual Graces, is the way to loath them. Take not then any thing upon trust from a crazy Fancy; nor, without a Scrutiny, believe that Faculty whereby Dogs dream, and Animals perform their natural Exploits.

2. *Check them at the first Appearance.* If they bear upon them a palpable mark of Sin, bestow not upon them the honour of an Examination. If the Leprosie appear in their Foreheads, thrust them, as the Priests did *Uzziah*, out of the Temple; or as *David* answer'd his wicked Sollicitors, *Psal.* 119. 115. *Depart from me ye evil doers; for I will keep the Commandments of my God.* Though we cannot hinder them from haunting us, yet we may from lodging in us. The very sparkling of an abominable Motion in our Hearts is as little to be look'd upon, as the *Colour of Wine* in a Glass by a Man inclined to Drunkenness. Quench them instantly, as you wou'd do a Spark of Fire in a heap of Straw. We must not treat with them: *Paul's* Resolve is a good Pattern, not to *confer with Flesh and Blood* †. We do not debate whether we shou'd shake a Viper off our Hands. If it be plainly a sinful Motion, a Treaty with it is a degree of Disobedience; for a putting it to the question whether we shou'd suckle it, is to question whether God shou'd be obey'd or no. If it savour not of *the things of God*, hear not its Reasons, and complement it with no less Indignation than our Saviour did his officious Disciple upon his carnal Advice, *Get thee behind me Satan, Mat.* 16. 22, 23. Excuse it not because 'tis little: Small Vapours may compact themselves into great Clouds, and obstruct our sight of Heaven: A little Poison may spread its Venom through a great quantity of Meat. We know not how big a small Motion, like a *Crocodile's* Egg, may grow, and how ravenous the Breed may prove: It may, if entertain'd, force our Judgment, drag our Will, and make all our Affections Bedlams. Besides, since the Fancy is that Power in us upon which the Devil can immediately imprint his Suggestions, and that we know not what Army he hath to back any sinful Motion, if once the Gate be set open; let us crush the Brat betimes, and fling the Head over the Wall, to discourage the Party. Well then, let us be ashamed to cherish that in our Thoughts, which we should be ashamed shou'd break out in our Words or Actions: Therefore as soon as you perceive it *base*, spit it out with detestation; as you do a thing you unexpectedly find ungrateful to your Palate.

Hic Annibal virtute, non morâ frangitur. †Gal. 1.16

Ex hinc nota est infirmitas mea: quia multo facilius irrumpunt abominandæ phantasiæ quàm discedunt. Kemp. de Imit. Chr. Lib. 3. c. 20.

3. *Improve them.* Poisons may be made medicinable. Let the Thoughts of old Sins stir up a Commotion of Anger and Hatred. We feel Shiverings in our Spirits, and a Motion in our Blood at the very thought of a bitter Potion we have formerly taken; why may we not do that spiritually, which the very Frame and Constitution of our Bodies doth naturally, upon the calling a lothsome thing to mind? The *Romans* Sins were transient, but the Shame was renewed every time they reflected on them †: They reacted a Detestation instead of the Pleasure: So should the Revivings of old Sins in our Memories be entertain'd with our Sighs rather than our Joy. We should also manage the Opportunity so as to promote some further degrees of our Conversion *. There is not the most hellish Motion, but we may strike some Sparks from it, to kindle our love to God, renew our Repentance, raise our Thankfulness, or quicken our Obedience. Is it a blasphemous Motion against God? It gives you a just occasion thence to awe your Heart into a deeper Reverence of His Majesty. Is it a lustful Thought? Open the Floud-gates of your godly Sorrow, and groan for your Original Sin. Is it a Remembrance of your former Sin? Let it wind up your Heart in the Praises of him, who deliver'd you from it. Is it to tempt you from Duty? Endeavour to be more zealous in the Performance of it. Is it to set you at a distance from God? Resolve to be a Light shining the clearer in that Darkness, and let it excite you to a closer adherence to him. Are they envious Thoughts which steal upon you? Let Thankfulness be the Product, that you enjoy so much as you do, and more than you deserve. Let Satan's fiery Darts enflame your Love rather than your Lust, and like a skilful Pilot, make use of the violence of the Winds, and raging of the Sea to further you in your spiritual Voyage. This is to beat the Devil and our own Hearts with their own Weapons; who will have little Stomach to fight with those Arms wherewith they see themselves wounded. There is not a Remembrance of the worst Objects but may be improved to Humility and Thankfulness; as St. *Paul* never thought of his old persecuting, but he sank down in Humiliation, and mounted up in Admirations of the Riches of Grace.

† Rom. 6. 21 *Whereof you are now ashamed.*

Psal. 119. 59. I thought on my ways, and turned my Feet unto thy testimonies.

4. *Continue your Resistance,* if they still importune thee; and lay not down thy Weapons till they wholly shrink from thee. As the Wise Man speaks of a Fool's Words, so I may not only of our blacker, but our more aerial Fancies, The *beginning* of them is *foolishness*, but if suffer'd to gather Strength, they may end in *mischievous Madness*; therefore if they do continue, or reassume their Arms, we must continue and reassume our *Shield* *. Resistance makes the Devil and his Imps fly: But Forbearance makes them impudent. In a Battel when one Party faints and retreats, it adds new Spirits to the Enemy that was almost broken before: So will these Motions be the more vigorous, if they perceive we begin to flag. That encouraging Command, *Resist the Devil, and he will flie from you* †, implies not only the beginning a Fight, but continuance in it, till he doth fly. We must not leave the Field, till they cease their Importunity; nor encrease their Courage by our own Cowardise.

Ec. 10. 13.

*Eph. 6. 16 Above all taking the Shield of Faith. ἀναλαβόντες, taking up again.

† Jam. 4. 7.

5. *Joyn Supplication with your Opposition. Watch and Pray* are sometimes linkt together *. The Diligence and Multitude of our Enemies should urge us to watch, that we be not surpriz'd; and our own Weakness, and proneness to Presumption, should make us pray, that we may be powerfully assisted. Be as frequent in solliciting God, as they are in solliciting you: As they knock at your Heart for Entrance, so do you knock at Heaven for Assistance. And take this for your Comfort, as the Devil takes their parts, so Christ will take yours at his Father's Throne: He that pray'd that the Devil might not winnow *Peter's* Faith, will intercede that your own Heart may not winnow yours. If the Waves come upon you, and you are ready to sink, cry out with *Peter, Master I perish*; and you shall feel his Hand raising you, and the Winds and Waves rebuked into Obedience by him. The very Motion of your Hearts Heaven-ward at such a time, is a Refusal of the Thought that presseth upon you, and will be so put upon your account. When any of these buzzing Flies discompose you, or more violent Hurricanes shake your Minds, cry out with *David, Unite my Heart to fear thy Name*; and a powerful Word will soon silence these disturbing Enemies, and settle your Souls in a calm and a praising Posture.

* Mat. 26. 41.

Psal. 86. 11, 12.

4. A

4. A Fourth ſort of Directions is concerning good Motions; whether they ſpring naturally from a gracious Principle, or are peculiarly breath'd in by the Spirit. There are ordinary Bubblings of Grace in a renewed Mind, as there are of Sins in an unregenerate Heart; for Grace is as active a Principle as any, becauſe 'tis a participation of the Divine Nature. But there are other Thoughts darted in beyond the ordinary Strain of Thinking; which like the Beams of the Sun, evidence both themſelves and their Original. And as concerning theſe Motions joyn'd together, take theſe Directions in ſhort.

1. *Welcome and entertain them.* As 'tis our Happineſs, as well as our Duty, to ſtifle evil Motions; ſo 'tis our Miſery, as well as our Sin, to extinguiſh Heavenly. Strange Fire ſhould be preſently quench'd, but that which deſcends from Heaven upon the *Altar* of a holy Soul, muſt be kept alive by quickning Meditation. When a Holy Thought lights ſuddenly upon you, which hath no connexion with any antecedent Buſineſs in your Mind, (provided it be not unſeaſonable, nor hinder you from any abſolutely neceſſary Duty either of Religion, or your Calling) receive it as a Meſſenger from Heaven; and the rather becauſe 'tis a Stranger. You know not but you may entertain an Angel, yea, ſomething greater than an Angel, even the Holy Ghoſt. Open all the Powers of your Souls, like ſo many Organ-pipes, to receive the breath of this Spirit when he blows upon you. 'Tis a ſign of an agreeableneſs between the Heart and Heaven, when we cloſe with, and preſerve Spiritual Motions. We need not ſtand long to examine them; they are evident by their holineſs, ſweetneſs, and ſpirituality. We may as eaſily diſcern them, as we can exotick Plants from thoſe that grow naturally in our own Soil; or as a Palate at the firſt taſte can diſtinguiſh between a rich and generous Wine, and a rough Water. The Thoughts inſtill'd by the Spirit of Adoption are not violent, tumultuous, full of perturbation; but, like himſelf, gentle and Dove-like Solicitings, warm and holy Impulſes, and (when cheriſhed) leave the Soul in a more humble, heavenly, pure, and believing Temper than they found it. 'Tis a high Aggravation of Sin to *reſiſt the Holy Ghoſt*, *Acts* 7. 51. Yet we may quench his Motions by Neglect as well as by Oppoſition, and by that means loſe both the Profit and Pleaſure, which would have attended the Entertainment. Salvation came both to *Zachens* his Houſe and Heart, upon embracing the firſt Motion our Saviour was pleaſed to make him: Had he ſlighted that, 'tis uncertain whether another ſhould have been beſtowed upon him. The more ſuch Sprouts are planted and nouriſhed in us, the leſs room will ſtinking Weeds have to root themſelves, and diſperſe their Influence. And for thy own good Thoughts, feed them and keep them alive, that they may not be like a Blaze of Straw which takes birth, and expires the ſame Minute. Brood upon them, and kill them not, as ſome Birds do their young ones, by too often flying from their Neſts. *David* kept up a Staple of ſound and good Thoughts: he would ſcarce elſe have deſired God *to try and know them*, had they been only ſome few weak Flaſhes at uncertain times.

Οὐσιωδῶς τῷ Θεῷ. *Polycarp. Epiſt. ad Phil.* termsholy Perſons.

Gal. 5. 22.

Pſ. 139. 23. *Try me and know my Thoughts.*

2. *Improve them* for thoſe Ends to which they naturally tend. 'Tis not enough to give them a bare Reception, and forbear the ſmothering of them; but we muſt conſider what Affections are proper to be rais'd by them, either in the ſearch of ſome Truth, or performance of ſome Duty. Thoſe Gleams, which ſhoot into us on the ſudden, have ſome Leſſon ſeal'd up in them, to be opened, and learned by us. When *Peter* upon the crowing of the Cock call'd to mind his Maſter's Admonition, *he thought thereon and wept* †: he did not only receive the Spark, but kindled a ſuitable Affection. A choice Graft, though kept very carefully by us, yet if not preſently ſet, will wither, and diſappoint our Expectation of the deſired Fruit. No Man is without ſome ſecret Whiſpers to diſſwade him from ſome alluring and baſie Sin †; as *Cain* by an audible Voice, *Gen.* 4. 7. which had he obſerved to the damping the revengeful Motion againſt his Brother, he had prevented his Brother's Death, his own Deſpair and eternal Ruin. Have you any Motion to ſeek God's Face, as *David* had? Let your Hearts reply, *Thy Face; Lord, will I ſeek* *. The Addreſs will be moſt acceptable at ſuch a time, when your Heart is tuned by One *that ſearcheth the deep things of God* †, and knows his Mind, and what Airs are moſt delightful to him. Let our Motion be quick in any Duty which the Spirit doth ſuggeſt; and while he heaves our Hearts, and oyls our Wheels, we ſhall do more in any religious Service, and that more pleaſantly and ſucceſsfully, than at another time with all our own Art and Induſtry; for his Injections are like Water pour'd into a Pump to raiſe up more; and as Satan's Motions are not without a main Body to ſecond them, ſo neither do the Spirits go unattended, without a ſufficient Strength to aſſiſt the Entertainers of them. Well then, lie not at Anchor when a freſh Gale would fill thy Sails, but lay hold of the preſent Opportunity. Theſe Seaſons are often like thoſe Influences from certain Conjunctions of the Planets, which if not (according to the Aſtrologers Opinion) preſently applied, paſs away, and return not again in many Ages: So the Spirit's Breathings are often determined, that if they be not entertain'd with ſuitable Affections, the time will be unregainable, and the ſame gracious Opportunities of a ſweet Intercourſe may be for ever loſt; for God will not have his Holy Spirit diſhonour'd *in always ſtriving* with wilful Man. When *Judas* neglected our Saviour's Advertiſement, *John* 13. 21. the Devil quickly enters and hurries him to the execution of his traiterous Project, *v.* 27. and he never meets with any Motion afterwards, but from his new Maſter, and that eternally fatal both to his Body and Soul.

† Mar. 14. 72.

† Job 33. 14, 17.

* *God ſpeaks once, yea, twice, that he may withdraw Man from his purpoſe.* Pſa. 27. 8.

† 1 Cor. 2. 10.

Gen. 6. 3.

3. *Refer them*, if poſſible, *to aſſiſt your Morning Meditation*; that like little Brooks ariſing from ſeveral Springs, they may meet in one Channel, and compoſe a more uſeful Stream. What ſtraggling good Thoughts ariſe, though they may owe their birth to ſeveral Occaſions, and tend divers ways, yet liſt them in the Service of that Truth, to which you have committed the Government of your Mind that Day: As Conſtables in a time of neceſſary Buſineſs for the King, take up Men that are going about their honeſt and lawful Occaſions, and force them to joyn in one Employ for the Publick Service. Many accidental Glances (as was obſerv'd before) will ſerve both to fix and illuſtrate your Morning Propoſition. But if it be an extraordinary Injection, and cannot be referred to your ſtanding *Theſis*, follow it, and let your Thoughts run whither it will lead you: A Theme of the Spirit's ſetting is better than one of our own chuſing.

4. *Record the choicer of them.* We may have occaſion to look back upon them another time, either as grounds of Comfort in ſome Hour of Temptation,

Temptation, or directions in ſome ſudden emergency; but conſtantly as perſuaſive Engagements to our neceſſary Duty. Thus they may lye by us for further uſe, as Money in our Purſe. Since *Mary* kept and ponder'd the ſhort Sayings of our Saviour in *her Heart*, † committing and fitting them as it were in her common-place Book; why ſhould not we alſo preſerve the whiſpers of that Spirit, who *receives* from the ſame Mouth and Hand, what he both *ſpeaks* and *ſhews* to us? It is pity the Duſt and Filings of choicer Metals, which may one time be melted down into a Maſs, ſhould be loſt in a heap of droſſy Thoughts. If we do not remember them, but like Children, are taken with their Novelty, more than their Subſtance; and like *John Baptiſt*'s Hearers, rejoyce in their *light* only *for a Seaſon* †, it will diſcourage the Spirit from ſending any more; and then our Hearts will be empty, and we know who ſtands ready to clap in his helliſh Swarms and Legions. But howſoever we do, God will record our good Thoughts as our Excuſers, if we improve them; as our Accuſers, if we reject them; and as He took notice how often He had appear'd to *Solomon* †, ſo He will take notice how often His Spirit hath appeared to us, and write down every Motion, whereby we have been ſolicited, that they may be witneſſes of His endeavours for our good, and our own wilfulneſs.

† Luke 2. 19, 51.

Συμβάλλαπτε. Συυβάλλων, συναρμόζων. *Heſych.*

†Joh. 5 35.

† 1 Kings 11, 9.

5. *Back them with Ejaculations.* Let our Hearts be ready to attend every Injection from Heaven with a motion to it: Since 'tis Ingratitude to receive a Preſent, without returning an acknowledgment to the Benefactor. As God turns His Thoughts of us into Promiſes, ſo let us turn our Thoughts of Him into Prayers; and ſince his Regards of us are darted in Beams upon us, let them be reflected back upon Him in thankfulneſs for the Gift, and earneſtneſs both for the continuance and encreaſe of ſuch Impreſſions; as *David* prayed that God would not *take his holy Spirit from him* †, which had inſpired him with his Penitential Reſolutions. To what purpoſe doth the Holy Ghoſt deſcend upon us, but to declare to us *the things which are freely given us of God* †? And is it fit for us to hear ſuch a Declaration, without a quick ſuitable Reflection? Since the Comforter is to *bring to our remembrance* † what Chriſt both ſpake and did; it muſt be for the ſame end, for which they were both ſpoken and acted by him, which was to bring us to a near Converſe with God. Therefore when the Spirit renews in our Minds a Goſpel-truth, let us turn it into a preſent Plea, and be God's Remembrancers of His own Promiſes, as the Spirit is our remembrancer of Divine Truths. We need not doubt ſome rich Fruit of the application at ſuch a Seaſon; ſince, without queſtion, the impreſſions the Spirit ſtamps upon us, are as much according to *God's Will* †, as the Interceſſions he makes for us. Therefore when any holy Thought doth advance it ſelf in our Souls, the moſt grateful reception we can beſtow upon it, will be to ſuffer our Hearts to be immediately fired by it, and imitate, with a glowing Devotion the Royal Prophet, in that form he hath drawn up to our hands; *O Lord God of Abraham, Iſaac, and of Iſrael our Fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the Thoughts of the Heart of thy Servant, and prepare my Heart unto thee* †. This will be an encouragement to God to ſend more ſuch Gueſts into our Hearts. And by an affectionate entertainment of them, we ſhall gain both a habit of thinking well, and a ſtock too.

† Pſal. 51. 11.

† 1 Cor. 2. 12.

† John 14. 26.

†Ro. 8. 27.

† 1 Chro. 29. 18.

A DISCOURSE OF THE Churches Stability.

Pſal. 87. 5. *And of* Sion *it ſhall be ſaid, This and that Man was born in her; and the Higheſt himſelf ſhall eſtabliſh her.*

THE Author of this *Pſalm*, and the time when it was penn'd, are uncertain. Some think it was compos'd after the return of the *Jews* from *Babylon*, upon the Erection of the ſecond Temple, and deſigned to be ſung in their conſtant Publick Aſſemblies. Others think it was compos'd by *David*, when he brought the Ark to *Sion*, as the Repoſitory for it, till the building of the Temple, wherein it might honourably reſt. It ſeems, whoever was the Author, to be Ecſtatical. The Penman breaks out into a holy Rapture and Admiration of the firmneſs and ſtability of the Church. 'Tis alſo Prophetical of the Chriſtian Church, of the Glory of it, the largeneſs of its Bounds, and perpetual Duration. The *Jews* ridiculouſly interpret it of literal *Jeruſalem*, in regard of the excellency of its Climate, the goodneſs of the Air, being ſeated in the middle or navel of the Earth, and the ſeat and ſpring of all the wiſe Men, accounting all Fools that were to be found in other Parts; 'tis true, others were not wiſe with a wiſdom to Salvation; they were not inſtructed in the high Myſteries of Religion by God, as thoſe People were. But was there not Learning among the *Greeks*, and Wiſdom among the *Chaldæans*, and a ripeneſs in Mechanick Arts among the *Tyrians*, which lived in the ſame Climate with the *Jews*? It can by no means be underſtood of the material *Jeruſalem* and *Sion*; that was ruin'd by the *Babylonians*, and tho' re-edified, yet afterwards ſubverted by the *Romans*, and the remainders of it at this Day become a Stable

Stable for *Mahomet*, and the bringing in those Nations mention'd, *v.* 4. overthrows any such interpretation, which never were inrol'd in the Registers of *Sion*, nor became Votaries to the true Religion, while the Walls of that place were standing in their Glory. *Sion* was the place whence *the Law* was to come, *Mich.* 4. 2. a Law of another nature, than that which was uttered with Thunders from Mount *Sinai*. *Sion* was the place where the Throne of Christ was to be settled, where he was to be crowned *King*, *Psal.* 2. 6. and where he was to manage the Scepter, and *rule in the midst of his Enemies*, *Psal.* 110. 2. and therefore 'tis here celebrated as the figure of the Christian Church; of that *City* which *Abraham* expected, *whose builder and maker is God*, *Heb.* 11. 10. And the Christian Church is particularly called by this name of *Mount Sion*, *Heb.* 12. 21. And Believers are called the Sons of *Sion*, *Joel* 2. 23. The Psalmist speaks,

1. *Of the great love the Lord bears to* Sion, *v.* 2.
2. *Of the glory of the Promises made to her*, v. 3.
3. *Of the confluence of new Inhabitants to her*, v. 4.
4. *Of the Duration and Establishment of her*, v. 5.

v. 1. *His Foundation.* The Foundation of God, *i. e.* That which God hath founded, that *Jerusalem* which is of God's Building, is seated in the Holy Mountain; the City was built before *Joshuah* conquered *Canaan*: But God is said to be the Founder of it, in regard of that peculiar Glory to which it was designed, to be the rest of his Ark, the place of his Worship, the Throne of the Types of the *Messiah*, the Seat whence the Evangelick Law was to be publish'd to all Nations, and the *Messiah* revealed as the Redeemer and Ruler of the World.

In the holy Mountains. *Jerusalem* was seated upon high Mountains. The Palace of the Kings was built upon *Sion*, and the Temple, the House of the Most High, was built upon *Moriah*, and encompass'd with Mountains *round about*, *Psal.* 125. 2. an emblem of the strength and stability of the Church. * *Holy Mountains*; not that there was an inherent Holiness in them more than in the other Mountains of the Earth; or that they were naturally more beautiful and stately than other Mountains; but becaufe they were separated for the Worship and Service of God, and had been ennobled by the performance of a Worship there before the building of the Temple. It was upon *Moriah* that *Isaac* was designed for a Sacrifice, and the most signal act of Obedience performed to God by the Father of the Faithful. It was there also that *David* appeased the Wrath of God, by Sacrifice, after it had issued out upon the People in a Plague, for the numbring of them: And the very name *Moriah* hath something sacred in it, it signifying either *God teaching*, or *God manifested*; which name might be given it by God, with respect to the manifestation of Christ who was to come, during the standing of the second Temple.

* *Daillé. Melange, Part* 2. *Page* 354.

v. 2. *The Lord loves the Gates of Sion.*] By *Gates* in Scripture is meant the Strength, or Wisdom, or Justice of a Place. *Gates* were the Magazines of Arms, and the places of Judicature. He had manifested his love to her in chusing that City before all the Cities of *Israel* and *Judah*, wherein to place his Name, and have his Worship celebrated; and that place in *Jerusalem* particularly, where his Law should be given by the Spirit to the *Apostles* upon the day of *Pentecost*; and to apply it to the Gospel-Church, it signifies the special respect God bears to her, above all the Rites, Observancies, and Ceremonies of the *Judaick* Institution. It was in this Gospel-Church, the true *Sion*, that he *desired to dwell*, and will *remain for ever*, *Psal.* 68. 17. Which is a Prophetick *Psalm* of the Gospel-times, and the Ascension of Christ.

1. *The Stability of the Church is here asserted.* * The Church is not built upon the Sand, which may fall with a Storm, nor upon the Waters, that may float with the Waves; nor spread out as a Tent in the Desart, that may be taken up, and carried away to another place; but upon a Mountain *not* to be *removed* *, 'tis built upon a Rock, the Rock of Ages; upon a Mountain which is not shatter'd by Waves, or shaken by Storms, upon *Christ*, who hath the strength of many Mountains in himself.

* *Celerus in loc.*

* *Psl.* 125. 1. *Mount Sion cannot be removed.*

2. *The necessity of Holiness in a Church.* What though the Church be a Mountain for strength and eminency, have the honour and priviledge of Sacraments, and be the Ark of the Oracles of God, 'tis not established unless it be a Holy Mountain: Holiness is the only *becoming* thing in the House of God; as it is consecrated to the glory of God, so it must be exercis'd in things pertaining to the glory of God. As the Foundation is Holy, so ought the Superstructure to be. There was no filth in the framing it; there must be no filth in the continuance of it.

v. 3. He speaks with some kind of astonishment of the *glorious things spoken of her*, or promised to her, and concludes it with a note of attention, or a mark of eminency, *Selah* *. No place enjoy'd an equal happiness with *Jerusalem*, while it remained faithful to its Founder. It maintain'd its standing in the midst of its Enemies; no Weapon formed against it was able to prosper; Heaven planted it, and the Dews of Heaven watered it; it had a continual succession of Prophets; the best Kings that ever were in the World, swayed the Scepter in it; it was blessed with more miraculous Deliverances than any part of the Universe; the Nations that loved it not, yet feared its Power, and feared the displeasure of its Guardian. It was here the Son of God delivered the Messages of Heaven by the order of his Father: It was here the Spirit first filled the Heads and Hearts of the *Apostles* in order to the conversion of a World from Idolatry to the Scepter of God; but more glorious things are spoken of the Spiritual *Sion*, than of the material *Jerusalem*; that had Christ in the Flesh, and the Gospel-Church hath Christ in the Spirit, he went from thence to Heaven, but he comes from Heaven to visit them with his Comforts; he hath left the Walls of *Jerusalem* in its ruines, but he hath not, he will not leave his Spiritual *Sion* fatherless and *comfortless*; John 14. 18. his Spirit abides for ever with his Church. *Glorious things are spoken of it*, when he pronounced it impregnable, and that the Gates of Hell, the Power and Policy of all the Apostate Angels and their Instruments, should not prevail against her, when he assured her he would be present with her, not to the end of an Age or two, but till the period of Time, the consummation of the World; Priviledges that material *Jerusalem* could never boast of; whatsoever Countries have been applauded for secular Excellencies, or been famous for Wisdom, none can claim such Eulogies as Gospel-*Sion*, where God hath declared his Will, publish'd himself a God of Salvation, placed the Laws of Heaven, and poured out that Wisdom which comes from above: These are glorious things, above humane Expectations, above humane Desires.

* v. 3. *Glorious things are spoken of thee, O City of God.*

The glorious things mentioned of the Gospel-Church, are in *v.* 4. where he speaks of the *enlargement* of her Bounds, the *increase* of her Inhabitants, and the numerous Muster-rolls of those that shall list themselves in her service *.

* *I will make mention of* Rahab *and* Babylon *to them that know me. Behold* Philistia *and* Tyre, *with* Æthiopia: *This Man was born there.*

The time ſhall come when thoſe Nations that are moſt alienated from the profeſſion of Truth, ſhall come under her Wing, and pay Allegiance to her Empire; Strangers ſhall be brought into her Boſom, not only *Philiſtia* and *Tyre*, Nations upon her Confines, but *Ægypt* and *Æthiopia*, Nations more remote, Nations born and bred at a diſtance ſhall be regiſtred as born from her Womb, and nurſt in her Lap; diſtance of Place ſhall not hinder the relation of her Children. And when God ſhall count the People of Foreign Nations, he ſhall ſet a mark upon every true Believer, and reckon him as one born in *Sion*, a Denizen of *Jeruſalem*, though not a *Jew* in the fleſh.

De Dieu in loc. לידעי

I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know me; or rather among them that know me, or for them that know me*, I will remember them as Perſons inlightned by me, and acquainted with me.

The *Pſalmiſt* reckons up here Nations that were greateſt Enemies to the Church, *Rahab* or *Ægypt* * her ancient Enemy; *Philiſtia* her perpetual Invader: *Rahab* ſignifies pride or fierceneſs, the fierceſt People ſhall be ſubdued to *Sion* by the power of the Goſpel: *Ægypt* the wiſeſt and learnedſt Nation, the moſt Idolatrous and Superſtitious, Men that reſt in their own Parts and Strength ſhall caſt away their Idols; *Babylon* the ſtrongeſt and moſt powerful Empire, the Subjects of which the Scripture often deſcribes as Luxurious, Cruel, Proud: *Tyre* the greateſt Mart, whoſe Citizens were the greateſt Merchants; The *Æthiopians* the Poſterity of curſed *Cham*, whoſe Souls are blacker than their Bodies: Men buried in ſin, benighted with Ignorance, poyſoned with Pride, the moſt fierce and envenom'd Enemies ſhall be brought in by an infinite Grace, and make up one Body with her, and ſhall be counted as related to her by a new Birth, and be made Members of her by Regeneration; this is properly to be *born in Sion* *; as without Regeneration we have not God for our Father, ſo neither have we *Sion* or the Church for our Mother: This is the great priviledge we ſhould inquire after, without which we are not in God's Regiſter; this *ſecond birth* God only approves of, he enrolls no Man in the number of the Citizens of *Sion*, nor indows them with the ſpecial Priviledges of it upon the account of their firſt, wherein they lye buried in the Corruption of *Adam*, and are Citizens of Hell, not of *Jeruſalem*. Again, this *ſecond birth* is never without the knowledge of God. * Ignorance is a bar to this enrolment; he is no Man that is not a Rational Creature, and he no Regenerate Man that hath not ſome knowledge in the great Myſteries of God in Chriſt.

* *For ſo Ægypt is named, Iſa. 51. 9.*

* *This Man was born there.*

* *Among thoſe that know me.*

In *v.* 5. 1. *The honour of* Sion *is deſcribed* by her fruitfulneſs.

1. *In regard of the eminency of her Births*, ſhe is not wholly barren, ſhe hath her Births of Men, and worthy Men; the carnal World hath not exceeded the Church in Men of raiſed Intellectuals; *Sion* hath not been a City of Fools. *Dionyſius* the Areopagite hath been her production as well as *Damaris* a Woman. Kings alſo have been nurſt at her Breaſts, that they might be nurſing Fathers to her by their Power; but the Honour of *Sion*, conſiſts in the inward change it makes on Men, diſpoſſeſſing them of the nature of Wolves for that of Lambs, rendring them the Loyal Subjects of God inſtead of his active Enemies. 'Tis the glory of *Sion*, that this or that Man born in her, was changed to ſuch Principles and ſuch Affections, that all the Education and Politeneſs of the moſt accompliſh'd Cities in the World could not furniſh them with.

2. *In regard of the multitude of them*; *this and that Man*, of all ſorts and conditions, and multitudes of them, ſo that *more are the Children of the deſolate than of the married Wife*. The Tents were Propheſied to be inlarged, the Curtains of the Habitations of *Sion* to be ſtretched out, and her Cords to be lengthned to receive and entertain that multitude of Children that ſhould be brought forth by her, after the *Sacrifice* of the Son of God, *Iſa.* 54. 1, 2. For that Exhortation follows upon the deſcription of the Death and Exaltation of Chriſt, *Iſa.* 53.

2. *The happineſs of* Sion. *The higheſt himſelf ſhall eſtabliſh her.*

1. *Security in her Glory. Eſtabliſh her.*

2. The *Author of that ſecurity and perpetuity. The Higheſt*; and that excluſive of any other. *The Higheſt himſelf* *, all that are not the moſt High are excluded from having a ſhare in the eſtabliſhment of the Church.

* *Coccei. in loc.*

'Tis a work peculiar to him. 'Tis not the excellent Learning, ſtrength of the wiſe or mighty Men, that are born in her, that doth preſerve her, but God alone; he ſpirits and acts them; Means God doth uſe in bringing in inward Grace, Means he doth uſe in ſettling the outward form. But ſuch Means that have in reaſon, no ſtrength to effect ſo great a buſineſs, Means different from thoſe which are uſed in the eſtabliſhment of other Kingdoms, whereby the hand that acts them is more viſible and plain, than the Means that are uſed. * 'Tis not the Wit of Man, which is Folly, nor the Strength of Man which is Weakneſs, nor the Holineſs of Man, which is nothing, can claim the Honour of this Work: God himſelf picks Stones out of the Quarry, ſmooths them for the Building, fixeth them in their places, he himſelf is the only Architect, his Wiſdom contrives it, his Grace erects it, his Power preſerves it, and accompliſheth his own Work; 'tis the Higheſt, none higher to over-power him, none ſo high as to check and mate him.

* *Folang.*

Shall eſtabliſh her.] This cannot be meant of the literal or local *Sion* (though that indeed was preſerved while the legal Service was to endure, (excepting that interruption by the *Babyloniſh* Captivity,) but now *Mahomet's* Horſe tramples upon it, and it retains none of the ancient Inhabitants,) but of the true myſtical *Sion*, the Goſpel ſtate of the Church, which ſhall continue in being as Chriſt the Head of it hath ſettled it, till Time ſhall be no more. Other Kingdoms may crumble away, the Foundations of them be diſſolved. But that God which laid the Foundation of *Sion*, and built her Walls, will preſerve her Palaces, that the Gates of Hell, the ſubtilty of Hereticks, the fury of Tyrants, the Apoſtacy of ſome of her pretended Children, all the Locuſts and Spawn of the Bottomleſs-Pit ſhall not be able to root her up.

Shall eſtabliſh her.] The word ſignifies the affording all things neceſſary for defence, increaſe of Victory, *preparations* of it, the knitting of it. כונן

Doct. *The Goſpel-Church is a perpetual Society eſtabliſh'd by the higheſt Power in Heaven or Earth.*

It ſhall continue as long as the World, and outlive the Diſſolution of Nature; ſhe ſhall bring forth her Man-child, maugre all the vigilancy of the *Dragon*, which ſhall be caught up to God and his Throne; and though ſhe be forced to fly into the Wilderneſs, yet a place is prepared for her Habitation, and Food for her ſupport during that State, no leſs than 1260 Days or Years, and this by no weaker, no meaner a Hand than that of *God himſelf* *; that Hand that catches up Chriſt the Man-child into Heaven; that Hand that ſets him

* Rev. 12. 3, 4, 5, 6. *where ſhe hath a place prepared of God.*

him upon the Throne of God; provides Meat for the *Woman* in the Wilderneſs. The Head and the Body have the ſame Defender, the ſame Protector, the ſame Hand to ſecure them *. Or by *Man-child* is meant, the whole number of the Believers which were more numerous before ſhe went into a Wilderneſs-condition; the Scripture uſing often the ſingular for the plural; and the Holy Ghoſt expreſſing himſelf here according to the property of the Woman, which is to bring forth one at the ſame time. The *Figure* of the Church notes Stability; 'tis *four-ſquare, and the length is as large as the breadth*, Rev. 21. 16. *The length, breadth, and height of it are equal*; the moſt perfect Figure, noting Perfection and Duration. So it was deſcribed in the Prophecy, *Ezek.* 48. 16. exactly 4500 Meaſures on each ſide. All belonging to this City or Church, is reckoned by the number *twelve, a ſquare number*, equal on all ſides; *twelve Gates, twelve Foundations, twelve Tribes of* Iſrael, *twelve Apoſtles, twelve Stones to garniſh it*, Rev. 21. 12, 13, 14, &c. A four-ſquare Figure is an emblem of unchangeable Conſtancy. Things ſo framed remain always in the ſame poſture, caſt them which way you will; and among ſome of the *Heathens* was reckoned as a divine Figure *, and the character of a Virtuous Man in regard of his Conſtancy was τετράγωνος.

* *Ribera.* in loc.

* *The* Arcadians *made* Jovis ſignum quadrangulum *Pauſanias de Arcadicis.*

The *ſhutting* of the Gate of the *new Temple*, *Ezek.* 44. 2. after the *God of Iſrael* had entred in by it, is interpreted by ſome of the everlaſting dwelling of the Lord in the Church of the Goſpel among his People, and never departing from it as he had done from the *firſt Temple* †. None ſhall enter in to deface it, none ſhall preſcribe new Laws to it, none ſhall trample upon it; when God enters into the Chriſtian Church, he ſhuts the Door after him, his Preſence never departs from it, his Goſpel ſhall never be rooted out of it, the Church hath a ſecurity in its Foundation, as being *built upon a Rock*, Mat. 18. 16. It hath an aſſurance of preſervation by the preſence of the *God of Iſrael*, of *Chriſt in the midſt of her*, Mat. 28. 19, 20. The Tabernacle of *Sion* ſhall *not be taken down, not one of the ſtakes thereof ſhall be remov'd, neither ſhall any of the cords thereof be broken*; And that becauſe *the glorious Lord ſhall be a place of broad Rivers and ſtreams to it*, Iſa. 33. 20, 21.

† Lightfoot *Temple, cap.* 38. *p.* 252.

The Enemies of the Church ſhall be conſum'd, that God may have his due praiſe. *Hallelujahs* are never ſung with the higheſt Note, till the wicked and idolatrous Generation be rooted out of the Earth. *Hallelujahs* were never uſed, as the *Jews* obſerve, till the conſummation of all things by the ſetting the Church above the toſſing of the Waves, and the deſtruction of its Troublers, when the Glory of the Lord ſhould *endure for ever*, and *God rejoyce in his Works*, Pſal. 104. 31, 35. And therefore when the Blood of his Children is avenged by his Juſtice upon his Enemies, and the ſmoke of *Antichriſt* riſeth up before him, and the Kingdom of God is for ever ſettled, *Hallelujah* is pronounced and repeated with a loud voice, *Rev.* 19. 2, 3, 6. Such a time will be, and God will eſtabliſh and ſecure his Church till he hath perfected his own and her Glory.

This Stability the Church hath had experience of in all Ages of the World, and it will always be ſaid in her, *Pſal.* 48. 8. *As we have heard, ſo have we ſeen in the City of the Lord of Hoſts, in the City of our God; God will eſtabliſh it for ever.*

In the handling this Doctrine, theſe four things are to be done.

1. The *Explication.* 2. *The Proof*, that it is ſo. 3. *Why it muſt needs be ſo.* 4. *Uſe.*

1. *Explication.*

1. *This ſtability muſt not be meant of any particular Church in the World.* Particular Churches have their Beginnings, Progreſſes, and Periods; many Churches as well as many Perſons have Apoſtatized from the Faith; many Candleſticks have been broken in pieces, and yet the Candle not blown out, but remov'd and ſet in another Socket; particular Churches have been corrupted by *Superſtition* and *Idolatry*, rent by *Hereſies*, and ſcattered by *Perſecutions*. What remains are there of thoſe ſeven *Churches in Aſia* which were the *walk of Chriſt*, Rev. 2. 1. but deplorable Ruines? There is no abſolute Promiſe given to any particular Church, that it ſhall be free from defection. The Church of *Rome* ſo flouriſhing in the Apoſtles Time, was warn'd to be humble, leſt it became as much Apoſtate as that of the *Jews*, *Rom.* 11. 21, 22. Nay, there are Predictions of almoſt an univerſal Apoſtacy *. And juſt before the Coming of Chriſt it will be difficult to find a *grain* of Faith among the multitude of *Chaff*, *Luke* 18. 8. There is not one place which was in the primitive Times dignified with Truth, but is now deformed by Error. Yea, the univerſal Church hath been forced by the fury of the *Dragon*, tho' not to ſink, yet to fly into the Wilderneſs and Obſcurity, yet hath been preſerv'd through all Changes in the midſt of thoſe Deſolations and Deſarts. 'Tis not indeed ſo fixed in one place, but thr Cords may be taken up, the Stakes removed, and the Tents pitched in another Ground. 'Tis ſpread through the World, where-ever God will ſet up the light of his Goſpel. *Sion* hath ſtood, though ſome Synagogues of it have been pulled down; It hath, like the Sun, kept its ſtation in the Firmament, though not without Eclipſes and Clouds to muffle it. The Church is but one, tho' it be in divers Countries, and nam'd according to the places where it reſides, as the Church of *Epheſus*, the Church of *Sardis*, &c. which all are as the Beams of the Sun darted from one Body, Branches growing from one Root, Streams flowing from one Fountain; if you obſtruct the light of one Beam, or lop off one Branch, or dam up the Stream, yet the Sun, Root, Fountain remains the ſame: So though the light of particular Churches may be dim and extinguiſh'd, the beauty of them defaced, yet the univerſal Church, that which is properly *Sion* remains the ſame, it remains upon Chriſt the Rock, and is ſtill upon the *baſis* of the Covenant, 'tis ſtill God's Church, and God is her God. When a People have forfeited their Church-Priviledges by Barrenneſs and Wantonneſs, and God in juſtice ſtrips them of their Ornaments, he will have another People, which he will form for his Glory, and fit for his Reſidence; the Goſpel ſhall never want an Hoſt to entertain it, nor a Ground to be made fruitful by it *. The Kingdom of God is not deſtroyed when it is removed, but tranſplanted into a more fruitful Soil. While Chriſt hath a Body in the World, he will find a *Joſeph* of *Arimathæa* to Embalm it, and preſerve it for a Reſurrection. When the Glory of the Lord goes off from one Cherub, it will find other *Cherubims* whereon to ſettle, *Ezek.* 10. 4. 18. That Glory which had dwelt in the material Ark of the Sanctuary, departs from thence to find a Throne in that *Chariot* which had been deſcribed, *Ezek.* 1. Nay, the departure of God from one Church, renders his Name more glorious in another †. The rejection of the *Carnal Iſrael* was the Preamble to the appearance of the *ſpiritual Iſrael*, and the Kingdom of the *Meſſiah* was rendred more large and illuſtrious by the diſſolving of that Church that had confidence in the Fleſh, truſted in their external

* *All the World wandred after the Beaſt,* Rev. 13. 3. *and worſhiped him,* v. 8.

* Mat. 21. 43. *The Kingdom of God ſhall be taken from you, and given to a Nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.*

† *Rivet.* in Hoſ. 1. 10. *p.* 518.

Rites and patcht the Beauty and Purity of Divine Worſhip with their whoriſh Additions; juſt as the Mortification of the Fleſh gives livelineſs to the Spirit, and the pulling up noiſom Weeds from a Garden makes room for the ſetting and flouriſhing growth of good Plants.

2. *Though God unſtakes the Church in one place, yet he will not only have a Church, but a profeſſing Church in another. It ſhall be ſaid of* Sion, *This and that Man was born there.* It ſhall be ſaid of *Sion by God*; It ſhall be ſaid of *Sion by Men.* If Chriſt confeſſeth none before his Father, but ſuch as *confeſs him before Men, Luke* 12. 8. ſhall he ever want Imployment? Shall the World ever be at that paſs as to bear none that profeſs him? and ſo none to be owned by him at the Right Hand of his Father? Shall he by whom all things ſubſiſt, have none to acknowledge their Subſiſtance by him? The World may be the Inheritance of Chriſt, but ſcarce counted his Poſſeſſion, if there were not in ſome parts of it a Body of Subjects to juſtifie their Allegiance to him in the face of a perſecuting Generation. Indeed when the Church was confined to the narrow Limits of the *carnal Iſrael*, the profeſſion of the Truth was contracted to a few, though the Faith of it might be alive in others; only *Caleb* and *Joſhua* among the whole Body of the murmuring Iſraelites in the Wilderneſs, aſſerted the Honour of God, and maintain'd the Truth of his Promiſe, though the belief of it might ſparkle in the Hearts of others under the Aſhes of their Fears, that hinder'd their Diſcovery of it to others. It was another time reduced to one, and *Elijah* only had the boldneſs to make a Declaration of the Name of God, though there were 7000 who had retain'd their Purity while they had loſt their Courage to publiſh it, 1 *Kings* 19. 18. But in the Chriſtian Church, ſince the number of Elect are more, the profeſſion will be greater in the midſt of an univerſal Apoſtacy of Pretenders, *Rev.* 13. 8. *All that dwell upon the Earth ſhall worſhip him, i. e.* the Beaſt, *whoſe Names are not written in the Book of Life of the Lamb.* If their Election be a Preſervative againſt an Adoration of the Beaſt, it is alſo a Security againſt the Denial of any ſuch Worſhip, and an Encouragement to profeſs the Name of Chriſt, when they ſhall be brought upon the Stage.

This Profeſſion may lie much in the dark, and not be ſo viſible as before; As a Field of Corn over-topt by Weeds looks at a diſtance, as if there were nothing elſe but the blue and red Cockle and Darnel, but when we come near, we ſee the good Grain ſhews its Head as well as the Weeds; but a profeſſing People there will be one where or other. 'Tis a ſtanding Law of Chriſtianity, that a *Belief in the Heart* ſhould be attended by *Confeſſion with the Mouth, Rom.* 10. 9. And the Church is a Congregation of People ſounding the Voice of Chriſt, as he was preached and confeſt by the Apoſtles; while there are Believers, there will be Profeſſors in Society together; ſome Ordinances ſettled in being, during the continuance of the World; as the *Supper*, 1 *Cor.* 11. 6. implies a Society, as the Seat of the Adminiſtration; *Baptiſm* is a Ceremony of admiſſion into a Society; the *Supper* a feaſting of ſeveral upon ſpiritual Viands. Officers appointed imply a Body profeſſing ſome Rules, *Matt.* 28. 20. To what purpoſe are all theſe ſetled during the continuance of the World, if they were not ſomewhere to be practiſed till that Period of time; and how can they be practiſed without a Confederation and Society? Without ſuch a Body all the Ordinances and Rules of Chriſt would be in vain, and imply as little Wiſdom in enacting them, as a want of Power in not keeping up a Society in ſome part of the World to obſerve them according to his own Preſcriptions. There will therefore be in ſome part or other of the World, a Church openly profeſſing the Doctrine of Truth.

3. *This Church* or *Sion ſhall have a numerous Progeny.* The *Spiritual Iſrael* ſhall be *as the Sand of the Sea, which cannot be meaſured or numbred, Hoſ.* 1. 10. which was the Promiſe made to *Abraham, Gen.* 22. 17. and renewed in the ſame Terms to *Jacob, Gen.* 32. 12. The Church is a little Flock in compariſon of the carnal World, yet it is numerous in it ſelf, though not in every place; for ſometimes there may not be above *three* found to withſtand the worſhip of a Golden Image; yet in ſome one or other place of the world, and ſucceſſively it ſhall be numerous; he will not loſe the Honour of the Feaſt he hath prepared, though thoſe that are invited prefer their Farms and Oxen before it, but will find Gueſts in the High-ways; he will ſpread his Wings from *Eaſt* to *Weſt*, and in every place *Incenſe ſhall be offered to his Name, Mal.* 1. 11. The Church is compared to the *morning, Cant.* 6. 10. which from ſmall Beginnings in a ſhort time fills the whole Hemiſphere with Light; and the Promiſes concerning it run all that *way.* The *Hills* were to be covered *with the Shadow* of it; her *Boughs are to be ſent out to the Sea, and her Branches to the River, Pſal.* 80. 10, 11. It was to ſpread it ſelf like a *goodly Cedar*, and be a *dwelling-place to the Fowl of every Wing, Ezek.* 17. 23. Yea, a numberleſs Multitude from all Nations, Kindreds, People, and Tongues, are to ſtand before the Throne, and before the Lamb, *Clothed with White Robes, and Palms in their Hands, Rev.* 7. 9. adorn'd with Innocency, and crowned with Victory. No Monarchy ever did, ever can ſo far ſtretch her Bounds; nor hath the Sun ſeen any place where it hath not ſeen ſome ſprinkling of a Church. Every Kingdom hath met with unpaſſable Bounds; but the Enſigns of Chriſt hath not been limited. The Church was once crowded up in a narrow Compaſs of *Judæa*; but ſince that her Territories are enlarged, her Enſigns have flouriſhed over many Countries, *Rahab, Tyre, Ethiopia*, the vaſt Circuit of *Aſia*, and the Deſerts of *Africa*, have been added to her Empire; her Progeny ſhall be hereafter as numerous as it hath been; when the Devices of *Antichriſt* ſhall be more ſeen and perceived, they will be more nauſeated, and many with *Ephraim* ſhall ſay, *What have I to do any more with Idols?*

Second thing; *That God has hitherto eſtabliſhed* Sion. II.

1. *'Tis teſtified by its preſent ſtanding, when other Empires are ſunk by Age or Violence.*

God hath promiſed the ſtability and eminency of the *Mountain of the Lord's Houſe* above all the Mountains, the ſtrongeſt Power, and moſt compacted Empires of the World, ſometimes ſignify'd to us by that *Title, Iſa.* 2. 2. And in the midſt of his deſtroying Plagues, and his milder Anger with the Church, ſhe hath a Charter of Security, *Jer.* 30. 11. *Though I make a full end of all Nations, yet will I not make an end of thee.* Further, the reaſons why Kingdoms and Nations are pulled up by the Roots, and utterly waſted, is not only becauſe they are inveterate Enemies, but refuſe her eaſie Chains, and decline her Service, *Iſa.* 60. 12. *The Nation and Kingdom that will not ſerve thee, ſhall periſh; yea thoſe Nations ſhall be utterly waſted.* The Warrant for the execution of ſuch is

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as firmly ſealed by Heaven, as the Patent for the Church's preſervation; 'tis repeated with an *Emphaſis*. The perſecuted Church hath ſtill been lifted up, when the *Aſſyrian*, *Perſian*, and *Greek* Monarchies have fallen in pieces, and left no footſteps of their Grandeur. The proſperity of worldly Kingdoms is no better than a Fire of Straw that blazeth and vaniſheth, it hath but the brittle Foundation of humane Policy, and an eſtabliſhment by a temporary Providence; the everlaſting Covenant, and the Baſis of Divine Truth and Love cannot be claimed by any but the Church; not a Kingdom can be pitch'd upon in all the Records of Hiſtory, that hath maintain'd its ſtanding, triumph'd over its Enemies, and ſubſiſted at ſuch a rate, and by unuſual and unheard-of Methods, as the Church hath done. Thoſe that have been beſt guarded by Laws, hedg'd in with the beſt Methods of Government, and arm'd with a ſtrong Power to protect them, have found ſomething or other riſing from their own Bowels, or their Enemies Power to procure their Diſſolution. But the Church, though daſht againſt ſo many Rocks, has yet floated above the Deluge of thoſe Commotions that have ſunk other Societies. The Kings of the World could never yet boaſt of a full Conqueſt of her, or brag that ſhe hath been ſubjected to the ſame condition with themſelves; ſhe hath born up her Head in the midſt of earthly Revolutions, and met with her Preſervation or Reſurrection, where carnal Intereſts have found their Funeral. Thoſe that have ſet their Feet upon the Church's Breaſts, or ſpilt her Blood, have found their Poyſon where they imagin'd they ſhould find their Safety. The *Babyloniſh* Empire, which was God's Rod for the correcting his People, ſaw her ſelf in the Chains of her Enemies that Night ſhe had been ſacrilegiouſly carouzing Healths in the *ſacred Veſſels of the Temple*, *Dan.* 5. 3, 30. and the *Jews* enjoyed a Deliverer, where the *Babylonians* felt the force of a Conqueror. Many ſuch fatal Periods may be reckon'd up both in Sacred and Humane Story, either for not protecting, or perſecuting that which is ſo dear to the Higheſt who hath eſtabliſht her.

2. *No Society but the Church ever ſubſiſted in the midſt of a multitude of Enemies.* Has ſhe not been like a little Flock in the midſt of many Wolves, which though they ſuckt the Blood of ſome, yet could never reach the Head or Heart of the whole? the Devil hath attackt her, without vanquiſhing her; ſhaken her, without ruining her. The biting of the Serpent, according to the ancient Promiſe, may bruiſe the Heel, but not the Head, and make an incurable Wound in the Myſtical Body. She hath been preſerved in a hating World in ſpight of the Enmity of it, by a Divine Wiſdom that hath not regulated it ſelf by the Methods of Fleſh and Blood. His feeding the *Iſraelites* in the Wilderneſs was a Figure of what he would do to his Church, and he hath accompliſht it to the Goſpel-Church, as really as he did to the ancient *Iſrael*. While ſhe hath been in a Wilderneſs theſe 1200 *Years*, and I hope ſomewhat upwards, ſhe hath not wanted her *Manna*, nor her *Rock*; ſhe hath been fed in her Straits, and preſerved in her Combates; and as Chriſt reigns, ſo the Church lives, and hath her *Table ſpread in the midſt of her Enemies*. What is 1100 *years* continuance of the *Venetian* Government, to ſo many thouſand Years preſervation of the Church in the midſt of *Atheiſm*, *Paganiſm*, *Antichriſtianiſm*, ever ſince it was firſt born and nurſt in *Adam*'s Family; and this hath been, when her Friends have forſaken her; when her Enemies have been confident of her ruine; when her ſelf hath expected little elſe than Deſtruction; when ſhe hath thought ſometimes in her Straits, her God ignorant of her; when Hell hath poured out a Flood, the *carnal Earth* hath ſometimes found it their Intereſt to help her, though their Enmity were irreconcileable againſt her, *Rev.* 12. 16. The ſubtilty and power of her Enemies, that have found ſucceſs in their other Projects, have met with an unforeſeen Baffle, when they have armed againſt her. Men of the greateſt Abilities have proved Fools, when they have exerciſed their Wit againſt her. *Achitophel*'s Wiſdom was great when on *David*'s ſide, and changed to Folly when he ſhifted ſides againſt him. A ſecret Blaſt hath been upon the Projects of Men, when they have turn'd againſt her upon Secular Intereſts. In the greateſt Judgments which have come, and ſhall come upon the World; when Wonders ſhall be ſhewn in the Heavens, and in the Earth, Blood, Fire, and Pillars of Smoke; when the *Sun ſhall be turned into Darkneſs, and the Moon into Blood*, *Joel* 2. 30. 31. yet God will have a Mount *Sion* and *Jeruſalem*; ſome that *call upon his Name*, *v.* 32. Not the Malice of her Enemies ſhall impair her, becauſe of God's Power, nor the common Judgments of the World, under which others ſink, ſhall extinguiſh her, becauſe of *God's Truth*, *v.* 32. *As the Lord hath ſaid.* Whence comes all this, but from God's having been her *dwelling-place in all Generations? Pſal.* 90. 1. He was ſo to her from the time of *Abraham*, to the introduction of his Poſterity into *Canaan*; he hath ſheltred her as an Houſe doth an Inhabitant, or the Ark did *Noah* in the midſt of many Waters. In all Generations *Sion* hath been impregnable; for he that is her dwelling-place, hath formed the Mountains, and *from everlaſting to everlaſting is* only *God*, *v.* 2. And though one Generation paſs, and another comes, he is the ſame Dwelling-place, and never out of repair, never will want repair; and therefore 'tis an aſtoniſhment, that the Devil after ſo long an experience, ſhould be ſuch a Fool as to engage in new Attempts, when he hath found ſo little ſucceſs in his former, and hath had ſo many Ages to witneſs the Baffles he hath received, what a Fool is he to think that her Defender ſhould be conquered by a revolted Angel, that lies under an everlaſting Curſe!

3. *The Violences againſt her, which have been fatal to other Societies, have been uſeful to her.* This Buſh hath burned without conſuming, and preſerved its Verdure in the midſt of Fire; not from the Nature of the Buſh, but the preſence of him that dwelt in it: It hath not only ſubſiſted in the Bowels of her Enemies, but hath been eſtabliſhed by means of the Violence of Men, and grown greater in the midſt of Torments and Death; ſhe hath not only out-grown her Afflictions, but grown greater and better by them. The laſt Monarchy compoſed of Clay and Iron; Clay for its earthly and miry Deſigns, and Iron for its force and violence, is the immediate Uſher of the Kingdom of God, that ſhall never be deſtroyed, but ſtand for ever, *Dan.* 2. 41, 44.

1. *She hath been often encreaſed.* Perſecution hath lopt off ſome Branches of the Vine, but have been found more ſprouting up inſtead of them that were cut off. Her Blood hath been Seed, and the Pangs of her Martyrs have been fruitful in bringing forth new Witneſſes. We have ſcarce read of more ſudden Converſions to Chriſtianity, though indeed more numerous, by the preaching of the Word, than by the ſhedding of the Blood of Chriſtians. Eminent Profeſſors have ſprung

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out of the Martyrs Aſhes. The Storms have been ſo far from deſtroying her, that it hath been the occaſion of ſpreading her Tents in a larger Ground. *Saul's* winnowing the Church blew away ſome of the Corn to take rooting in other *places, Acts* 8. 3, 4. Like Seeds of Plants blown away by the Wind, which have riſen and brought forth their kind in another Soil; and it is no more than hath been predicted, *Dan.* 12. 1, 4. *Such a time of trouble that never was ſince there was a Nation, ſhould be the time when many ſhould run to and fro, and Knowledge ſhould be increaſed.* While other Societies increaſe by perſecuting their Enemies, this increaſeth by being perſecuted her ſelf. *It grows as a Vine, Hoſ.* 14. 7. Though it be cut, the cutting hath contributed to its thriving. This Roſe-buſh hath not only ſtood in the Wind, which hath rooted up other Oaks, but the fragrancy of it hath been carried by that Wind to places at a greater diſtance. When *Antiochus* commanded all the Books of the Scripture in the Hands of any to be burned, they were not only preſerved, but preſently after appeared out of their hidden places, as they were tranſlated into the Greek Tongue, the Language then moſt known in the World, and made publick to other Nations. Truth hath been often rendred by ſuch Proceedings more clear and glorious. The perſecution of *Sion's* Head, the Captain of our Salvation, to Death, was the occaſion of the diſcovery of the Goſpel to the whole World; he was the great Seed, that being caſt into the Ground became ſo *fruitful* as to ſpread his Branches in all Corners of the Earth, *John* 12. 24. And that Perſecution which I ſuppoſe remains yet to be acted, and which will be the ſmarteſt, ſhall be ſucceeded by the cleareſt Eruption of Goſpel-Light, wherein the Goſpel ſhall recover its ancient and primitive Glory. The ſlaying of the Witneſſes ſhall end in an Evangelical Succeſs, *Rev.* 11. 9, 10, &c. The World *ſhall give Glory to the God of Heaven*, v. 13. *The Kingdoms of the World ſhall become the Kingdoms of Chriſt*, v. 15. Chriſt ſhall more illuſtriouſly *reign*, *v.* 17. The *Temple of God* ſhall be *opened* in Heaven, *v.* 19. The ſpiritual *Iſrael*, as well as the national, the *Antitype* as well as the Type, have multiplied under oppreſſion *; and, like an arched Building, ſtood firmer by all the weights that have been deſigned to cruſh her.

* *Decay of Chriſtian Piety*, p. 23

(2.) *She has often been Refin'd by the moſt violent perſecutions of her Enemies.*

She hath not only ſurviv'd the flames that have been kindled againſt her, but as refin'd Gold come out more beautiful from the furnace, left her droſs behind her, and hath been wrought into a more beautiful frame by the hand of her great Artificer; like the Sand upon the Sea-ſhore, ſhe hath not only broke the force of the Waves, but been aſſiſted by them to diſcharge her Filth, and been waſhed more clean by thoſe Waves that ruſh'd in to drown her. She hath been more conformed to the Image of her Head, and made fitter to glorifie God here, and to enter into the Glory of God hereafter. The Church is to caſt *forth her Roots like Libanon, Hoſ.* 14. 5. The Cedar by its ſhakings grows up more in beauty as well as ſtrength, and the Torch by its knocks burns the clearer. Though the number of her Children might ſometimes decreaſe through Fear, yet her true Off-ſpring that have remained, have increaſed in their Zeal, Courage, and Love to God. Apoſtates themſelves have proved Refiners of them that they have deſerted *. The Corn is the purer by the ſeparation of the Chaff. Thus hath ſhe grown purer by Flames, and ſounder by Batteries.

* Dan. 11. 35. *And ſome of them of Underſtanding ſhall fall to try them, and to purge and make them white*

4. *When ſhe has ſeemed to be forlorn and dead, God has reſtored her.* When *Iſrael* was at the loweſt, a Decree iſſued out in *Ægypt* to deſtroy her Males, and root out her Seed, Deliverance began to dawn; and when a Knife was at her Throat at the Red-Sea, and ſcarce a valiant Believer found among a Multitude of Deſpairers, God turned the Back of the Knife to his *Iſrael*, and the Edge to the Throat of the Enemies. When the whole Church as well as the whole World ſeem'd to be at its laſt Gaſp, God preſerv'd a *Noah* as a Spark to kindle a new World and a new Church by. When *Jeruſalem* was ſackt, the City deſtroy'd, the People diſpers'd into ſeveral parts of the *Babyloniſh* Empire, without any humane probability of ever being gather'd again into one Body; yet ſhe was preſerv'd, reſtor'd, recollected, brought out of the Sepulchre, reſettl'd in her ancient Soil, and recover'd her Beauty, which can be ſaid of no other Society in the World but this; whoſe Deliverance and Reſtauration hung not upon the Will and Policy of Man, but upon the Word of God, who had limited their Captivity to Seventy Years, and promis'd a Reſtauration. The Bleſſing of God to *Abraham* and *Sarah* is ſet out as a ground of Faith and Comfort for the Churches Reſtauration and Increaſe, *Iſa.* 51. 1, 2, 3. He will *comfort Sion, and comfort all her waſt Places, and make her Wilderneſs like* Eden, *and her Deſerts like the Garden of God, that Joy and Gladneſs may be found therein*; as well as he did enliven the dead Body of *Abraham*, and the barren Womb of *Sarah*. When the Church hath been ſo low, that Men have deſpaired of ſeeing any more of her than her Aſhes, God hath produc'd a new Remnant, he hath reſerv'd a Tenth to return, *Iſa.* 6. 13. and from the hidden Womb of the Earth brought forth a new Succeſſion by the vigorous influence of the Sun of Righteouſneſs. And after the laſt Attempt and ſucceſs of the *Antichriſtian* State, when they are jolly and merry at the Church's Funeral, *Revel.* 11. 10. they ſhall ſoon be amaz'd at her Reſurrection, *v.* 11. as much as the High-Prieſts were at the Reſurrection of *Chriſt*. For the Church can no more lie in the Grave than her Head, the Myſtical Body no more than the Natural: His Reſurrection was an Earneſt of this, and this the Accompliſhment of that; little difference in the time of their Grave-ſtate; three Days the Natural Body lay, three Days and an half only the Myſtical ſhall lie before a full Revival.

5. *God never wanted Inſtruments for his Church in the due ſeaſon.* If *Abel* be butcher'd by *Cain*, God will raiſe up *Seth* in his place, to bring Men to a publick form of Worſhip, *Gen.* 4. 26. If *Nebuchadnezzar* be the Axe to hew down *Jeruſalem*, *Cyrus* ſhall be the Inſtrument to build her up; when his Time is come he will not want an *Ezra* and *Nehemiah* to rear her Walls, nor be wanting to them to inſpire them with Courage, and aſſiſt their Labour in ſpite of the Adverſaries that would give check-mate to the work. If *Stephen* be ſtoned by the *Jews*, he will cull out *Paul* an abetter of that Murder to be a Preacher of the Goſpel, and he that was all Fire againſt it, ſhall become as great a flame for the propagation of it; one *Phœnix* ſhall ariſe out of the Aſhes of another. When *Arrianiſm*, like a Deluge, overflowed the World, the Church wanted not an *Athanaſius* to ſtand in the Gap, and be a Champion for the truth of the Deity of Chriſt. When Enemies riſe up againſt the Church from all Quarters to afflict it, God raiſed others from *all Quarters* to defend it, *Zach.* 1.

19,

19, 20. Yea, those that have been the Instruments to support the Antichristian State against her, by giving their Power and Strength to the Beast, shall turn their Arms against that which they supported, to *make her desolate, eat her Flesh, and burn her with Fire*, Rev. 17. 12, 13, 16. 'Tis the same Christ that is King in his Church, and the Spirit is not dispossessed of his Office to furnish Men with Gifts for the defence and encrease of it; he is still a *spirit of Government* in Magistrates, and *the spirit of Fire* in Ministers for the Churches Interest. Now since the Church hath maintained its standing longer than any other Empire, and that in the midst of its Enemies, and hath been both encreased and refin'd by the Violences used against her, since she hath been so often restor'd, and never wanted Instruments for the rearing and protecting her, who can doubt whether the Highest hath not, and whether the Highest will not still establish her, and cover her with his mighty Wings?

III. 3. The third thing, *Why it must needs be so.*

1. *'Tis necessary for the honour of God.* Those Societies may moulder away, and those Religions grow feeble which have drawn their Birth from the wisdom of Man, and been settled by the force of Man; but a divine Work must needs have a divine Establishment. 'Tis so,

(1.) *If you regard it as his main design in the Creation of the World.* Can we think God made the World for the World's sake, that he pitch'd Tabernacles here for a few Creatures, that could spell from all his Works but a few and little Letters of his Name? Could the bare Creation shew to Man so much as his back Parts? The most glorious Perfections of his Nature could never be visible in a handful of Creatures, though never so Glorious, no nor in multitudes of Worlds of a more beautiful Aspect, without the discovery of the Gospel, and the settling a Gospel Church. How should we have known his Patience, been instructed in his Mercy, have had any sense of his Grace, or understood the depths of his Wisdom, or heard the voice of the Bowels of his Love, so as they are link'd together in his Nature? If God created the World for his Glory, he created it for his highest Glory; a bare Creation without a redeemed Company of Creatures, could never have given us a prospect of the great glory of his Nature, nor have answered the end of God, which was the manifestation of his Perfections. His Wisdom broke out in the frame of all Creatures, giving them Life and Motion; but his Eye, when he made the World, was upon the manifestation of a greater Wisdom, which then lay *hid* in his Bosom, and was not to be discovered but in the publishing the Gospel, *Ephes.* 3. 9, 10. The Wisdom that broke out in the Creation was but a Scaffold, whereon in time his Wisdom in the Glory of a Church peculiar to himself should appear. All things were created for Christ, as well as by him, for him and his Glory, as Mediator, and as Head of the Church, and therefore for the glory of his Body. And his end in sending Christ was to *gather all things together in him*; those things which are *in Heaven*, as well as those which are *on Earth*, Eph. 1. 10. And in order to that end he *works all things* *. This *Counsel* and *Will* of appointing Christ was the spring and rule of all his Works, and therefore of Creation, as well as the rest succeeding it. He that would upon occasion give the richest parts of the World for the Ransom of *Sion*, as *Ægypt*, *Æthiopia*, *Seba*, Isa. 23. 43. may well be thought to create those and other Nations to lay a foundation for her. We know that soon after the Creation the Rest of God was disturbed by the entrance of sin, which could not come unexpected, unforeseen, and unpermitted. There had not then been any ground of rejoycing in the habitable Parts of the Earth, *Prov.* 8. 31. if he had not designed something else. But he provided in his Counsel another Rest, and in order to that suffered this first Rest in the bare Creation to be spoil'd; *Sion* he chose; and *Sion* he desired as his *Rest for ever* wherein he would dwell, *Psal.* 132. 13, 14. The end of God in Creation was not certainly only to make a Sun or Stars, an Earth bedeck'd with Plants, and Man a rational Creature, only to contemplate these Works, but to render him the acknowledgments of his Power and Wisdom *: As a Limner lays his chief design in the midst of the Cloth, and fills the void places with many other Fancies to beautifie and set off his Work, but those were not in his first Intention, but his main design was the draught in the middle, surrounded with the rest. Now when Man by sin had made himself uncapable of performing the Work he had to do, God orders things so as to have a Rest, to have a People to acknowledge him. Hence perhaps the forming of such a People is called by the term of a new Creation, not only as it is an act of creative Power, but as it was the chief design of the exerting his Power in the creation of the World. And shall the chief of his Counsel be the conquest and triumph of Satan? Shall he at the closing up of the World be defeated of his main Contrivance? Surely, if there were a greater opposition to *Sion* than ever there was, he would exert a greater strength than ever he did, not to be crost in his principal aim.

(2.) *As he hath been the Author and Builder of Sion* *. Great Kings have a particular care of the Cities they have founded for the honour and preservation of their Name, and a testimony of their Magnificence; with what choice Priviledges do they use to endow them; with what strong Garrisons do they use to secure them in time of danger? And shall not the Great God perpetuate that which he hath form'd for his Glory, to which he hath given a peculiar denomination of the *City of God* *? *Nebuchadnezzar* cannot be more industrious to enrich *Babylon*, which he had built by the Might of his Power, than God will be to perpetuate *Sion*, which he hath built for the Honour of his Majesty. God was the Architect of this City, and gave the Model. *Christ* was the Builder of this City, and rais'd the Structure *. God laid the Platform of all things, much more of that which is dearer to him than all things: He laid the Foundation of it by his Son; whereas the *Jewish Synagogue* was form'd by the Ministry of *Moses*; he hath poured upon her greater treasures of Knowledge, a fuller measure of the Spirit than he did before, that the Knowledge of precedent Ages was nothing in comparison of that which he lighted in the Gospel *Sion*, in the fulness of Time. The Spirit hath form'd the Church in the Womb of the World, as he form'd Christ in the Womb of the Virgin. The natural and the mystical Body of the Son of God have the same Author and Original; not a Stone fitted to be a part in composing this Temple, but was culled out, and polish'd by God, 1 *Pet.* 3. 5. He that laid the corner Stone, fixeth the *lively stones* to become a *spiritual House*. *Are built*; not built themselves; 'tis his House, because he built it, as well as his House because he dwells in it, and rules it as the Master of the Family. Though the whole Fabrick of Nature is God's work, yet the *Church* is peculiarly, and by way of distinction, called *his Work* *; and every Stone in it is called his *Jewel* †, made so

* V. 11. *He works all things according to the counsel of his own Will.*

* *Charron. 3 Verit. lib. 3. cap. 1. p. 16.*

* *His foundation is in the Holy Mountain.* Psal. 85 1.

* *Called by that title four times in the 48* Psal. 1, 2, 8, 14. *whence the Psalmist concludes the establishment of her.*

* He. 3. 3, 4. He, *i. e. Christ, built the House, and he that built all things is God.*

* Hab. 3. 2. *Revive thy work.*

† Mal. 3. 17. *My Jewels.*

ſo by his Power, in working a real change; for by Nature they were as unfit as the common Pebbles of the Earth. He is therefore peculiarly called the Creator of *Iſrael*, *Iſa.* 43. 15. As he hath maintained a Creation revolted from him, notwithſtanding all the provoking ſins of Men; ſo he will maintain a Creation dear to him, notwithſtanding all the bloody Contrivances of Men. *Sion*'s Inheritance is ſecured, becauſe 'tis *a branch of God's planting*, *Iſa.* 60. 21. Things are preſerv'd by the ſame means whereby they are firſt ſettled. Is it not then for the honour of God to be the Eſtabliſher of that by the Power of his Might, whereof he hath been the Founder by the ſtrength of his Arm? He made not uſe of the Riches, Power, and Wiſdom of the World, to lay the Foundation of *Sion*; but as the *Jews*, he wrought as it were with a Trowel in one hand, and a Sword in the other, and erected her Walls againſt the force and policy of Hell and Earth; and as he founded it without worldly Advantages, and againſt the ſtream of corrupt Nature, he knows how to preſerve it when the Wit and Strength of the World are contrary to it. It would be too low a conceit of the Wiſdom and Power of God, to imagine that he ſhould undertake ſo great a Work, to be baffled in the End he deſigned to himſelf: His Wiſdom is as much concerned in Honour to work Wonders for the preſervation of *Sion*, as his Power was imployed at firſt miraculouſly, to lay the firſt Corner Stone of her.

(3.) *As he hath been the preſerver and inlarger of her to this Day.* Men think themſelves concerned in Honour to perfect thoſe which they call their Creatures, and often regard one act of Kindneſs as an engagement upon them to ſucceſſive Acts of the like nature. 'Tis not for the Honour of any Man to ſtand by a Friend a long time, and to enjoy the Glory of aſſiſting him, and deſert him at the laſt pinch. God ſet up the Church after the Fall in *Adam*'s Family, rather than create a new World, to create a new Church; he raiſed up *Seth* to propagate it, when *Abel* was taken off by the bloody hands of his Brother; he preſerv'd it in *Noah*'s Family, in the midſt of a corrupted and degenerate World, and ſettled it upon the Foundation of the Goſpel in both; Upon the firſt Promiſe in the Family of *Adam*, *Gen.* 3. 15. Upon the *ſweet-ſmelling Sacrifice* offered by *Noah*, *Gen.* 8. 20, 21, 22. Not upon the Symbol or Type, the Blood of the Beaſts, but upon the thing ſignified by it; and the preſervation of the World promiſed after that Sacrifice, was chiefly in order to the preſervation of a Church in it, as the Creation of the World was in order to the erecting it; and therefore the Rain-bow ſettled then as a ſign of the Covenant, for the World's preſervation from a Flood of Waters, is made the ſign of the everlaſting Covenant of Peace, both in *Ezekiel*, *, and in the *Revelation* †, as a ſign he would preſerve his Church from the multitude of Waters, from the rage of the People, ſignified by Waters in the Prophetick part of Scripture, and from the Floods that the Devil ſhould caſt out againſt her. And thence it is, that this Covenant of her Eſtabliſhment is compared with that Covenant God *ſwore to Noah*, and the Faith of the Church ſtrengthned by reflection upon that, *Iſa.* 54. 9. After this ſettling it in *Noah*, he fixed it in *Abraham*, and cleared up the Promiſe of the *Meſſiah*, with a greater evidence than to the Ages before: He multiplied it in the fleſhly *Iſrael*, and enlarged the Bounds of it to a whole Nation. After that, he takes away the Partition-wall, and ſpreads her Confines to the poſſeſſion of the *Gentiles*, that the Sons of *Japhet* might dwell *in the Tents of Shem*, according to his Promiſe, *Gen.* 9. 27. out of the forlorn *Gentiles*, as ſtupid as Stocks and Stones, he raiſeth up Children, a great Poſterity to *Abraham*. Thoſe that he employed in the erecting *Sion*, and eſtabliſhing the Law that went out from her in the rubbiſh of the *Gentiles*, he ſtruck off from all humane Aſſiſtances, all Strength and Power in themſelves, when he commanded them not to depart from *Jeruſalem*, but to wait there for a *Power from on high*, before they ventured to be Witneſſes to him, and publiſh his Name, not only in the uttermoſt parts of the Earth, but in *Jeruſalem*, the City where they were to abide, or in any part of *Judæa*, *Acts* 1. 4, 8. They were not to ſpeak a word of him in their own ſtrength, or in any ſtrength leſs than a Power from Heaven, which was to be given them by the ſending the Spirit: and this he calls *the Promiſe of the Father*; as ſignifying his purpoſe to enlarge his Church, as well as build it at the firſt, by himſelf and his own Power. 'Tis this the Promiſe of the Father our Saviour there pitches their Faith upon, and 'tis this our Faith ſhould be eſtabliſhed in in all Conditions of the Church.

Now hath God thus rear'd up a Church out of the Aſhes of Man's original Apoſtacy, ſettled it among the murmuring and ungrateful *Iſraelites*, that induſtriouſly longed for the Garlick and Onions of *Ægypt*, as weary of the greatneſs of his Mercy to them, and propagated it to the Idolatrous *Gentiles*, fill'd with all Unrighteouſneſs, as bad as bad could be, as is deſcribed, *Rom.* 1. 29, 30, 31? To what purpoſe was the enlarging the Churches Patent, if he did intend the footſteps of her ſhould ever be rooted out of the World? He pickt out the weakeſt, pooreſt Perſons as the matter of it, that he might ſhew his own Honour in preſerving it: He hath yet ſupported her all the while ſhe hath carried the croſs of her Lord: He hath ſent his Spirit to frame a Succeſſion of new Materials for her: How fruitleſs would all this be, if he ſhould let Hell waſte the *Temple* erected for Heaven? What? did he gather and enlarge the Church, only to make it a richer Conqueſt, and a fatter morſel for the Devil? How vain would his former kindneſs appear, if he ſhould let it utterly ſink as long as the World endures: It cannot be imagin'd with any ſemblance of Reaſon, that God hath taken all this Care about the nurſing and growth of the Church from ſmall beginnings, to let his Darling be a Prey to the mouth of *Lyons*, and be of no other uſe than to fatten his Enemies.

(4.) *In regard of the Coſt and Pains he hath been at about* Sion. Did the Creation of the World ever coſt him ſo much? Was there one Tear, one Groan, one Sigh, much leſs the Blood of the Son of God expended in laying the Foundation of it? When the Matter of it was without form and void, the beauty of it was not wrought with a waſhing with Blood. When God eſtabliſhed the Clouds above, and ſtrengthen'd the foundations of the Deep, when he gave the Sea his decree, and appointed the foundations of the Earth, the Son of God was by him *rejoicing* in the habitable parts of the Earth, and his *delights* were among the Sons of Men, *Prov.* 8. 28, 29, 31. Not *bleeding* and *dying*. But this he muſt do, he muſt take humane Nature, be bruiſed in his Heel by the Serpent, and be a Sacrifice himſelf, make an atonement for ſin, before a Stone for the building of ſpiritual *Sion* could be fram'd and laid.

What pains have been taken alſo in the effecting it? The birth of the Church was a work of greater Power than the fabrick of the World; a few words went

* Ezek. 1. 28.
† Rev 4. 3.

went to the rearing of that; in the revolution of six Days it was set upon its Feet: But many a Year was God in Travail before *Sion* was brought forth; there was an Enemy as potent as Hell to deal with in setting it in *Adam*'s Family after Man's Apostacy. The corrupt Nature, that had then got the possession of the World to contest with. The World must be drowned to bring it to a second Nativity and establishment in *Noah*. The forming the Church of the *Jews* was not without some pangs of Nature; what Signs and Wonders, and great Terrors were wrought in its bringing forth out of *Ægypt*, and striking off the Chains of her Captivity? *Deut.* 4. 34. What *fire*, *blackness*, *darkness*, *tempest*, that made a convulsion in the Souls of those that were to be her Materials? *Heb.* 12. 18, 19. And the bringing forth the *Gentile* Church, and enlarging the Cords and Stakes of *Sion*, was preceded by the darkening the Sun, the trembling of the Earth, the opening of the Graves, the suffering of that which was dearest to God himself.

No Power was ever employed so signally in the Affairs of any worldly Concern, as in the settlement of *Sion*. The devouring Waves of the Red-Sea have been made her Bulwarks, and the Sand, the Grave of her Enemies, hath been a path for her passage. The Sun hath forgotten his natural Race, to gaze upon her Victories, *Josh.* 10. 13. *Angels* have been commissioned to be her Champions, and fight her Battels, 2 *Kings* 19. 35. The whole Host of Heaven have been arrayed to fight for *Sion* on Earth. The mercileſs nature of the Fire hath been curb'd, to preserve her Children, when she seemed to be reduced to a small number; and the mouths of hunger-starv'd Lions have been bridled for the same purpose, *Dan.* 6. 22. The proudest Enemies to her have been vanquish'd by Frogs, and Lice; and Tyrants that would lay their Hands upon her, have been made to their Disgrace a living Banquet for Worms the vilest Creatures, *Acts* 12. 23.

And indeed, after the Malice of the Devil had usurp'd God's Right in the Creation, and had drawn the chiefest of his sublunary Creatures into an Apostacy with himself, no less than an infinite Power could be engaged against the greatest of Created Powers, if God would not forego his own Honour in suffering himself to be deprived of the Fruit of his Works. No less than Infinite Power could erect a Church in the World, that God might have the fruit of his Creation, he ordered this Power to appear, struck down the Gates of Hell, sent his Son to rescue his Honour, and his Spirit to polish Stones for his Temple. Every one that is fitted for this Building, had Almightiness at work with him *before he was form'd*, *Eph.* 1. 19, 20. Every Stone was hewed by the Spirit, and the Image of God was imprinted by a Divine Efficacy. Shall the fruit of so much Power, and the mark of his own Image, want an establishment, God would seem to be careless of the Treasures of his own Nature, wherewith he hath endow'd her. Shall all this Cost and Pains be to no purpose? Were the Gates of Hell taken down to be set up again more strongly? And the Chargeable Counsels of God to be puft away by the breath of Satan? Doth it consist with his Wisdom to let *Sion* fall out of his Hands into the Power of her old Oppressor? Men are more desirous to preserve the Estate they have gotten by Sweat, than that which is left them by Inheritance; and are most careful in settling that which hath cost them more Treasure, and more Labour. *Jacob* sets a value upon the Portion he got with his Sword and Bow, *Gen.* 48. 22. No less will God upon that *Sion* he hath wrested out of the World by the Might of his Arm.

(5.) *In regard of Faithfulness: His Veracity is engaged.*

[1.] *In regard of Faithfulness to Christ the Head.* The Spirit was promised to Christ, *Acts* 2. 33. *Having received the Promise of the Holy Ghost*, *i. e.* the Holy Ghost promised to him by the Father: He received that which was promised; his receiving it from God implyed the Spirit's being promised to him by God. To what end was this Spirit given him, and sent by him? *To convince the World of Righteousness*, *John* 16. 10. an effect necessary to the building *Sion*. For this end he received it, for this end therefore it was promised to him. The Promise would be vain, the performance of the Promise, in the mission of the Holy Ghost, would be to no purpose, if the end for which he was promised, and for which he was sent, were not perform'd, if there should not be a perpetual number convinced of, and imbracing that Righteousness of Christ, which hath been manifested by his going to the Father.

God also promised him a great Posterity after his making his Soul *an offering for sin*, *Isa.* 53. 10, 11. A *seed* that he should *see*, therefore stable and perpetual ‖, because always visible to him. God pawn'd his Word upon the condition of his Death; the Condition was perform'd to the full satisfaction of God: His Truth therefore hath no Evasion, no Plea to deny the performance of the Promise in raising up a multitude of Believers in the World, and such a multitude as shall always be seen with pleasure by him, as good and found Children, and the Travel of the Mother's Womb, are by the Parents. The truth of God is oblig'd by Christ's exact performance of the Condition, as well as by the particular respect he hath to the Glory of it; it was for the *Church* Christ *gave himself*, *Eph.* 5. 25. 'Tis necessary therefore that God should preserve and establish a Church for him to the end of the World; that Christ might not by any default of his Father, lose the end and design of his Death, there shall be a Generation of Believers, a little Seed lying in the midst of all the Chaff; so God promised *: His Name shall be propagated in a perpetual Birth of Children, it shall be *found* while the Sun in the Heaven keeps its Station.

‖ *A Posterity was to follow his Sacrifice, his Cross was to give them being, and his Blood was to give them life.*

* Ps. 72. 17. *His Name shall be continued as long as the World.*

(2.) *In regard of faithfulness to the Church it self.* How doth the Word sparkle with Promises to *Sion* in all her Concerns? He hath promis'd an indissolvable Marriage, the fixing a Knot that shall never be unty'd *. A Marriage that shall never end in Widdowhood, so that Judgment, Righteousness, Loving-kindness, Mercy, Faithfulness must first fail, before the Church meet with *an entire dissolution*, *i. e.* God, and the glorious Perfections of his Nature shall fail, before the Church be forsaken, and left to her Enemies. She is no less assur'd of continual Supplies and Nourishment, and that by no meaner a Hand than that of *God himself*, *Isa.* 27. 3. *I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment, I will keep it night and day.* (Nor a meaner *Dew* than himself, *Hos.* 14. 5.) Also without the failing her a Minute; he would water her with Doctrine to preserve her Verdure and increase her Growth. He would be her Guardian Night and Day, in the darkness of Adversity, in the sun-shine of Prosperity; so that Satan should not out-wit, nor the Craft and Subtilty of Hereticks waste her; for it refers to *v.* 1. wherein God promiseth her to punish *the piercing Serpent, the crooked Serpent*, that by

* Hos. 2. 19 *I will betroth thee unto me for ever, and that in judgment, righteousness, loving kindness, mercy, faithfulness.*

various Windings and Turnings inſinuates himſelf to the deſtruction of Men. And he adds, *v.* 4. *Fury is not in me*, he lays by his Anger againſt her, as conſider'd in apoſtate Nature; the Fury of Hell ſhall not prevail where the Anger of God is pacify'd, but her Enemies ſhall be as Briars and Thorns before him. He hath a conſuming Fury for her Enemies, though he hath none for his Vineyard. Protection is in no leſs meaſure promis'd, and that not a temporary one, nor a bare Defence, but with the Ruin of her Enemies, and treading them down, as Straw is trodden down for the Dunghil, *Iſa.* 25. 10. *In this Mountain ſhall the Hand of the Lord reſt.* By *Hand* is meant his Power, and by *Reſt* is meant the perpetual Motion of it for her, and that againſt the moſt furious, malicious, and powerful of her Enemies, *Mat.* 16. 18. *againſt the Gates of Hell:* Againſt the Wiſdom of Hell, Gates being the Seat of Counſel; againſt the Cenſures and Sentences of Hell, Gates being the place of Judicature againſt the Arms of Hell, Gates being the place of Strength and Guards. When Chriſt ſecures againſt Hell, he ſecures againſt all that receive their Commiſſion from Hell; neither Hell it ſelf, nor the Inſtruments edg'd and envenom'd by Hell, ſhall prevail againſt her; ſhe is ſecur'd for her Aſſemblies in one part or other, when they gather together to hear the Law, and to ſacrifice; *And I that am the Lord thy God, from the Land of Ægypt, will yet make thee to dwell in Tabernacles, as in the Days of ſolemn Feaſts, Hoſ.* 12. 9. 'Tis a Promiſe to the Church, it was never yet, nor appears like to be perform'd to the *Ten Tribes* as a Nation, but to their Poſterity, as ſwallow'd up in, and embody'd with the *Gentiles.* The Conqueſt of her Enemies is ſecur'd to her, *Pſal.* 110. 1. The Promiſe is made to Chriſt of making *his enemies his footſtool*; But made to him as *David's Lord*, and conſequently as the Lord of his People, as *King in Sion*; and therefore made to the whole Body of his loyal Subjects. And all thoſe things are of little comfort without duration and ſtability, which is alſo ſecur'd to her, *Hoſ.* 6. 3. *His going forth, i. e.* the going forth of God in the Church, is *prepared as the Morning.* נכון Stable; His appearance for her, and in her, is as certain as the dawning of the Morning Light at the appointed Hour. All the Clouds which threaten a perpetual Night cannot hinder it, all the Workers of Darkneſs cannot prevent it; the Morning will dawn whether they will or no. Her Duration is compared to the moſt durable things, to that of the *Cedar* the moſt laſting of all Plants. Three times it is compar'd to *Lebanon* in the Promiſe, *Hoſ.* 14. 5, 6, 7. The *Cedar* never rots, Worms eat it not. 'Tis not only free from Putrifaction it ſelf, but the Juice of it preſerves other things. *Numa*'s Books *, though of Paper, yet dipt in the Juice of *Cedar*, remain'd without Corruption in the Ground Five hundred Years. How ſhall that God who always remembers every thing, yea the meaneſt of his Creatures, forget his own variety of Expreſſions and multiply'd Promiſes concerning his *Sion.*

* *Sanct. in loc.*

(6.) In regard, *'tis the ſeat of his Glory.* 'Tis *the branch of his planting, the work of his hands, that he might be glorify'd, Iſa.* 60. 21. His Glory would have a bruſh, if *Sion* ſhould ſink to Ruine. He *ſows* her *for himſelf, Hoſ.* 2. 23. ſpeaking of the Church in the time of the Goſpel, not to the Devil, to Sin, to the World, but to his own Glory. As Husbandmen ſow their Fields for their own uſe, to reap from them a fruitful Crop; and therefore till the Harveſt be in, they take care to make up the Breaches, and preſerve them from the Incurſions of Beaſts. Though God hath an objective Glory from all Creatures, yet he hath an active Glory only from the Church. 'Tis *Iſrael*, the *Houſe of Aaron*, and *thoſe that fear the Lord*, that the *Pſalmiſt* calls upon to render God the Praiſe of the *eternity of his mercy, Pſal.* 118. 2, 3, 4. He forbids the profane and diſobedient World *to take his Covenant in their Mouth, Pſal.* 50. 16. None do, none can truly honour and acknowledge him, but the Church; therefore the Apoſtle in his *Doxology* appropriates the Glory that is to be given to God as the Object, to the Church as the Subject, *Epheſ.* 3. 21. *Unto him be Glory in the Church by Jeſus Chriſt throughout all Ages, world without end.* So ſolemn a Wiſh from ſo great an *Apoſtle*, that it *ſhould* be, amounts to a certainty that it *will* be. There cannot be a Glory to God in the Church throughout all Ages, without the continuance of the Church in all Ages. God will have a Revenue of Glory paid him during the continuance of the World; there ſhall therefore be a ſtanding Church during the Duration of the World; while he therefore expects a *Glory* from the midſt of his People, he will be a *wall of Fire round about them*, and keep *Sion* one where or other in a poſture to glorifie him. What is the *Apoſtle*'s motive to this Glory? 'Tis not a remote Power, ſuch as can act, but will not; but a Power operative in the Church, in doing thoſe things for her which ſhe could never ask nor think for her ſelf *. God hath a greater Glory from the Church than he can have from the World; he therefore gives her more *ſignal* experiments of his Power, Wiſdom, and Love, than to the reſt of the World. He had a Glory from Angels, but only as Creator, not as Redeemer, till they were acquainted with his Deſign, and were Speculators of his Actions in gathering a Church in the World. The Church therefore was the original of the new Glory, and Praiſe, the Angels preſented to God. *Glory in the Church by Chriſt. Muſculus* thinks that is added to diſtinguiſh it from the *Jewiſh* Church, which was ſettled by the Miniſtry of *Moſes*; as much as to ſay, God had not ſo much Glory by the Tabernacles of *Jacob*, as he hath by the Church as ſettl'd by Chriſt. Or, *by Chriſt* notes the manner of the preſenting our Praiſe, and the ground of the acceptance of our Praiſe. God accepts no Glory but what is offer'd to him by the hand of Chriſt; and Chriſt preſents no Glory but what is paid him by the Church. 'Tis the Church then, and the Goſpel-Church that preſerves the Glory of God in the World. If the Church therefore ceaſeth, the Glory of God in the World ceaſeth. But ſince God hath created all for his own Glory, ſeparated a Church out of the World for his Glory, appointed his Son the Head of it, that he might be glorify'd, his Church therefore is as dear to him as his Glory, and dear to him in order to his Glory; in eſtabliſhing it therefore he eſtabliſhes his own Honour and Name. It ſhall therefore remain in this World to glorifie him, afterwards in another to glorifie him, and be glorify'd by him.

* V. 20. *Now to him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us*

(7.) In regard that *'tis the Object of his peculiar Affection.* Eſtabliſhment of a belov'd Object is inſeparable from a real Affection. By this he ſecures the Spiritual *Sion*, or Goſpel-Church, both from being forſaken by him, or made deſolate by her Enemies, becauſe ſhe was *Hephzibah* *, *my delight*, or, *my will is in her*, as if he had no Will to any thing but what concern'd her and her ſafety: As Men engrave upon their Rings the Image of thoſe Friends that are deareſt to them, and

* Iſa. 62. 4

and as the *Jews* in their *Captivity* engrav'd the Effigies of their City upon their Rings, to keep her in perpetual remembrance, ſo doth God engrave *Sion upon the Palms of his Hands*, *Iſa.* 49. 16. to which the Holy Ghoſt ſeems to allude. He ſo loves his *Iſrael*, that he who will be commanded by none, ſtoops to be *commanded* by them in things concerning *his Sons*, *Iſa.* 45. 11. Not only ask of me what you want, but *command* me in the things that are to come; the Pleas of my Promiſes of things to come, and your Deſires to bring them forth as the Work of my Hand, ſhall be as powerful a Motive to me, as a Command from a Superiour is to an obedient Inferiour; for it is to *things to come*, ſuch things that God hath predicted, that he limits their asking, which he calls alſo here a commanding of him. There was a real Love in the firſt Choice; there is an intenſeneſs of Love in the firſt Attraction, *Jer.* 31. 3. *I have loved thee with an everlaſting love, therefore with loving-kindneſs have I drawn thee.* His Love, which had a being from Eternity, is expreſt by Words of more tenderneſs, when he comes to frame her; *loving-kindneſs*; as if his Affection ſeem'd to be increas'd, when he came to the execution of his Counſel. According to the vigour of his immutable Love will be the ſtrength of her immutable Eſtabliſhment. This Promiſe is made, not to the Church in general, but to all the Families of the ſpiritual *Iſrael*, *v.* 1. Men are concern'd in Honour for that upon which they have plac'd their Affection. Shall there then be Decays in the Kindneſs of that God, whoſe Glory it is to be immutable? Is it poſſible this Fountain ſhould be frozen in his Breaſt? Was there not a love of good Will to *Sion* to frame her, to pick out her Materials when they lay like Swine in the confuſed Maſs and dirty Mire of a corrupt World? Is there not alſo a love of delight, ſince he hath refin'd and beautify'd her by imparting to her of his *own comlineſs*, *Ezek.* 16. 14. Is it likely this Affection ſhould ſink into careleſneſs? And the fruit of ſo much Love be daſht in pieces? Can ſuch tenderneſs be ſo unconcern'd, as to let the Apple of his Eye be pluckt out? To be a lazy Spectator of the Pillage of his Jewels by the Powers of Hell? to have the Center of his Delight toſt about at the pleaſure of Men and Devils? Shall a Mother be careleſs of her Sucking-child? How then can that God, whoſe tenderneſs to the Church cannot be equall'd by the Bowels of the moſt compaſſionate Mother to her Infants? Surely God is concern'd in Honour, to maintain againſt a feeble Devil, and a decrepit World, that which is the Object of his Almighty Affection.

(8.) *In regard of the natural Weakneſs of the Church.* No generous Prince but will think himſelf bound in honour to ſupport the weaker Subject: No tender Parent but will acknowledge himſelf oblig'd in Affection to take a greater care of the weaker than the ſtronger Child; The Gardiner adds Props to the feebleſt Plants, that are moſt expos'd to the fury of the Storms, and have leaſt ſtrength to withſtand them. The Powers of the World have always been the Churches Enemies; the Wiſe have ſet their Reaſon, and the mighty their Arms againſt her; the Devil, the God of this World, is ſo far from being her Friend, that *Sion* hath been the only Object of his ſpite. He contrives only Flouds to drown her, or Mines to demoliſh her. Her own Friends are often ſo darkened, or divided, that they cannot ſometimes for Ignorance, and will not other times for Peeviſhneſs, hit upon, and uſe the right means for her Preſervation. 'Tis an honourable thing then for that God, who entitles himſelf *the Father of the Fatherleſs*, to ſhew his own Power and Grace in her eſtabliſhment. The *fatherleſs* condition of the Church is an Argument ſhe hath ſometimes uſed to procure the aſſiſtance ſhe wanted *. And the weakneſs of *Jacob* urg'd by the Prophet excited *Repentance* in God, and averted two Judgments which were threatned againſt that People, *Amos* 7. 2, 3, 5, 6. 'Tis no mean Motive to him to help the helpleſs, this Opportunity he delights to take; when there was no Man to help, *no Interceſſor* to plead, then his *own Arm brought ſalvation.* When he ſaw no Defenders but all Ravagers, no Phyſicians but all Wounders, then ſhou'd the *ſpirit of the Lord lift up a Standard*, *Iſa.* 59, 16. 19.

* Hoſ. 14. 3. *With thee the Fatherleſs finds Mercy.*

To *conclude*, if *Sion*, the Goſpel-Church, were not of as *long a duration* as the ſtanding of the World, God wou'd loſe the honour of his Creation, after the Devil by Sin had made the Creatures unuſeful for thoſe Ends to which God had appointed them by his firſt inſtitution. The Wiſdom of God had been blurr'd, the Serpent wou'd have triumph'd, the Kingdom of God had been diſſolv'd, the Enemy wou'd have enjoy'd a remedileſs tyranny, had not God put his Hand to the Work, and erected a new Kingdom to himſelf out of the Ruins of the Fall. And ſince God was pleas'd to take this Courſe rather than create a new World, and hath laid the Foundation of a new Kingdom by drawing ſome out of that common Rebellion the Humane Nature was fallen into, and that he might do it with honour to himſelf, hath ſent his Son upon that Errand, by his Blood to bring back Man to God, and his Spirit to make Men fit for a Communion with him, and hath backt his Affection to the Church with ſo much coſts and pains for her welfare; If after all this God ſhou'd deſert his Church, the diſhonour of God's Wiſdom, the loſs of the Fruit of all his coſts and pains, the weakneſs of his Affection, or of his Power to perform his Promiſe, and the ruine of his Glory intended by thoſe Methods, wou'd be the iſſue which wou'd be attended with the Triumph of his revolted Creature and greateſt Enemy. This wou'd be, if God ſhou'd ceaſe picking out ſome Men for his Praiſe, and keeping up his Name and Royalty in the Earth.

2. *'Tis for the exerciſe of the Offices of Chriſt that* Sion *ſhould be eſtabliſh'd.* He is *Prophet*, *Prieſt*, and *King*, which are all Titles of Relation. Prophet implies ſome to be inſtructed, a Prieſt ſome to offer for, and a King ſome to be ruled; put one Relation, and you muſt neceſſarily put the other. If there were no Church preſerv'd in the World, he would be a nominal Prophet without any Diſciples, a King without Subjects, and a Prieſt without Suppliants to be aton'd by him, upon Earth. Now Chriſt is the *wonderful Counſellor*, *the everlaſting Father*, and *the Government is* laid *upon his Shoulders*; to what end? to *order* and *eſtabliſh* the Kingdom of God, *Iſa.* 9. 6, 7. All the Strength and Vigour he had, as it was *from God*, ſo it was intended *for God* *. And the reaſon is, becauſe, though God hath given up the adminiſtration of things to Chriſt, yet he hath not deveſted himſelf of his Right, nor can; For God is the chief Lord, and the relation of Creatures not ceaſing, the relation of Lord and Creator cannot ceaſe. And therefore ſince the Right of God continues, the Grant of the uttermoſt Ends of the Earth to be the Inheritance and Poſſeſſion of Chriſt, includes not only a Gift, but an Office, to preſerve, protect, eſtabliſh, and improve his Poſſeſſion for thoſe Ends for which he had the

* *Thou madeſt the Son of Man ſtrong for thy ſelf*, Pſa. 80. 17.

Grant, and to prevent all that may impair it. As he had a right and ſtrength, by the order of God to rear it, ſo he hath an Office and Power to eſtabliſh it, as well as to erect it, and *Chriſt* is *the ſame* in all his Offices, *yeſterday, to day, and for ever*, *Heb.* 13. 8. The ſame in credit with God, in faithfulneſs to his Office, the vertue of his Blood, the force of his Arm, and compaſſions to bleeding *Sion*.

(1.) *'Tis his part, as a Prophet, to eſtabliſh it in Doctrine.* 'Tis his part *externally* to raiſe his Truth when it lies gaſping in the Rubbiſh of Error, and refine his Worſhip when it is daub'd with Superſtition and Idolatry. *Internally* to clear the Underſtanding to know his truth, quicken the Will to embrace it, rivet the Word in the Conſcience, and enflame the Affections to love and delight in it. Certainly the Promiſe of the abiding of his Spirit implies the efficacy of his Operation while he abides. He is to provide againſt the ſubtilty and rapine of Fox-like Hereticks, that they ſpoil not the *tender Vine*, *Cant.* 2. 15. And to furniſh the Church with Gifts for the preſerving and increaſing her. The perpetual exerciſe of this prophetical Office he promis'd them, when he gave the *Apoſtles* a Charter for his preſence *to the end of the World*, *Matt.* 28. 20. Which was in relation to their Miniſtry and their Office of teaching. Since he promis'd his preſence with his Miniſtry to the end of the World, he will have a Church to the end of the World, to enjoy the benefit of that Promiſe to be taught by them. It conſiſted not with the Wiſdom or Faithfulneſs of Chriſt to promiſe a perpetuity to that, if he knew it were to be cut ſhort before the end of the World. And this himſelf alſo aſſures the Church of in all its variety of States, *Revel.* 2. 1. *Theſe things ſaith he that holds the ſeven Stars in his Right-hand, who walks in the midſt of the ſeven Golden Candleſticks.* Not only Seven Stars at one time, or Seven Golden Candleſticks in being together, but in all the Succeſſions of the Church to the conſummation of the World. And as he deſcribes himſelf by this Title when he ſpeaks of the Church of *Epheſus*, which was the firſt State of the Church, not only aſſuring her of his holding her Star, and walking by her Candleſtick, but all the reſt that were to follow, ſo he doth renew the ſame Expreſſion in part when he ſpeaks of the Church of *Sardis*, which is the riſing of the Church from the Apoſtacy wherein it had been cover'd in the *Thyatirian* ſtate, *Revel.* 3. 1. *Theſe things ſaith he that hath the ſeven Spirits of God, and the ſeven Stars.* The ſeven Spirits of God ſignifies the Gifts for the building and perfecting the Church ſtill in the hand of Chriſt, which ſhould be in a more plentiful way poured out than for ſome time before, as they were in the firſt Reformation. He is ſtill therefore as a Prophet walking in the Church in all Ages. Not only in the firſt Foundation of it by the Apoſtles, but in the Reformation of it, after it had been bury'd in Superſtition and Idolatry. And at the Reſtauration of the Church in the World, there ſhall be a pure River of Water, as *clear as Cryſtal, proceeding from the Throne of God, and the Lamb*, *Revel.* 22. 1. *i. e.* Pure Doctrine without any Mud and Mixtures.

(2.) *'Tis his part as a Prieſt to eſtabliſh it in the favour of God, and look to the Reparations of his Temple.* The Church is his Temple. A Temple is the proper Seat and the proper Care of a Prieſt. He is *a Prieſt* ſtill *upon his Throne*, *Zach.* 6. 13. and that *for ever*. As he hath therefore ſome thing to offer, ſo he hath always ſome for whom he offers; who are they but his Church? His Prayer on Earth, *John* 17. was but a Model or Draught of his Interceſſion in Heaven; one part of it is for preſervation of them *through the truth of God*, *John* 17. 17. The keeping up the Goſpel in the World in order to a ſanctification of ſome, is the matter of his interceſſion, which is one part of his Prieſtly Office. And we cannot imagine his Plea for his Church to be weaker on his Throne, it being alſo a Throne of Grace, than it was for his Enemies when he was upon a Croſs of Suffering. The *Compaſſions* annext to his Prieſthood *remain ſtill*, *Heb.* 4. 15. If his Office be perpetual, the Qualifications neceſſary to that Office are as durable as the Office it ſelf, as long as there is any Object for their Exerciſe. To what purpoſe are his Compaſſions, if he ſhould not pity her for whom they were deſign'd, and for whoſe Behoof he was furniſht with them? He cannot be faithful to God in his Office, if he be not merciful and tender to *Sion* in her Diſtreſſes. He certainly pities her as he would himſelf, were it poſſible he ſhould be in an infirm Condition. He muſt loſe his Soul before he can loſe his Pity; and the Church muſt ceaſe to be his Body before ſhe can ceaſe to be the Object of his Compaſſions. He hath the ſame Sentiments now that he had when he called to *Paul from Heaven*, *Acts* 9. 4. It was not then, Why perſecuteſt thou *mine*, but why perſecuteſt thou *me*? Nor is it ſo now; as the Relation continues the ſame, ſo doth the Compaſſion, ſo do his Sentiments, ſo do his Cares. To what purpoſe doth he as a Prieſt ſit upon a Throne of Grace, if he did not ſhew Grace to his *Sion* againſt the cruel Deſigns of her *Enemies*? As God pities us when he remembers *our Frame*, *Pſal.* 103. 13,14. So no queſtion doth Chriſt, when he remembers *Sion*'s Oppreſſions, as a diſtreſſed Child is the Object of the Father's Pity. Add to this, That ſince the Death of Chriſt was one part of his Prieſtly performance, and that the virtue of his Sacrifice is as eternal as his Prieſthood, what a diſparagement would it be to him, and the virtue of his Death, if ever the World while it ſtood, ſhou'd be void of the Fruits of it? There can be no moment wherein it is not valid, to expiate the Sins of ſome Men, and therefore not a Moment wherein the World ſhall be without a *Sion*, whoſe Sins are expiated by it. Shou'd the Standard of *Sion* be ſnatcht away, and torn by the Powers of Darkneſs, what wou'd become of the Glory, what wou'd become of the virtue of the Redeemer's Death? Wou'd God conſecrate him ſo ſolemnly by an Oath to be a Prieſt, to ſo little purpoſe? How cou'd it be for ever, if the execution of that Office ſhou'd be interrupted by the ceſſation of a Church as long as the World ſtands upon its Pillars? Would it not be an empty Title, if the End of it were not perform'd? We cannot imagine the falling of *Sion*, but we muſt queſtion the merit of his Death, the truth of his exaltation, the ſtrength of his Interceſſion, the faithfulneſs of his Office, and the ſincerity and candor of his Compaſſions.

(3.) *'Tis his part, as a King, to eſtabliſh* Sion *in being, and govern her.* The Prophets always teſtify'd that of his *Government there ſhould be no end.* If the Church ſhould ceaſe for one Moment in the World, what Subjects wou'd he have to govern here? Can he be a King without a Kingdom, or a Governour without Subjects, to bear a voluntary and ſincere Witneſs to his Name? If he be *King in Sion*, he will alſo have a *Sion* to own him, and a *Sion* to rule in; not only a conqueſt of the Serpentine Brood and infernal Powers was promis'd, but the total and perpetual Victory,

Gen.

Gen. 3. 15. *The ſeed of the Woman was to bruiſe the Serpent's Head.* When the *Head is bruiſed*, there is no more Wiſdom to guide, or Force to ſpirit the Arm and the other Members of the Body. It was a Promiſe made not only of Chriſt to Man, but of a compleat Victory to Chriſt, that he ſhou'd out-wit the Serpent's Wiſdom, and utterly diſcomfit the Serpent's Power. If the Conqueſt were not perfect and perpetual, it cou'd not be call'd a *ſpoiling of Principalities and Powers*, as it is, *Col.* 2. 15. but an interruption or temporary Check, whence they might reſcue themſelves. He is therefore ſaid *to ſtill the Enemy and Avenger* *. *i. e.* Make them utterly ſilent, not knowing what firm Counſels to take, or what ſucceſsful Orders to give. And it being his end to deſtroy the Works of the Devil, the deſtroying the Works muſt be the Root of the Being and Preſervation of the Church. Did Chriſt then riſe as a Conqueror out of the Grave, and ſit down as King upon his Throne, to let the Devil and the World run away with the Fruits of his Victory? Will he be ſo injurious to himſelf, as to let his Throne be overturn'd by his Enemies? And to let the Adverſary of *Sion* repoſſeſs himſelf of that which he hath been ſo powerfully and ſucceſsfully ſtript of? Chriſt being King cannot be chaſed out of his Kingdom, nor wants Power to keep it from being utterly waſted. To be the Governour of *Sion* was as much in his firſt Commiſſion as to be her Redeemer *. Chriſt as King will never leave beating up the Quarters of Hell, till he hath utterly routed their Force, and made the Partizans of it his Footſtool, and thereby eſtabliſh'd *Sion* beyond the Fears of any tottering. Therefore when he ſpeaks of the Church of *Smyrna*, which was to have a ſore conflict with the Devil, and feel the ſmart of him for *Ten Days*, underſtanding thoſe *Ten ancient Perſecutions* of the Church, he aſſumes a new Title for her Encouragement, *Revel.* 2. 8. *Theſe things ſaith the firſt and the laſt, which was dead and is alive.* I was the firſt that liſted you and embody'd you for the War, and I will be the laſt to bring up the Rear; I was firſt in raiſing you, and I will be the laſt in preſerving you. Fear not the Terror of thoſe Perſecutions, though they be to Blood and Death; I was uſed ſo, I was dead, but I am now alive, and I live for my Church, to behold her Battles, to procure her Victory, and to *Crown* thoſe that ſhall fall in the Fight againſt her Enemies. Chriſt in encouraging them to ſuffer for him, aſſures them of the ſecurity of a Church; the Devil ſhould not waſte the whole, but caſt ſome of them into Priſon, not all, and that for their refining, *v.* 10. *The Devil ſhall caſt ſome of you into Priſon, that you may be tryed.* Chriſt lives ſtill, and acts as King for the Security of *Sion*, and preſerving a Generation to ſerve him, till the time comes that is promiſed, *Rev.* 22. 3. that *there ſhall be no more Curſe, but the Throne of God and of the Lamb* ſhall be in it, and then his *ſervants ſhall ſerve him* with a full ſecurity from all Trouble.

*Pſal. 8. 2. I make no ſcruple to underſtand the whole *Pſalm* of Chriſt, ſince the Apoſtle hath interpreted part of it of him, *Heb.* 2.

**Iſa.* 49. 10 He was to *feed* and guide his Flock, which is often in Scripture put for Ruling.

3. *The Foundation of Sion is ſure.* 'Tis founded upon Chriſt the *Corner-ſtone*. Chriſt is called the *Foundation*, 1 *Cor.* 3. 11. The Apoſtles are the *Foundation*, *Epheſ.* 2. 20. Chriſt is the Foundation *perſonally*, the Apoſtles *doctrinally*; Chriſt *meritoriouſly*, the Apoſtles *miniſterially*; the *Apoſtles* in regard of the *publication* of the *Doctrine*, Chriſt in regard of the *efficacy* of the Doctrine whereby the Church is eſtabliſhed.

1. *The Church is ingrafted in Chriſt*, united to him, one with him; the parts of it are reckoned as his *ſeed* *. As if they had ſprung out of his Loins, as Men naturally did from *Adam*'s; that as *Adam* was the Foundation of their corruption, ſo ſhall Chriſt be the Foundation of their reſtauration: They ſhall be lookt upon as the Children of Chriſt, and Chriſt as their Father; and as Father and Children, legally counted one.

**Pſ.* 22. 30 *a ſeed ſhall ſerve him, it ſhall be counted to the Lord as a Generation.*

The Church is his *own* Body, *Eph.* 5. 29, 30. In loving and eſtabliſhing the Church, he loves and eſtabliſheth himſelf. Whatſoever is implanted in Nature as a Perfection, is eminently in God: Now, ſince he hath twiſted with our Natures a care of our own Bodies, this care muſt be much more in the Nature of Chriſt, becauſe his Church is as nearly united to him, as our Members to the Fleſh and the Bones; and he hath an higher Affection to his Myſtical, than we can have to our Natural Bodies. Chriſt will no leſs ſecure and perfect his own Body, than a Man would improve the Beauty and Strength of his Natural Body, to preſerve it from Wounds, from being mangled or ſcarrified, unleſs it be for the ſecurity of the whole. If he did not do it, it would be a Hatred of his own Fleſh, which never any Man in his right Wits was ever guilty of. The Eternity of Chriſt is made the Foundation of the Church's Eſtabliſhment, *Pſal.* 102. 27, 28. *Thou art the Son, and thy Years ſhall have no end. The Children of thy Servants ſhall continue, and their Seed ſhall be eſtabliſhed before thee.* There could be no Strength in the Argument without union and communion with him: The Church is ſetled upon him as a Foundation, and therefore is of as long a duration as the Foundation upon which it ſtands; the conjunction is ſo ſtrait, that if one fails the other muſt; eſpecially ſince as Chriſt is *the Head*, the Church is his *fulneſs*, *Eph.* 1. 22, 23. *Sion* cannot be compleat but in him, and Chriſt cannot be compleat without her. A Foundation is of little uſe without a Superſtructure; a Building falls not without a diſcredit to the Foundation upon which it ſtood. *Sion*'s compleatneſs depends upon the Strength of Chriſt, and Chriſt's myſtical compleatneſs depends upon the ſtability of *Sion*, he will not leave Himſelf an imperfect and empty Head.

2. *'Tis founded upon the Covenant.* Upon that which endures for ever, and ſhall ſurvive the Funeral of the whole World. Heaven and Earth ſhall paſs away, but the Church is founded upon that which ſhall not paſs away, 1 *Pet.* 1. 23. *The Word of God*, &c. Not ſuch a Word as that whereby he brought forth Light in the World, and formed the Stars at the Creation; a Word that engag'd him not to the perpetuating of it *. This Covenant is more firm than the Pillars of Heaven, and the Foundations of the Earth. The Stars of Heaven ſhall diſſolve, the Sun ſhall be turned into Darkneſs, the Elements ſhall change their order for confuſion: But the Church being founded upon an eternal and immutable Covenant, ſhall ſubſiſt in the midſt of the confuſions and flames of the World, *Iſa.* 54. 10. *The Mountains ſhall depart, and the Hills be removed, but my Covenant of Peace ſhall not be removed.* 'Tis more eſtabliſh'd than the World. The *Apoſtle* clearly intimates it in his commendation of *Abraham*'s Faith, when he tells us, *He looked for a City which hath Foundations*, by virtue of the promiſe of a numerous Seed, *Heb.* 11. 9, 10. As if the World had no Foundation in compariſon of the Church. 'Tis beyond the Skill of Hell to raze up the Foundation, and therefore impoſſible for it to beat down the Superſtructure. *Adam* fell under the ſtrength

**Turretin* Sermons, p. 330.

of

of the Serpents wit, but he could by no Promiſe lay claim to Stability, as the Church can by an immutable Covenant for her ſupport.

IV. The *Uſe*. 1. *Information.*

1. If the Church hath a duration and ſtability, then *Ordinances and Miniſtry are perpetual.* Miniſters may be thruſt into Corners, clapt up in Priſon, hurried to their Graves; but the Sepulchres of Miniſters are not the Graves of the Miniſtry. A Miniſtry, and a Church, Ordinances and a Church, cannot be ſeparated; they run parallel together to the end of the World; for *Sion* cannot be ſuppoſed without Divine Officers, and Divine Inſtitutions; the one cannot be eſtabliſhed without the other. Chriſt walks *in the midſt of the ſeven golden Candleſticks*, *Rev.* 2. 1. in the ſeven States of the Church, to the end of the World*. As there are ſeven States of the Church, ſo there are ſeven Stars in the hand of Chriſt for all thoſe States; the Miniſtry have the ſame ſupport, the ſame Guardian as the Church her ſelf. What was in the *Epheſian* and Primitive State, is alſo in the *Sardian* State, the State of the Church riſing from corruption of Doctrine and Ordinances *. Chriſt hath ſtill Stars to ſhine, and *ſeven Spirits* to gift them; *hath* at preſent, not *had*; *hath* in the State we are, which ſeems to be the end of that *Sardian* State. 'Tis true, the Church is in a wilderneſs Condition, and hath been ſo *for above* 1200 *Years*; but hath ſhe yet ſeen her Funeral? No, ſhe hath a place for her Reſidence, and Food for her Nouriſhment, and both provided for her by that God that fram'd her, by that God that ſtood by her in the pangs of her Travel, and ſhelter'd her *Man-child* from the fury of her Enemies *. *They ſhould feed her*; ſhe is not ſtarved in the Deſart, ſhe hath Manna to comfort her, her Caterer to provide her Food, and ſome to adminiſter the Banquet of the Word and Sacraments to her. For any Member of *Sion* to deny a Miniſtry, and deny Ordinances, and therefore to neglect them, is to conclude her dead in a Grave, and not living, in a Deſart, utterly famiſh'd, and not fed. Though there be a Smoke in the Temple, a Cloud and Obſcurity, the Truths and Ordinances of God not ſo clear, ſo efficacious, as they have been, as ſome underſtand, *Rev.* 15. 8. or as they ſhall be; yet there is a Temple ſtill. A Smoke in the Temple ſuppoſeth a Temple ſtanding, and Ordinances in it: The obſcurity of a thing nulls not the Being of it, nor a Cloud upon the Sun the ſtability and motion of it. He that denies a Church, a Miniſtry, and Divine Ordinances in it, muſt firſt charge Chriſt with falſhood, when he promiſed to be *with them to the end of the World*, Mat. 28. 19, 20. *Alway, even to the end of the World.* Not to ſuſtain their particular Perſons to the end of the World, but their Doctrine in a Succeſſion of ſome, to teach and baptize by virtue of Authority from him; for to that doth the Promiſe and Command refer, and not unto the contiuance of the Apoſtolical Dignity, or of their extraordinary gifts of Miracles, but the duration of their ſtanding work till the Top-ſtone were laid, with the loud acclamations of Grace, Grace. The Church ſhall no more want a Miniſtry in the Deſart, than ſhe wanted a Prophet in *Babylon*.

2. *The Doctrine of the eſtabliſhment of every Member of* Sion *is clearly confirmed.* He that eſtabliſheth *Sion*, counts up every Man that was born in her, every Child of *Sion* is in the ſame ſtate, and under the ſame Promiſe as *Sion* her ſelf. The promiſe of Stability to *Sion* is not to be underſtood of the firmneſs of her Palaces, but the duration of her Inhabitants; as when God is ſaid to *build a Houſe*, 'tis not to be underſtood of rearing the Walls, but increaſing the Family. * Every renew'd Man, every one truly born in *Sion* ſtands upon the ſame Foundation of the Covenant, hath the ſame Charter with *Sion* her ſelf, and therefore upon a ſurer Ground than any particular Society of Men in the World, *Pſal.* 125. 1. *They that truſt in the Lord ſhall be as Mount* Sion, *which cannot be remov'd, but abides for ever.* He is upon a better Foundation of Security than the Church of *Epheſus* or *Smyrna*, *Pergamus* or *Sardis*, which have loſt their footing, and their Places know them no more. A Believer enjoys other Priviledges with *Sion*, but the Patent runs here for his Stability in the favour of God, and runs high by removing all Fears in the Negative, *Cannot be removed*, and confirming all confidence in the Affirmative, *Abides for ever.* No Name writ upon God's Hand, no Name preſented on Chriſt's Breaſt ſhall be razed out, no Fruit of his Death ſhall be loſt, no Devil ſhall ſteal from him any part of his Purchaſe. As he hath Blood enough to redeem them, ſo he hath Power enough to preſerve them; the ſame Blood that is the cement of *Sion*, the ſame Hand that built her, the ſame Head that influenceth her, ſecures every one of her true born Children. They are all in the ſame Poſture, and upon the ſame Foundation with *Sion* her ſelf.

3. *How great is the folly of* Sion's *Enemies!* They judge of her by the weakneſs of her worldly Intereſt, and not by the Almightineſs of her Guardian. They ſtand againſt a God, that in decreeing the Stability of *Sion* decreed the Ruine of her Oppoſers, and can with as much eaſe effect it as reſolve it. The *Stone*, which is the Foundation of this Kingdom, ſhall *break in pieces the Image* of all worldly Glory, the Policy of all worldly Wiſdom, and the force of all worldly Power, *Dan.* 2. 35, 44, 45. It ſhall make the Mountains of the World as a level, and Duſt underneath it. Chaff may as well ſtop the Wind, and force it to another Quarter; Stubble may as well quench the fury of the Flames, as the Enemies of *Sion* be Victorious over the God of *Sion*. As he hath a *Fire* in *Sion* to warm her; ſo he hath a *Furnace* in *Jeruſalem* to conſume her Enemies, *Iſa.* 31. 9. a Fire to burn his People's Droſs, but a Furnace to diſſolve his Enemies Force. *Pharaoh* is an Example to all Generations, to warn Men not to ſtruggle with thoſe whom God reſolves to Patronize; how did he further his own Deſtruction by his Hardneſs, and the deliverance of the Oppreſſed by his Fury? How often is the violence of her Enemies the occaſion of the manifeſtation of God's Glory, and the ſettling *Sion*'s Security? Had not *Pharaoh* been ſo furious, God had not manifeſted the Glory of his Power, nor his *Iſrael* enjoyed ſo miraculous a Safety. 'Tis true, the Church is weak, but the Arm that holds her, is the ſtrongeſt in Heaven and Earth. Her outward Intereſt is ſmall, but her Intereſt is twiſted with that of her Lord. An Enemy ſhall find more miſchief from Mud-walls, under the protection of a Valiant Arm, than from Stone-walls, under the guard of an Infant. How fooliſh is it for a Man to think to break a Rock with his Fiſt for hurting his Shins, whereby he bruiſeth his Hands as well as his Leggs? How fooliſh is it for Men to beat the Buſhes about a Lion's Den, whereby they will be ſure to rouſe him? God dwells in *Sion*, from thence he *roars*, to the *ſhaking of Heaven and Earth*, the Powers of the World, when he will manifeſt himſelf to be *the hope of his People, and the ſtrength of the Children of* Iſrael, *Joel* 3. 16.

4. *What a ground is here for Prayer!* This ſets an edge upon Prayer. No Petition can more comfortably, no Petition can more confidently be put up,

* *I do not queſtion but that the whole is Prophetical it would not elſe be called Myſtery, as it is*, Rev. 1. 20. *were it meant of thoſe particular Churches.*

*Rev. 3. 1. *These things ſaith he that hath the ſeven Spirits of God, and the ſeven Stars.*

*Re. 12. 6. *And the Woman fled into the Wilderneſs, where ſhe hath a place prepared of God that they ſhould feed her there 1260 Days.*

*Exo. 2. 21. *God made them houſes*, i. e. *gave them Children.*

up, than for *Sion*'s Eſtabliſhment. Prayers for particular Perſons, or for our ſelves, may want Succeſs, but Supplications for *Sion* never miſcarry, they have the ſame Foundation for an Anſwer, that *Sion* hath for her Stability, *viz.* The Promiſe of God; they are agreeable to that Affection which ſhall never be removed from her: How believingly may we cry out, *Be it unto* Sion *according to thy word?* There is no fear of a Repulſe; whatſoever God denies, he will not deny that for which he hath ſo often engaged himſelf. It may be for the good of the Church, that ſo great a Perſon as *Paul* ſhould lye in Chains, and his Fetters conduce to the *furtherance of the Goſpel, Phil.* 1. 12. But it can never be for the Intereſt of *Sion*, or for the Intereſt of *Sion*'s God, that ſhe ſhould be cruſh'd between the Teeth of the Lions, and that which he hath redeemed by the Blood of his Son, be a prey to the Jaws of the Devil. God hath entitled *Sion* by the name of a *City not forſaken, Iſa.* 62. 12. And as we have his Promiſe for her Settlement, ſo we have his Command for our Earneſtneſs; *ver.* 7. *And give him no reſt till he doth eſtabliſh* Jeruſalem *a praiſe in the whole Earth.* And he preſcribes us to back that by our Prayers, which he had promis'd, *ver.* 1. *For* Jeruſalem*'s ſake I will not reſt till the righteouſneſs thereof go forth as brightneſs.* Our deſires in this caſe are ſuited to his Reſolves, and run in the ſame Line with his immutable Decree; he will have no Reſt in himſelf, nor he would have no Reſt from us, till this be accompliſh'd. We cannot call upon God with a greater confidence for any thing, than for that Church that ſhall outlive the Funeral of the World, and ſurvive the frame of Nature that ſhall lie in Aſhes.

5. *What a ſtrong ground is here for Truſt!* Look not ſo much upon the condition of *Sion*'s Walls, as upon her Foundation; not upon her preſent Poſture, as upon her Promiſe-Charter; not upon her as a weak Vine, but under the hand of the Higheſt, as the Vine-dreſſer; look not upon the feebleneſs of the Flock, but upon the care of the Shepherd; nor upon the fierceneſs of the Lions, but upon the ſtrength and affection of her Guardian.

(1.) *Let not our Faith reſt upon Appearances.* Fleſh will then make a wrong Judgment of God. Providences are various, and ſhould our Faith be guided only by them, it would have a livelineſs one Moment, and faint the next. As the Promiſe is the Stability of the Church, ſo it is only the Stability of our Faith. The Authority of the Word is the Life of our Faith, and not the ſenſe of any particular Providence in the World. A Faith built upon protecting Providences in a ſenſitive Faith; a Faith built upon the Promiſe, is a ſpiritual Faith.

(2.) *Yet the Experiences God hath given us hitherto of the continuance of the Church, may be called in to bear witneſs to the Truth of the Promiſe.* He hath before conducted his *Iſrael* into *Canaan*, when *Pharaoh* meditated their utter Ruine, or their continuance under his Chains; he fed them with Manna, and watered them with a Rock in a Deſart, that afforded no earthly aſſiſtance. The preſerving the Vine could never be aſcribed to the Vine it ſelf, in which there is no ſtrength; nor to the Foxes, in whom there is no pity; but to the Keeper of the Vineyard. We have reaſon therefore to truſt God, but not at all to truſt Man; Is it from Man or from God, that the Church hath ſubſiſted ſo long in the World, a little Flock in the midſt of many Wolves, among Enemies more numerous than her Friends? What a ſmall number hath the Church had in any Age to mate the multitude of her Enemies, what Wiſdom to countermine their Policy, and what Power to repel their Force? The Church is not weaker now than it hath been; the Sons of *Sion* were always Sheep; Sheep have not the ſtrength of Lions to reſiſt, nor the ſwiftneſs of Eagles to fly away from Danger; the Danger cannot be greater than it hath been, there were always Dragons that ſpat out their Venom, and Lions that opened their Mouths againſt her; the Devil never wanted Diligence, nor the World Enmity to overturn her; could ſhe for one Moment have ſubſiſted in the midſt of ſo many Furies, had not God been her Shield, and Glory? Call to mind how often God hath healed her Diſeaſes, and bound up her Wounds. Let us reſt in that Promiſe, which hath ſo often been made good by his Power, which he hath in many Ages diſplayed upon as great occaſions of Danger as *Sion* can be in. Let us live believingly under his Wings, and fear not our own Weakneſs, or our Enemies Strength.

3. *We have greater ground of Confidence than the Church of Iſrael had.* In the day of *Iſrael*'s Trouble by *Salmanaſſer*, the Prophet comforts the Church in her Anguiſh, by the conſideration of the *Meſſiah* who was to aſſume the Government, though many Years after, *Iſa.* 8. 22. *Iſa.* 9. 1, 6. Shall a Promiſe, that was to ſtay ſo many Ages for performance, be a ground of Truſt and Confidence to a tottering Church then? And ſhall not the ſtaggering Church have more ground to reſt, ſince the *Meſſiah* is made the Head of the Corner, and hath the Keys of Hell and Death delivered to him? What a baſe thing is diſtruſt then againſt ſo many aſſurances of Stability, and the experience of a multitude of Ages? Graſp the Promiſe, plead it earneſtly, ſhew God his written Word, which he hath ſent from Heaven, he never yet diſowned it, nor ever will. Methinks, the Voice, *God is able to deliver Sion*, ſounds too much of Diſtruſt. If we know no more than God's Power, we know not ſo much as the Devil doth; he knows his Power, and he knows his Promiſe. Let us therefore firſt eye the Promiſe, which God loves, and the Devil fears, and then call in his Power to back his Word.

4. *Regard not Man.* Too much Eye upon him implies too little upon God, as if God's Word were not enough to create and ſupport a Confidence without the Buttreſſes of ſecular Strength. All dependance on Man is either upon a *broken Reed*, that cannot ſupport it ſelf, or a *piercing Reed*, that Wounds inſtead of Healing, *Iſa.* 36. 6. 'Tis a diſhonour to God, and provokes him to lengthen a Miſery and retard a Deliverance. The nearer *Sion* comes to a final Settlement, the more God will act by himſelf, either without Inſtruments, or in a more ſignally ſpiriting Inſtruments, that himſelf ſhall be more viſible in them than themſelves. *The Higheſt himſelf ſhall eſtabliſh her.* If he be the Higheſt he is fit to be truſted by us; if he will do it himſelf, it is fit we ſhould couple none with him. The nearer the Time comes wherein God will appear Himſelf, the more we ſhould depend upon him Himſelf; the exerciſe of Faith ſhould be ſtrongeſt, when the Promiſe, the Object of Faith, is neareſt its Meridian. Let us be more careful to keep our Faith from ſinking, and let God alone to keep his Church from ſinking.

Uſe 2. *Of Comfort.* The Church's Patent is ſingular, the greateſt worldly Society could never ſhew the fellow of it. *The Higheſt himſelf ſhall eſtabliſh her.* There is not ſuch a Clauſe in the ſettlement of any Nation. Why ſhould we be afraid then of the joynt Conſpiracy of Men or Devils?

He

He that hath laid the Foundation, can, and will preſerve the Superſtructure, not only becauſe he formed it, but becauſe he hath promiſed it. When Chriſt would reveal to *John* the future Condition, and conflicts of the Church to the end of the World, he appears like a Conquerer with all the Enſigns of Authority and Power about him, *Rev.* 1. 13, 14, 15, 16. He hath *Eyes like a flame*, to pierce his Enemies, *Feet like braſs* to cruſh them, *a two edged Sword out of his Mouth*, to pierce them; and this, while he is in the midſt of the ſeven Candleſticks; The ſeveral Alterations and Periods of the Church to the end of the World, to preſerve and cleanſe them.

1. Here is *Comfort in the Confuſions and Troubles of the World.* The ſhaking of Heaven and Earth were the Harbingers of the appearance of Chriſt for Redemption, and laying the *Corner Stone of* Sion, *Hag.* 2. 7. The ſame Methods will be uſed when he ſhall come to lay the top-ſtone, and compleat all the fruits of *Redemption*, *Luke* 21. 25, 26, 28. The Confuſion of the World is the reſtauration of *Sion*; a Storm or ruſhing mighty Wind preceded the plentiful effuſion of the Spirit upon the *Apoſtles*, for the blowing the Goſpel into every *Corner*, *Act.* 2. 2. Never were the Diſciples in ſo hopeleſs a Condition as before the Reſurrection of Chriſt, the ground of the Churches Stability; they then expected to ſee his Face no more. What Commotions and Thunders are deſcribed in the *Revelation* before the *New Jeruſalem* comes down from Heaven, and God pitch his Tabernacle among Men? But he ſuffers not thoſe Commotions to be raiſed in the World by the miniſtring Angel, till the Servants of God be ſealed in the *Forehead*, for their preſervation in thoſe Confuſions, which ſhall be the ruine of their *Enemies*, *Rev.* 7. 2, 3. The Ark may ſhake with the motion of the Oxen, but it cannot fall. *Noah*'s Ark may be toſt by the Waves that drown the World, but not ſink, and at laſt *reſt upon the Mountains of Ararat.* * *i. e.* the curſe of Terrors, the removal of Fears. Chriſt came not to the Diſciples, but in the fourth Watch of the Night, and that when the Ship was toſſed by the Waves, and was tugging againſt a *contrary Wind*, *Mat.* 14. 24, 25. 'Tis no hardſhip for *Sion* to be in a Boat beaten by the Sea, when Chriſt walks upon the Waters, and bids her be of good Chear, ſaying, *'Tis I, be not afraid.* An *Earthquake* preceded the deliverance of *Paul* and *Silas* out of Priſon, *Acts* 16. 26. And Lightnings, and Voices, and Thundrings, Earthquake, and great Hail, ſhall accompany the opening of the Temple of God in Heaven, and the manifeſtation of the *Ark of the Teſtament* in that *Temple*, *Rev.* 11. 19.

* Gen. 8, 4. אל הרי אררט

2. Here is comfort *in Perſecutions.* Perſecution is yet for a while the Lot of the Church; a Sea and a Wilderneſs are yet the paſſage to *Canaan.* The firſt Promiſe to *Abraham* of a numerous Seed, was with the comparing it to the *duſt of the Earth*, *Gen.* 3. 16. Duſt that is trampled upon, Duſt that is removed by a puff of Wind. But the next was by comparing it to the *Stars in Heaven*, *Gen.* 15. 5. that are bright, and fixed, and have their orderly Motions. Before the Introduction of the *Philadelphian* State of the Church, or Brotherly State, (which it is likely we are not far from) the Promiſe of Glory to them that Overcome, intimates a Combat, and the Promiſe of Chriſt's confeſſing the Names of ſuch before his Father, implies a Time before the Period of the *Sardian* State, wherein the Church is to bear a ſignal Teſtimony to the Truths of Chriſt, in the way of a *Conflict*, *Rev.* 3. 5. The glorious State of the Church at the Reſurrection of the Witneſſes, ſhall be preceded by ſuch a Calamity as ſhall be the terror of the Godly, and the triumph of an Enemy devoted to a ſudden and unexpected deſtruction, *Rev.* 11. 9, 10, 11, 12.

Perſecutions make way for *Sion*'s Stability. Never was ſhe firmer and purer than in the Time of the *Apoſtles*, and thoſe immediately following them, when the Witneſſes for the Truth, to the loſs of their Blood, were as numerous as the Survivors: ſhe was then, when the Flood was caſt out againſt her, clothed with the *Sun, and crowned with a Crown of twelve Stars*, *Rev.* 12. 1, 2. Such Troubles now may dim the outward Splendor, but increaſe her inward Spirit, and refine her to that Temper ſhe was in in the Primitive Ages of Chriſtianity. Proſperity was never much the Church's Friend: Poyſon was flung in her Diſh when ſhe gain'd an earthly Felicity, and the fondneſs of great ones. Her Stability conſiſts not in this, but in the Graces and Spirit of Chriſtianity: That which eſtabliſh'd her Head, eſtabliſheth the Body; her Captain aſcended not from Mount *Olivet*, till he had ſuffered on Mount *Calvary.* The Church was never deſcribed ſo glorious in her outward Attire, as her greateſt Enemy, that is clothed in Scarlet, and deck'd with Gold, *Rev.* 17. 4. *Sion*'s Glory is internal, *Pſal.* 45. 13. *The King's Daughter is all glorious within.* All thoſe Perſecutions that are yet to come upon her, ſhall not demoliſh her Walls: The rigours of her Enemies, and the Treaſons of her pretended Friends, have not yet expelled her out of the Earth; ſhe hath not yet ſunk, though her Maſts have been ſometimes cut cloſe to the Deck, and her viſible Pilots flung over-board into the Sea; and ſhall ſhe ſink when ſhe is not far from an entrance into the Harbour? She hath been *a Brand pluck'd out of that Fire*, *Zach.* 3, 2. She was pluck'd out of the Furnace of *Babylon*, and ſhall be pluck'd out of the Furnace of *Myſtical Babylon.* Though ſhe ſhould be mown down as Graſs by the Sythe of her Enemies, yet the Preſence of Chriſt ſhall be as Rain upon her, to make her ſprout and ſpread after all her Afflictions, *Pſal.* 72. 6. Though ſhe hath been in the midſt of the Fire, ſhe never yet was, nor ever will be conſumed: She hath had Joy in her Diſgraces, and Greatneſs by her Flames: She hath always had a God to inſpire her with Vigour, to ſuſtain her Weakneſs, and prop her by his Arm, and hath often ſwam to a ſafe Harbour in a Tide of her own Blood. Is not that God ſtill a ſufficient Defence, and the Promiſe a ſufficient Charter againſt the Violence of the World: *The Higheſt himſelf ſhall eſtabliſh her*; Himſelf by his own Arm, and Himſelf by his own Methods.

(3.) Here is *Comfort in the deepeſt deſigns of her Enemies. The Higheſt himſelf ſhall eſtabliſh her.*

If he be the Higheſt, and imploys himſelf as the Higheſt, there is none ſo high as to over-top him, none ſo high as to out-wit him. Though their Union be never ſo cloſe, and their Projects never ſo deep, yet God's being with the Church, is curb enough for them, and comfort enough for *Sion*, Iſai. 8. 9. *Aſſociate your ſelves together, O ye People*, &c. *Take counſel together, and it ſhall come to naught; ſpeak the word, and it ſhall not ſtand; for God is with us.* God's Preſence with *Sion* blows away all. God was with the Ark in its Captivity, and made it victorious in its Chains. It cripled *Dagon* the *Philiſtines Idol*, 1 *Sam.* 5. 4. and made them return it to their Diſgrace, which they thought they had ſeiz'd upon to their Honour. While God is a ſtrength to the Poor, the *branch of the terrible ſhall be brought low*, and their *blaſt* be but as a *Storm againſt the Wall*, *Iſa.* 25. 4, 5. He can haſten their ruine by their own ſubtilty, and catch them in their *own Net*, *Pſal.* 35. 8. Or, he can turn them to *gloriſie* the Church, as much as they hindred her, *Iſa.* 25. 3. They are ſometimes compared to *Bees*, *Pſal.* 118. 12. *Iſa.* 7. 18.

and

and he can make them afford Honey as well as a Sting. They are Bees for their Wrath, and Bees for their Weakneſs, and many times Bees for her Profit. Sometimes he makes the Houſe of *Jacob as fire*, and *the Houſe of* Eſau *as Stubble before him*, *Obad.* 18. 'Tis not more natural to the Serpent's Seed to ſpite the Church, than it is natural to God to protect her; their Malice cannot engage them ſo much in Attempts againſt her, as God's Promiſe engageth him in the defence of her. What can Weakneſs do againſt Strength? Folly againſt Wiſdom? Hell againſt Heaven? and a fallen *Lucifer* againſt the higeſt God?

(4.) Here is comfort to expect *the glory of the Church. The Higheſt himſelf ſhall eſtabliſh her.*

The Mountain of the Lord's Houſe ſhall be lifted up on the top of the Mountains, Iſa. 2. 2. In the laſt Days it ſhall be more glorious than any Mountain dignified by God: Above Mount *Sinai*; where the Law was given; the terreſtrial Mount *Sion*, where the Temple was built; Mount *Moriah*, where *Abraham* had a type of the Death and Reſurrection of Chriſt; Mount *Horeb*, where *Moſes* by Prayer diſcomfited *Amalek*; and Mount *Piſgah*, where *Moſes* had a proſpect of *Canaan*. *Abraham*'s Conqueſt of the *four Kings*, *Gen.* 14. ſeems to be a figure of the Churches Victories, when the captive *Lots* ſhould be reſcued, and *Sodom* it ſelf be ſomething better for *Sion*. Then ſhall Chriſt meet her as *King of Salem*, King of Peace, with the Bleſſings of the moſt High God. Then ſhall he, as he did at the Feaſt in *Cana*, turn the Churches Water into Wine. *Idols ſhall be utterly aboliſh'd*, *Iſa.* 2. 18. Droſs and Mixtures in Doctrine and Worſhip *purged out*, Rev. 22. 1. *The River of the Water of Life ſhall be as clear as Cryſtal, proceeding from the Throne of God, and of the Lamb. The everlaſting Goſpel preached*, *Rev.* 14. 6. called everlaſting, becauſe it ſhall never more be clouded and obſcured by the fooliſh Inventions of Men; there ſhall be no more *Sea*, *Rev.* 21. 1. The Troubles of *Sion*, ſignified by a ſtormy Sea, ſhall ceaſe, and *a new Heaven, and a new Earth* be created; there ſhall be multitude of Converſions, *Rev.* 11. 15. *The Kingdoms of the World ſhall become the Kingdoms of Chriſt.* The breath of the Lord ſhall come into many, and make them *ſtand upon their feet*, *Ezek.* 37. 9, 10. There ſhall be a greater Preſence of God in Ordinances, for the Earth, *ſhall ſhine with his Glory*, *Ezek.* 43. 2. *Holineſs* ſhall ſparkle in her, for the *glory of the Lord ſhall be upon her*, *Rev.* 21. 11. His Holineſs to purifie her, and his Power to protect her. Perſecutions without, and Diviſions within, ſhall ceaſe; *Satan ſhall be bound*, his force reſtrained; he ſhall not wander about with his Cloven-foot, *Rev.* 20. 3. The *Sea of Glaſs*, which was mingled with Fire, with the fire of worldly Perſecutions, with the fire of inteſtine Animoſities, ſhall be as *clear as Cryſtal*, *Rev.* 15. 2. *Rev.* 22. 1. He will then have Magiſtrates no longer carrying on the Intereſt of the God of this World, but the Intereſt of the Church, whom he calls his Princes, *Ezek.* 45. 8. His, becauſe ſet up by a more immediate Providence: His, becauſe acting deſignedly and intentionally for his Glory; no more pinching his People, and making a Prey of his *Sion*, but laying down *their Crowns at the foot of his Throne*. And to compleat all, there ſhall be a perpetuity in this ſpiritual Proſperity; only between the beginning and compleating it Satan ſhall *be let looſe*: But for a little ſeaſon, *Rev.* 20. 3. and after this, it ſhall not have one blow more from Hell; but the Devil muſt for ever give over nibbling at her Heel. Now the Church never yet found ſuch a ſtate ſuitable to thoſe Promiſes and Predictions; ſome great thing remains to be accompliſh'd, which the World hath not yet ſeen, nor the Church experienced. But that Truth that will not lye, that Truth which cannot lye, has aſſured it. The *Myſtery of God ſhall be finiſhed*, *Rev.* 10. 7. The Church hath hitherto been gaſping in the Fire, and in the Water; ſhe has liv'd, but as wrapt in a Winding-ſheet; the Saints under the Altar have cryed a long time for the vengeance of the Temple to recompence their Blood. There is a time when this *Lazarus*, that hath lain begging at the Door of the Rich and Mighty, ſhall be mounted up to a better ſtate. *Sion* ſhall enjoy a Reſurrection, and fling off all badges of a Funeral. *For the Higheſt himſelf ſhall eſtabliſh her.*

Third *Uſe of Exhortation.*

(1.) *Take heed of Apoſtatizing from* Sion; from the *Doctrine* and *Worſhip* of *Sion*.

If God ſhall *eſtabliſh her*, Stability is not to be found out of her. To depart from her, is to leave a firm Rock to find ſecurity in a quick-ſand. To leap out of a ſtout Ship in a Storm, to expect a preſervation in the Waves. To turn our backs upon Heaven, to ſeek eaſe in the bowels of Hell. The Altar at *Damaſcus* is caſt down, and *Jeroboam*'s Altar is demoliſh'd, when that at *Jeruſalem* ſtood. To ſtay in *Sion*, is to be expoſed to the Gun-ſhot of Men and Devils; to run from her, is to ſeek to the Devil for Protection, and run into the mouth of all the Artillery of God, that is ſet for the eſtabliſhment of *Sion*. If we are Chriſtians, no force, nor violence ſhould ſeparate us from her.

2. *Let us love Sion.* There is nothing the *Scripture* uſes more as an argument to ſeparate our Affections from the World, than the uncertainty and fading nature of it. The perpetuity then of the Church ſhould be a motive to place our Affections there, where they ſhall never want an Object, and which we cannot love, without loving her Head and her Eſtabliſher. The *Jews in Babylon* would rather forget themſelves than their *City and Temple*, *Pſal.* 137. 5, 6. Our Affections to Goſpel-*Sion* ſhould be more tender, ſince God hath poured out more of his Spirit upon her, and ſhe is more amiable in his Eye. That which the *Jews* ſo much affected, is periſhed. But the true *Sion* is eternal, and ſhall flouriſh for ever. The Higheſt himſelf hath an eſtabliſhing Affection to her. Let our Affections to her equal the Malice of the Enemies againſt her, ſince we have greater Incentives to love her, than they can have to hate her. While others cry, *Raze, Raze it even to the ground*, let us at leaſt teſtify our Affections, and if we have not her ſtanding Walls to love, let us not eſtrange our tenderneſs from her *very duſt*, *Pſal.* 102. 14. There is a pleaſure to be taken in her Stones, becauſe they ſhall be again ſet in their place, a favour to be ſhewn to her Duſt, becauſe it ſhall be again compacted, and enjoy a Reſurrection. For the Higheſt that hath promiſed to eſtabliſh her, will not deſert her in her Ruines, *ver.* 16. *When the Lord ſhall build up* Sion *he ſhall appear in glory*; we have therefore more ground to favour her Duſt, than to admire the proudeſt Palaces.

(3.) *Let us deſire the Eſtabliſhment of* Sion *more than our own private Eſtabliſhment.*

'Tis the Sign of a gracious Spirit to look *not only on his own things but the things of others*, *Phil.* 2. 4. And what things of others ſhould be regarded, if the things of Chriſt and his Spouſe be over-looked. No private Perſon hath any Promiſe of eſtabliſhment but as he is a Deniſon of *Sion*, as one born in her. In deſiring therefore the Welfare of *Sion*, we wiſh and make way for the eſtabliſhing of our ſelves; our Intereſts are common with hers. Her Proſperity therefore ſhall be the firſt and laſt of our

our Wishes. When we wish the stability of *Sion*, we wish the honour of God, the continuance of his Worship, the glorifying his Name which is deposited in that Cabinet; The Glory of God cannot flourish, if the Church perish. How base then are those, that if they can swim in a worldly Prosperity, care not if the Church be drown'd in Tears and Bloud; that clothe themselves and regard not her Nakedness; that provide an Earthly *Canaan* for themselves, and care not what desolate Desert *Sion* sits weeping in.

(4.) *Let us endeavour the establishment of* Sion. 'Tis a grateful thing to a Prince to favour his Favourite. Let us be as forward to enlarge her Territories, as the Devil and his Instruments are to encrease the Suburbs of Hell. The Highest himself will establish her by himself; we must therefore take those Methods which are agreeable to the chief Preserver. A complyance with the Enemies of God was never the way to secure the Interest of *Sion*. A Divine Work in a Divine Way will meet with Divine Assistance. To contribute to the establishment of *Sion* is a Work honourable in it self, since 'tis the Work of God himself; 'Tis an imitation of the highest Pattern. In this we are Associates, and Co-workers with God. For *the Highest himself shall establish* Sion.

A

DISCOURSE

UPON THE

Fifth of November.

Exod. 15. 9, 10.

The Enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the Spoil; my Lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my Sword; my Hand shall destroy them; Thou didst blow with thy Wind; the Sea covered them; they sank as Lead in the mighty Waters.

AN Anniversary Commemoration of a memorable Deliverance falling upon this Day, hath caused a Diversion of my Thoughts, to look back, not only upon a Mercy never to be forgotten, but to look forward to that Deliverance which is to come parallel to this in the Text. *Israel* was a Type of the Church, *Pharaoh* a Type of the Churches Enemies in all Ages of the World, both of the spiritual Enemy, Satan, and of the temporal, his Instruments.

The Deliverance was a Type of the Deliverance that Christ wrought upon the Cross by his Blood. Also, of that Christ works by his Power upon his Throne, the one from the Reign of Sin, the other from the Empire of Antichrist.

This was the Exemplar of all the Deliverances the Church was to have. As the *Assyrian* should lift up a Staff against *Jerusalem, after the manner of Ægypt*, so the Lord should lift his Rod up for them *upon the Sea, after the manner of Ægypt*, when the *yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing*, *Isa.* 10. 26, 27. when the power of the Enemies shall be destroyed by the Strength of Christ. The Lord himself makes it his Pattern in those Victories he is to gain for his People; when he calls upon his *Arm* to *awake as in the ancient Days*, when he *cut* Rahab, *and wounded the Dragon, and made the depths of the Sea a way for the ransom'd to pass over*, *Isa.* 51. 9, 10, 11. then *the redeemed of the Lord shall come with singing unto* Sion, the Song of *Moses*, while they stand upon a *Sea of Glass*, a brittle, frail, and stormy World, *Rev.* 15. 3. And our Redeemer makes this his Pattern and Rule, when he comes to tread the Wine-press in Wrath, and make them drunk with his Fury, that then he would *remember the Days of old, Moses and his People, when he divided the Water before them, to make himself an everlasting Name*, *Isa.* 63. 1, 2, 11. that his Power may be as glorious in the latter as it was in the former, and all Deliverances of the Church from the beginning to the end, be knit together to be an everlasting Matter of Praise to his Name.

This Historical Narration is to have a more universal Accomplishment; the Deliverance from *Ægypt* is promised to be fulfilled a second time, and God would act the same part over again, as also their Deliverance from Ogg King of *Bashan*, after the Ascension of Christ, *Psal.* 6. 22. *The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring my People from the depths of the Sea.* This is after he had *ascended*, v. 18. when he came to *wound the Head of his Enemies*, *v.* 21. So *Isa.* 11. 15. *The Lord shall utterly destroy the Tongue of the Ægyptian Sea, and with his mighty Wind shall he shake his Hand over the River, and shall smite it in the seven Streams, and make Men go over dry-shod.* *Nilus* with its seven Streams was the glory of *Ægypt*, and *Rome* with its seven Hills is the glory of the Papacy, *Rev.* 17. 9. So *Zac.* 10. 10. *I will bring them again out of the Land of Ægypt, and they shall pass through the Sea with Affliction*, and the deeps *of the River shall dry up.* *Pharaoh* and his Army cannot revive and stand up in their former Ranks; but there shall be Deliverances with resemblances to that, when the Enemies shall be as arrogant and furious as *Pharaoh*,

and

and the Church as dejected and ſtraitened as *Iſrael.*

The Text is a part of *Moſes* his Song. A *Carmen ἐπινίκιον*, A Song after Victory: A Panegyrick; the Praiſe of God attended with Dancing at the Sight of the Ægyptian Wracks, *v.* 20.

1. *It was then real*; The Iſraelites then ſang it.

(2.) *'Tis Typical*, The Conquerors of Antichriſt ſhall again Triumph in the ſame manner, *Rev.* 15. 3.

(3.) *It was an earneſt of future Deliverance to the Iſraelites.* When God appeared for them in their firſt *Exit*, he would not fail in that Work which ſhould conduce ſo much to his Glory; it was a Pledge, that his purchaſed People ſhould paſs over, and be planted in the Mountain of his Inheritance, *v.* 16, 17.

There is in the Words,

1. *A Deſcription of the Enemy.*

2. *His Defeat.*

The Enemy is introduced laying his Council, and vaunting his Reſolution. By an elegant *Climax*, and orderly proceeding, *I will purſue, I will overtake, I will divide the Spoil, my Luſt ſhall be ſatisfy'd*, &c. They laid the Foundation deep in Council, built their Reſolves high in Power, and then applaud themſelves in their Inſolence.

I will purſue. Had he no Reflections upon his former ſucceſleſs Attempts to keep the *Iſraelites* in ſlavery? or could he with any reaſon hope to reduce them with his baffled Strength to that Yoke, which had been broken by a powerful Arm? Had he not reaſon freſhly to remember his own inability to remove one of the Plagues ſent upon them, to promote *Iſrael*'s Reſcue? Was that high Arm which brought them out of *Ægypt* broken? Gods Weapons blunted, his Magazine of Plaguing Ammunition waſted, and his Strength too feeble to preſerve thoſe he had by a ſtrong hand redeemed? Theſe things be obvious to *Pharaoh*'s Thoughts. Yet, *I will* ſtill *purſue.* How heady and raſh are the Churches Enemies! Infatuation is the Uſher to Deſtruction: When you find the Churches Enemies loſe their Wits, you may quickly expect they will loſe their Strength and Lives.

I will divide the Spoil. He promiſeth them this Victory before the Conflict, encourages his Soldiers with hopes of the Prey, which was the Recovery of their Jewels which the *Iſraelites* had borrowed by God's Order, and the *Ægyptians* had lent them by a Secret Impreſſion, and the Flocks and Herds of the poor *Iſraelites* to boot.

How great is the pride of the Churches Enemies! They ſtrut without thinking of a ſuperiour Power to curb them, and promiſe themſelves the Accompliſhment of their Deſigns without fearing the check of Providence. Thus did *Siſera*'s Mother triumph in a preſumptuous Hope before a Victory, *Jud.* 5. 30. and ſing *Te Deum* before a Conqueſt. *Ventoſa & inſolens natio* is the Title *Pliny* gives the *Ægyptian* Nation.

תמלא נפשי My Soul ſhall be ſatisfy'd.

My Luſt ſhall be ſatisfied upon them *. How revengefully do they expreſs themſelves? They apprehend themſelves cheated of their Jewels by the *Iſraelites*; ſuch an Apprehenſion would encreaſe Rage and Animoſity.

I will draw my ſword, my hand ſhall deſtroy, תורישמו *my Hand ſhall diſinherit them.* I will reduce them like a company of fearful Fugitives, by brandiſhing a drawn Sword, that they ſhall quickly return to their former Bondage, and become the perpetual Inheritance of the *Ægyptians.* How ſecure are the Churches Enemies! the ſight of a glittering Sword, and an Edict for a Return, they thought would quell their Spirits; 'Tis true, they had to deal with an unarm'd People, unprovided for defence, whoſe late Slavery had rendered them unfit for military Exerciſes, an unequal Match for a numerous and diſciplin'd Army. But what if they were? had they not the ſame power to protect them in their March, which had brought them out of their Bondage? This the Enemies never reflected on: Pride and Security are always Twins.

In *v.* 10. You have their Defeat. The Sea quenched the Fire of their Rage, and laid flat the Towers of their proud Confidence. God blows with his Wind, the ſtrong Eaſt Wind, *Exod.* 14. 21. a Strength added to its natural Fierceneſs, which made the meeting of the Floods more ſwift and fierce; ſome think Thunders and Lightnings burſt out of the Pillar of Fire in the Cloud, when *God looked upon them*, *Exod.* 14. 24.

They *ſank like Lead*, ſuddenly, eaſily, irrecoverably; they were laſht before, now executed. Other Plagues had a mixture of Patience, this is a pure Cup of the Indignation of God.

The *Defeat is deſcribed*,

1. *By the Author*: *Thou didſt blow.*

2. *Inſtrument*: *Thy Wind*; *the Sea*, Wind and the Sea conſpire together againſt the Enemies, when God orders them.

3. *Victory*, or ſucceſs of this Order; *The Sea covered them*; *they ſank like Lead in the mighty Waters.*

General Obſervations.

1. *The greateſt Idolaters are the fierceſt Enemies againſt the Church of God.* 'Tis the *Ægyptian* is the Enemy. No Nation had more and more ſordid Idols. The *Perſians* adored the Sun, the greateſt Benefactor to the World, in the Rank of inanimate Creatures; other Nations ſeveral Stars, but none did ſo much abuſe the Reaſon of Man, as that accurſed Nation. Onions, Garlick, Cats, Oxen, Flies, and Crocodiles; thoſe Dung-hill Creatures, were their adored Deities. And how much better is the Adoration of the Swadling-Clouts of our Saviour, or the Straw which was in the Manger, or the Tail of the Aſs he rode upon, and ſo many Splinters of the Croſs, which if put together would make a *Coloſſus?* For this among the reſt may the Church profeſſing ſuch Worſhip be called ſpiritual *Ægypt.* *Ægyptii Diisfœcundi.* Hieron.

2. *The Churches Enemies are not for her Correction, but her Deſtruction: I will purſue*; *my Hand ſhall deſtroy them.* They breath out nothing but Slaughters; *My Hand ſhall deſtroy them*; down with it, down with it even to the ground, and Men are *famous as they can lift up Axes upon the thick Trees*, *Pſal.* 74. 5.

3. *How deſperate are ſometimes the Straits of God's* Iſrael *in the Eye of Man?* How low their Spirits before Deliverance? They here behold a deep Sea before them, and a raging Enemy behind them? Hear a confuſed Noiſe of Women and Children in the midſt of them, feel the pantings of their own Hearts, and perhaps ſee a Conſternation in the Faces of their Governours; they ſee themſelves diſarmed of Weapons, lying almoſt at the Mercy of an Oppreſſor, with a well-furniſht Army; they repent of what God had done for them, and are more ambitious of Slavery than Liberty; Quarrel with *Moſes*, (and as one of their Hiſtorians ſaith, were about to ſtone him) *Exod.* 14. 10, 11, 12. Without doubt they then thought him a Lyar, and it is likely had no more honourable Thoughts at that time of God; for when they ſaw the happy Succeſs in the miraculous Overthrow of the *Ægyptians*, then *they believed God and his Servant Moſes,*

Moſes, Exod. 14. 31. as if they gave credit to neither of them before. They had a Pillar of Fire, and a Cloud, the Chariot of God; a greater Argument to eſtabliſh them than the Preparation of their Enemies to terrifie them. But what a faithleſs Creature is Man under the viſible Guard of Heaven, and ſo far naturally from living by Faith, that he will hardly draw Eſtabliſhments from Senſe!

4. *God orders the Luſts of Men for his own Praiſe.* He had forced *Pharaoh* to let the People go; he had ſtopt the Streams of his Fury; when he removes his Hand, and pulls up the Dam, *Pharaoh* returns to his former Temper with more Violence, thereby giving occaſion for God's Glory in his own Deſtruction; he ſerves himſelf of the deſperate Malice of his Enemies, to make his Wiſdom and other Attributes more triumphant.

5. *The nearer the Deliverance of the Church is, the fierce are God's Judgments on the enemies of it, and the higher the enemies Rage.* The former Plagues were but ſmall Gaſhes in the *Ægyptian* State: But when the time approached of the *Iſraelites* perfect Deliverance, then the Firſt-born in every Houſe, the Delight and Strength of the Parents is cut off: And at the compleating of it, the Glory, Flower, and Strength of *Ægypt* buryed in the Sea; the fuller Beams of Mercy on the one are attended with more ſcorching Darts of Judgments on the other.

6. *All Creatures are abſolutely under the Soveraignty of God, and are acted by his Power in all their Services. Thy Wind:* All are ſubject to his conduct, and are the Guardians of his People, and the Conquerors of his Enemies. How eaſie is it for the Arm of Omnipotency to demoliſh the ſtrongeſt Preparations againſt his *Iſrael*, and with a Blaſt reduce their Power to Nothing? The Sea ſuffers Violence to preſerve his People, and the liquid Element ſeems transformed into a Wall of Braſs. God can make the meaneſt Creatures Miniſters of his Judgments, raiſe Troops of Flies to rout the *Roman* Army, as it was in *Trajan*'s Siege of the *Agarens*.

7. *By the ſame means God ſaves his People whereby he deſtroys his Enemies*; the one ſank, the other paſt thorow; That which makes one Balance ſink, makes the other riſe the higher; the Red-Sea was the Guardian of *Iſrael*, and the Executioner of *Ægypt*; the *Iſraelites* Gallery to *Canaan*, and the *Ægyptian*'s Grave. The Cloud that led the *Iſraelites* through the Red-Sea, blinded the *Ægyptians*; the Waters that were fifteen Cubits high above the Mountains, kept the Ark from daſhing againſt them, whereby *Noah* might be indangered, and drowned the Enemies though never ſo high according to Humane Stature.

8. *The ſtrength and glory of a People is more waſted by oppoſing the Intereſt of the Church, than in Conflicts with any other Enemy.* Had the *Ægyptian* Arms been turned againſt any other Enemy, they might have proſpered, or at leaſt retired with a more partial Defeat, or ſaved their Lives though under Chains. But when they would prepare them againſt God's *Iſrael*, they meet with a total Defeat, where they expected Victory, and find their Graves where *Iſrael* found their Bulwarks; the choiceſt of their Youth, the flower of their Nobility, the ſtrongeſt of their Chariots and Horſes at one Blow overthrown by God.

9. *We may take notice of the Folly of the Churches Enemies.* Former Plagues might have warned them of the Power of God; they had but burned their own Fingers by pinching her; yet they would ſet their Force againſt Almighty Power, that ſo often had worſted them; 'tis as if Men ſhould pull down a Steeple with a String.

But the Obſervations I ſhall treat of are,

1. *When the Enemies of the Church are in the higheſt Fury and Reſolution, and the Church in the greateſt Extremity and Dejection, then is the fitteſt time for God to work her Diliverance fully and perfectly.* When the Enemy ſaid, *I will purſue, I will overtake, I will divide the ſpoil*, &c. then God *blowed with his Wind*, then *they ſank*.

2. *God is the Author of all the Deliverances of the Church, whoſoever are the Inſtruments.* [*Thou didſt blow with thy Wind; who is like unto the Lord among the Gods?*

1. For the Firſt, *When the Enemies of the Church are in the higheſt Fury*, &c. *Great Reſolutions againſt God meet with great Diſappointments. The Churches Straits are the Enemies Hopes, but God's Opportunity.* When their Fury is higheſt, God's Love is neareſt.

1. There are four Seaſons on the part of the Enemy God takes hold of.

1. *Flouriſhing Proſperity.* Here is *Pharaoh* in the Head of a gallant Army, the *Iſraelites* in a Pound at his Mercy. The *Ægyptian* Proſperity is a forerunner of their Deſtruction; the Adverſity of the other, of their Salvation. *Haman* is in the top of his Favour, when the *Jews* are marked out for Slaughter, and then himſelf is marked out for Ruine. Proſperity, like Rain, makes the Weeds of Pride and Atheiſm to grow up, and then they are fit Matter for God's Sickle to cut down. When the *Cluſters of the Vine of the Earth are ripe*, full of an outward Glory and Sweetneſs, then *the Angel thruſts in his ſharp Sickle*, *Rev.* 14. 18. There is an ἀκμὴ ſet them. When *the great City is clothed in fine Linnen, Purple and Scarlet, deckt with Gold and precious Stones*, *Rev.* 18. 16. and come to the higheſt point of its Glory and Proſperity, then ſhall God thicken the Clouds of his Vengeance, and bring their Riches to nought in one Hour.

2. *Swelling Pride; I will purſue*, &c. Pride is provoking, becauſe it is a Self-deifying, and ſets up the Creature as God's Mate. God ſtands upon his Honour, and loves to attack thoſe that would equal themſelves with him. Pride ſunk the Glory of the fallen Angels into Miſery, and ſo it will that of the Serpent's Seed; this is the immediate forerunner of Deſtruction, *Prov.* 16. 18. Men have their *hairy Scalp*, the prime of their Strength, and pride of their *Hearts*, when God *wounds* them, *Pſal.* 68. 21. *Ægypt* was become *Rahab*, Pride it ſelf, as the Word ſignifies, and ſo God called it by that Name, *Iſa.* 51. 9. When *Ægypt* mounted to *Rahab*, to the top of Pride, then God cut it. When the Dragon briſtled, and erected his ſtately Head to ſeize upon the Prey, then God wounded him, put an end to *Ægypt*'s Pride, and the *Iſraelites* Fear: He loves to beat down the Pride of the one, and raiſe up the Lowlineſs of the other. When *Herod* will aſſume the Title of a God given him by the Acclamations of the People, an Angel ſhall immediately make him a Banquet for Worms, *Acts* 11. 22, 23. When *Sennacherib* had proſpered in his Conqueſt of *Judæa*, had taken many ſtrong Towns, cloſely beleaguered *Jeruſalem*, thundered out Blaſphemies againſt God, and Threatnings againſt his People, then comes an Angel, makes a horrible Slaughter in a Night, ſends him back to his own Country, where after the loſs of his Army, he loſt his Life by the hands of his own Children. A greater Pride cannot be expreſt, than what the Apoſtle predicts of the Man of Sin, and that hath been extant for

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some time in the World*: And perhaps it will yet amount to a higher Step than it hath yet done before he be consumed by the brightness of the Lord's coming, *since all that yet lets and hinders is not taken out of the way.* The higher the Pride, the nearer the Fall. When *Goliah* shall defie the God of *Israel*, a Stone from a Sling thrown by the hand of *David*, our great *David*, the Antitype, shall lay him vomiting out his Soul, and Blasphemies on the Earth. We are many times more beholding to the Enemies Insolence, than our own Innocence, *Deut.* 32. 17. *Were it not that God feared the Wrath of the Enemy, i. e.* in their Pride, lest *their Adversaries should behave themselves strangely, and say, Our Hand is high*; a sinful *Israel* should not have so many Preservations*. When they will *ascend into Heaven, and exalt their Throne above the Stars of God*; when *they will ascend above the Heights of the Clouds, and be like the most High, then shall they be brought down to Hell, to the sides of the Pit, Isa.* 7. 13,14,15. The highest Towers are the fairest Marks for Thunder, and the readiest Tinder for the Lightning of Heaven. When *Tyrus* had set her Heart, as the Heart of God, then would God defile her Brightness, and make her die the death of them that are slain in the midst of the Sea, *Ezek.* 28. 6, 7, 8.

3. *Eager Malice.* Nothing would satisfie the *Ægyptians* here, but the Blood of the *Israelites. My Hand shall destroy them*; they were under a cruel Bondage, attended with Anguish of Spirit before God began their Rescue. The Serpents Seed have the same Principles of Craft and Malice sown in their Nature, that are resident in his; ever since the beginning he endeavoured to shape Men into the same Form and Temper with himself; Their Rage would raze out the very Foundation of *Israel*, and not suffer the *Name* to be had any *more in remembrance, Psal.* 83. 4. They love to be drunk with the Blood of the Saints, and are no more satisfied with Blood than the Grave with Carcases; they repair their Arrows, and watch for an Opportunity to discharge them; and never want Poison, but Opportunity; this is God's Time to deliver. When *Pharaoh* would pollute the Land with the Blood of the *Hebrew* Males, and ordain them to be dragg'd from the Womb to the Slaughter, then God raises up himself to attempt the Rescue of *Israel*; yet he bears with his Insolence, punishes him, but not destroys him. But when he would be still stiff against a Sense of the multitude of Plagues, and a great Mercy of Patience in them; when he would arm for the Field against that God the smart of whose force he had felt, and resolves to destroy or bring back the *Israelites* upon the Point of his Sword, God would then bear no longer, but make the Water his Sepulchre. When *Haman* designs the Ruine of the Jews, procures the King's Commission, sends Dispatches to all the Governours of the Provinces, sets up a Gibbet for *Mordecai*, and wants nothing but an Opportunity to request the Execution, he tumbles down to exchange his Prince's Favours for an exaltation on the Gallows, *Est.* 6. 4. *Est.* 7. 10. When the Serpent encreased his malicious Cruelty, and cast out a Flood against the Church, God makes the Earth, the carnal World to give her assistance, and repel the Force that Satan used against her*. When *Multitudes shall gather together in the Valley of Decision*, then shall *the Lord roar out of Sion, and be the hope of his People, and the strength of the Children of Israel, Joel* 3. 14, 16. And when Spiritual *Ægypt* shall make a War against Christ, who sits upon the white Horse, and combine all their force for the Destruction of his People, then shall the Beast and the false Prophet be taken, and brought to their final Ruine, and their Force be broken in a Lake of Fire, as that of *Ægypt* was in a Sea of Water, *Rev.* 19. 19, 20. The time of their greatest fierceness shall be the time of Christ's Fury; he will strike them surest when he finds them cruelest; their Rage shall rouze up his Revenge; when the Men of *Sodom*, to which the Antichristian State is likened, shall be resolutely bent to Wickedness, they shall be struck with blindness, and that blindness succeeded by destruction; then will God set Bounds to the outrageous Waves, and snatch the Prey out of the Teeth of the Lyons.

4. *Confident Security. I will divide the Spoil, my lust shall be satisfied upon them.* God lets the Enemy *come in like a Flood* and Torrent, with a confidence to carry all before him, before he *lifts up a Standard against him, Isa.* 59. 19. Then shall the Spirit of the Lord stir up himself gloriously in the Principles and Actions of his People, and the Redeemer shall come to *Sion.* God will set his force against their Confidence, and break their Impetuousness by his own Power. When the Enemies of the Church think they have entangled it in such a Snare, reduced it to so low a Condition as to be secure of her Ruine with a Blast and Puff, then God will *arise, and set her in safety from them that puff* at *her, Psa.* 12. 5. This will be the Case of *Babylon*; when she shall say, *I sit as a Queen, and am no Widow, and* shall *see no sorrow*, then shall *her Plagues come in one Day, Death, and Mourning, and Famine*, for then God will stir up his Strength to judge her, *Rev.* 18. 7. 'Tis in the time of the Antichristian Polity, and mutual Congratulations with the highest security for their happy Success, triumphing over the dead Bodies of the Witnesses, that they shall stand again upon their Feet, (the same Persons if politically dead, others witnessing the same Doctrine, if they were corporeally dead) and damp all their Mirth and Triumph, and turn their Security into Fears; then shall Glory be given to the God of Heaven, and the Ark of his Testament be seen in his Temple, and the Power of the Lord be magnified, *Rev.* 11. 10, 11. When they shall all be gathered together to the Battle of the great Day of the Lord; the place is called *Armageddon, Rev.* 16. 14, 16, *&c.* חרם and גדוד A cursed Troop, an Army under God's *Anathema*, when they have the greatest confidence. When *Jerusalem* shall be penn'd up by a *Siege*, it shall be a *Cup of trembling in the Hands of her enemies, Zach.* 12. 2. Fear shall seize upon them in the midst of their Confidence. The Sun was risen upon *Sodom* just before the devouring Shower of Fire and Brimstone. With what Derision would they have entertain'd any Messenger, that should have assur'd them of such a Shower in so clear a Day? No doubt but the *Ægyptian* Horses went prancing into the Sea, and their Riders confident of catching their Prey; when they saw the Waters congealed, they had not the least Suspicion, but that the Division of the Sea was made in their Favour, till the Chariot-Wheels were taken off, and the Waters ready to roul upon them, *Ex.* 14. 23,25.

2. As something on the part of the Church's Enemies forwards the Deliverance, so *there is some regard God hath to the Churches Straits. Cum duplicantur lateres, venit Moses.* 'Tis God's usual Method to let the Church be in great Distress before he commands Deliverance. *The Distress of the Church was great in the Concern of this Day, though it was not sensible, the deliverance being known near as soon as the danger.*

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*2 Th. 2. 4. *Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God*, in additions to the Word, clipping the Institutions of God, and adding new, and canonizing new Mediators of Intercession, *who sits in the Temple of God* in a profession of Christianity, *shewing himself that he is God*, assuming the Name of God, and the Title of God, in being called most holy.

* *Trap* on Exod. p. 9.

* Rev. 12. 15, 16. *The Earth helped the Woman.*

The Church is to be in the depths of the Sea before ſhe be fully delivered, *Pſal.* 68. 22. The *Jews* were to *paſs through the Sea with Affliction* before the *Pride of Aſſyria* ſhould be *brought down, and the Sceptre of Ægypt depart away*; after that, he would ſtrengthen *them in the Lord*, and they ſhould *walk up and down in his Name*, *Zach.* 10. 11, 12. The ſharpeſt Pangs precede Deliverance; it was ſo when Chriſt came in the Fleſh, it will be ſo at every new riſing of Chriſt in his Spirit; when things were at a low Ebb, when the Sun ſat in the greateſt darkneſs of Error, Idolatry and Profaneneſs, when the *Jews*, the only Spot of Ground God had, was as a Wilderneſs almoſt barren of any Grace, when the great Predictions of the Prophets were unminded, and leſs underſtood, when *Urim* and *Thummim* had ceaſed, and the Spirit of Propheſie was ſhut up, when Chriſt comes in the fulneſs of time to work an univerſal Relief for Mankind. When the Day of Vengeance is in the Heart of the Redeemer, he ſhall look and find none to help, he ſhall wonder to find none to uphold, therefore his own Arm ſhall bring Salvation, *Iſa.* 53. 5.

This has always been God's Method. With his Son, the Powers of Darkneſs had their Hour, and triumph'd when they had laid him in the Grave before he was raiſed by the Glory of his Father. The Witneſſes muſt be killed by the hand of their Enemies, before they ſtand upon their Feet, and aſcend up into Heaven, in the ſight of their Adverſaries, *Rev.* 11. 7. when the Church ſhall walk in darkneſs, *grope for the Wall like the blind, mourn like Doves, look for ſalvation, and it ſhall ſeem far off*; then will the Lord *put on a Helmet of ſalvation on his Head, and the garments of vengeance for clothing, and be clad with zeal as a Cloak*, *Iſa.* 59. 9, 10, 11, 17. The break of Day is uſhered in by a thicker Darkneſs than that which clouded the Night before. The ſharpeſt Perſecution that ever the Church had, was in the time of *Diocleſian*, a little before Chriſtianity was to rule his Empire in the Exaltation of *Conſtantine*. *Abraham* was in Hardſhip out of his Country, when he received the Promiſes of the *Meſſiah*; and *Iſrael* in the Wilderneſs, when the Oracles of God were delivered to them. Confuſion of the Church precedes always the Communication of Light.

1. *The Reaſons of the Doctrine are theſe.*

1. *This makes for God's Glory.* The Creature cannot in this condition challenge any ſhare in the Honour of the Deliverance, or pare off ſo much as a Splinter of his Glory. Had the *Iſraelites* been arm'd, and drawn into a ſtrong Battalion, and ſo defeated the *Ægyptian* Army, the Victory would rather have been challeng'd by them, than aſcribed to God; but neither the Strength of their Multitude, nor the Wiſdom of their Guides, were able to protect them; Counſel fail'd, and Heads were feeble; then did God get himſelf a Name, when they were upon the point of a remedileſs Ruine. It was manifeſt the Name of the Lord got *David* the Victory, ſince he encountred unarmed with *Goliah*, who could have cruſh'd him like a Fly had he been in his Fingers.

The time of the Church's Depreſſion is the time of God's Exaltation; he waits for the Extremity to lift up himſelf: When Paleneſs is upon the Face of his People; when the Cedars of *Lebanon* hang their Heads; when the Church's Beauty ſeems a lamentable Deformity, and *Sharon* is like a Wilderneſs, then will God ariſe, *Iſa.* 33. 9, 10. God never builds up *Sion*, but he ordains all things in a Method for his appearance in the greateſt Glory, *Pſal.* 102. 16. *When the Lord ſhall build up Sion, he ſhall appear in his Glory*; that is, when the Church is deſtitute, *v.* 17.

1. *God exalts his Power*; his *Right-hand* then becomes *glorious in Power*, *Exod.* 15. 6. He loves to appear in his Dreſs as a Creator, when there is no fitneſs in the Subject to anſwer his End, but what he beſtows upon it. When *Jeruſalem* becomes *a rejoycing, and her People a Joy*, 'tis an Act of creating Power, *Iſa.* 65. 18. *For behold I create Jeruſalem a rejoycing.* When the Creature can give them not the leaſt aſſiſtance, then will they be ſenſible of God's unbounded Sufficiency, and their own neceſſary Dependance. God never had too little help from his Creature in a Deliverance; he hath ſometimes complain'd of too much, and diſbanded ſome of the Church's Forces, as in the Caſe of *Gideon*, *Judg.* 7. As Chriſt rules in the midſt of his Enemies, ſo doth God's Power moſt viſibly in the midſt of Diſtreſſes. A Phyſician's Skill is moſt conſpicuous when the Diſeaſe is moſt dangerous, and moſt complicated, and Nature at the loweſt ebb. 'Tis more Glory to God to quench the Fire in its fulleſt rage, than to extinguiſh it in its firſt Smoke and Sparkles. God loves the faireſt Mark to ſhoot at, and will rather down with *Goliah*, than with the ordinary *Philiſtines*; grapple with the great, rather than with a light Danger, that the Lord may appear to be *a man of War*, *Exod.* 15. 3. As God ſhews his Mercy in his People's Redemption, he will ſhew his Strength in their Conduct, *Exod.* 15. 13. He that made this Deliverance a ſtanding Monument of his Power, entitles himſelf by it, *Iſa.* 43. 16. *Thus ſaith the Lord, which makes a Way in the Sea, a Path in the mighty Waters.*

2. *His Kindneſs to, and Care of his People.* When the Straits are remedileſs, and the Counſels whereby the Projects are laid, not to be defeated by Humane Skill; when God ſeems to have forgot, then in a ſeaſonable Deliverance he ſhews himſelf the careful Watchman of *Iſrael*. When a Ship is in a raging Storm, and Chriſt aſleep, he will leave his own Eaſe to keep his Word, and content his People. When the Church thinks God hath forgotten his Mercies, and they have forgotten their Dependance; when the Miſery is ſo preſſing, that there is no faith of a Deliverance left, then Chriſt comes, when Faith is ſcarcely to be found upon the Earth, *Luke* 18. 8. to exalt his Mercy in the depths of their Miſery, and work terrible things they looked not for, *Iſa.* 64. 3. The *Iſraelites* wou'd not have underſtood God's Care in their Protection, without this or the like Strait. God had a new Opportunity to ſhew his Watchfulneſs over them, to turn the Cloud which went before them as their Guide, behind them for their Defence, *Exod.* 14. 19. The Scoffs of the Enemy at the Church's Miſery, are God's Motive to help her. *I will reſtore Health to thee, becauſe they called thee an Out-caſt*, *Jer.* 30. 17. 'Tis in Straits we ſee God's Salvation, not Man's, *Exod.* 14. 13. *Stand ſtill, and ſee the ſalvation of the Lord.*

3. *His Juſtice.* He lets the Church be encompaſs'd with Miſeries, and the Enemies in a Combination againſt her, that he may overthrow them at once. God makes a quicker Diſpatch with the *Ægyptians*, when they were united, than when they had aſſaulted *Iſrael* with a ſmaller Body: His Righteouſneſs gets Glory at one blow, when he makes them to lie down together, *Iſa.* 43. 17. His Juſtice is unblemiſht in ſtriking when their Wickedneſs is viſibly ripe; the Equity of it muſt needs be ſubſcribed, that when the Enemies Malice is greateſt,

greateſt, when they have no mixture of Compaſſion, 'tis the cleareſt Righteouſneſs to cruſh them without any mixture of Mercy. God brings things to that paſs, that he may honour both his Juſtice and Mercy in the higheſt. That the black Horſes, and the white Horſes may march firm together, *Zech.* 6. 6. the black Horſes that brought Death and Judgment Northward to *Babylon*, where the Church was captive; the white Horſes that followed them, and brought Deliverance to his People; the one to be Inſtruments of his Judgments, the other of his Mercies. God loves to glorifie thoſe two Attributes together; he did ſo in the redemption of Mankind by the death of his Son, and he doth ſo in the deliverance of his Church; there is a conformity of the Church to Chriſt, in her Diſtreſs, that there may be a conformity of God's Glory in Temporal, to his Glory in Eternal Salvation. God ſingles out a full Crop to be an Harveſt for both. A wicked Man is ſaid to be *waited for* by the Sword, *Job* 15. 22. God attends the beſt ſeaſon for Revenge; when Mercy to the one ſhall appear moſt glorious, and Vengeance on his Enemies moſt equitable, and all Diſputes againſt his Proceedings be ſilenc'd.

2. *It makes to the Churches Advantage.* God had a *work* to do *upon Mount* Sion, *and on* Jeruſalem, before he would *puniſh the ſtout Heart of the King of* Aſſyria, *and the glory of his high looks*, *Iſa.* 10. 12. His end ſhall be attained in the correction of his Church, before his Glory ſhall be exalted in the deſtruction of her Enemies. There are Enemies in the Hearts of his People to be conquered by his Grace, before the Enemies to her Peace and Proſperity ſhall be defeated by his Power; he will let them be in the Fire, till, like Gold, they may have a purer Honour in a brighter luſtre.

1. *Humiliation is gain'd hereby.* God would not preſently raze out the *Canaanites*, leſt the wild Beaſts ſhould increaſe upon them, *Deut.* 7. 22. Too quick Deliverances may be occaſions to multiply the wild Beaſts of Pride, Security, and Wantonneſs in the Heart; Humility would have but little footing. There is need of a ſharp Winter to deſtroy the Vermin, before we can expect a fruitful Spring. Without Humiliation the Church knows not how to receive, nor how to improve any Mercy. The Enemies haſten their own Ruine, by increaſing the meaſure of their ſins; and *Iſrael*'s Deliverance, by being Inſtruments to humble their Hearts. The ſooner the Plaiſter hath drawn out the corrupt Matter, the ſooner it is caſt into the Fire. God hereby prevents the growth of Weeds in that Ground he intends to enrich with new Mercies.

2. *A Spirit of Prayer is excited.* Slight Troubles make but drooping Prayers. Great Straits make it guſh out, as the more the Bladder is ſqueezed, the higher the Water ſprings. We hear not of the *Iſraelites* crying to the Lord after their coming out of *Ægypt*, till they had a ſight of the formidable Army, *Exod.* 14. 10. *They were ſore afraid, and the Children of* Iſrael *cried unto the Lord.* Prayer gains Mercies, but ſcarce ſprings up free without ſenſe of Diſtreſs: We then have recourſe to God's Power, whereby he is able to relieve us, when we are ſenſible of our own Weakneſs, whereby we are unable to Relieve our ſelves; Men will ſcarce ſeek to God, or truſt him, while any Creature, though but a Reed, remains for their ſupport; they are *deſtitute* before they *pray*, or believe God regards their Prayers, *Pſal.* 102. 17. *He will regard the Prayer of the Deſtitute, and not deſpiſe their Prayer.* Diſtreſs cauſes Importunity, and God will do much for Importunities ſake, *Luke* 11. 8.

3. *Diſcovery of Sincerity.* Hereby God diſcovers who are his People, and who are not; who are in the higheſt form of Chriſtianity, and who are not in the School, or at leaſt but in the loweſt form; he ſeparates the good Corn from the uſeleſs Chaff. No queſtion but there were ſome among the *Iſraelites*, that in this Extremity, acted Faith upon the remembrance of the Wonders God had wrought for them in *Ægypt* before their departure; certainly they did not all murmur againſt *Moſes*; Were there no *Calebs* and *Joſhuahs*, that followed God fully in a way of Faith and Submiſſion? Their Faith and Courage had not been conſpicuous without this Extremity. Thundrings and Lightnings, and terrible things in Righteouſneſs, are to prove us, whether the Fear of God be before our Faces, that we ſin not, *Exod.* 20. 18, 20. God ſeparates the Droſs. You never know a new Building, without pulling down, to ſeparate the Rubbiſh, and rotten Rafters, from the ſound Materials. *Abraham* was put upon hard work, the imbruing his Hands in the Blood of his only Son, to prove his Integrity; when God ſees his Sincerity, he diverts the Blow; not only delivers him from his Grief, his Son from his Danger, but renews the Promiſe of the Meſſiah to him as a Reward. Deliverance then comes when God hath ſeparated the Corn from the Stubble.

4. *A ſtanding encouragement for future Faith.* When the ſtraits are greateſt from whence God delivers us, there is a ſtronger Foundation for a future Truſt. When the Diſtreſs is inconſiderable, Faith afterwards will be more feeble; large Experience heartens and ſtrengthens Faith in the Promiſe. When gloomy Clouds are blown over, the brighter and thinner will not be much feared. When we ſee the Sun melt the thickeſt over our Heads, we ſhall not doubt its Force to diſſolve the leſſer Vapours which may afterwards aſſemble; when the Ship hath eſcaped a raging Storm, we ſhall not doubt it in a leſs. God often puts them in mind of their deliverance in the Red-Sea, to ſtrengthen their Faith and dependance on him. It muſt needs be an eſtabliſhment to Faith; for Deliverances from great Straits are ſome kind of Obligation on the honour of God. When the *Iſraelites* had provoked God by Murmuring, and wiſhed they had dyed in *Ægypt*, and not in the Wilderneſs, *Moſes* intercedes with this Argument, The *Ægyptians* ſhall hear of it, from whom God brought up *Iſrael* with a ſtrong hand, and it would diſparage God's Power, and tax him with an inability to bring his People into the Land he intended; then God grants their Pardon, *Numb.* 14. 13, 14, 20.

5. *Engagement to future Obedience.* 'Tis upon this account God prefaceth the Law with his Mercy in delivering them out of *Ægypt*. The ſtrongeſt Vows are made in the greateſt Straits. Many Obligations there are, when the Extremity forces us to cry. When we are in the Jaws of Death, God may have his Terms of us; when we are at ſome diſtance, we will have our own. The lower a Perſon is, the more readily will he bend to any Condition; hope of Deliverance will make him ſtoop. And when God ſnatches his People as Firebrands out of the Fire, they are more obliged to him from common Ingenuity, and muſt be more aſhamed of breaking their Vows, than if their Mercies were of a great alloy. If common Patience leads to Repentance, a reſcue from an amazing Danger is a ſtronger Cord to draw us to Repentance and Obedience. And it is certain, that when the Church in Sincerity makes Vows to God, it will not be long before God puts her into a Condition to pay them;

them; and furniſh her with Incentives of a holy Ingenuity.

6. *The greater Thankfulneſs.* The more ſtraithed, the greater thankfulneſs for Enlargement. As we hear not of the *Iſraelites* Prayers, after they came out of *Ægypt*, till they were in the Pound, ſo we read of none of their Songs, though they had matter enough for them, in their firſt departure, till God had daſh'd in pieces the Enemy, and *thrown the Horſe and Rider into the Sea.* Then, and not till then, had they a deep ſenſe, how *glorious* God was *in Holineſs, fearful in Praiſes, doing Wonders,* Exod. 15. 11. Great Mercies unvail God's Face more to the view of his People. When *Iſrael* inherits great Salvation, then the Lord ſhall inherit the praiſe of *Iſrael.* When we have leſs Mercies, we take little notice of the Author; God hears the Language of but one of our Bones; but when he *delivers the poor from him, that is too ſtrong for him, and ſpoils him,* then *all my Bones ſhall ſay, Lord, who is like unto thee?*

7. *To prevent future miſchief to the Church.* The deſtruction of the greateſt Enemies is a diſarming the leſs. God by this Deſtruction ſtruck a Terror into thoſe Nations upon whoſe confines *Iſrael* was to march into *Canaan,* who without ſo remarkable a rebuke of Providence, would have been deſirous to finger ſome of their Prey. Then *trembling took hold of the mighty Men of* Moab. *All the Inhabitants of* Canaan *did melt away; fear and dread fell upon them by the greatneſs of the Arm of God,* that they ſhould be as *ſtill as a Stone, till they paſſed over the* River, *Exod.* 15. 15, 16. Their preſent Deliverance was a Paſs-port for their future Security in their Journey; and no Enemies troubled them in the way, but thoſe upon whom God had a mind to ſhew his Power.

2. *How doth God deliver when the Seaſon is thus?*

1. *Suddenly.* They ſank like Lead in the mighty Waters, which quickly reaches the bottom. Judgment comes like Lightning. Death and Hell are ſaid to ride *upon Horſes, Rev.* 6. 8. They are too ſwift for God's Enemies, and will eaſily win the Race of them. Deſtruction comes, *as Travel upon a Woman with Child,* 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 3. How ſuddenly did God turn the *Aſſyrian* Camp into an *Aceldema,* overthrow a powerful Army, and make their Tents their Tombs in the ſpace of a Night? He will daſh them *in pieces like a Potters Veſſel, Pſal.* 2. 9. all in bits at a ſtroke; He comes ſuddenly; he *rides upon a Cherub, Pſal.* 18. 10. But becauſe the Motion of an Angel is not ſo intelligible, he adds another Metaphor from the nimbleſt of ſenſible things; *he flies upon the wings of the Wind,* to aſſiſt his People in Extremity. The Enemy comes like a *Whirlwind**, and God goes forth as a *Whirlwind* of Fury, *Jer.* 30. 23. The Whirlwind of his Judgments ſhall be as quick as the Whirlwind of their Malice; a continual Whirlwind, when the other is vaniſhing; it *ſhall fall with pain upon the Head of the Wicked,* when the other ſhall be as fruitleſs as a Snowball againſt a Wall of Braſs. The Enemy beholds him not till he be upon him; for *the Clouds are as Duſt under his Feet, Nahum* 1. 3. and obſcure his Appearance, as the raiſing the Duſt doth the march of a Troop; he comes unawares upon them in a Cloud. The Execution is ſudden; They ſhall be *cut down as Graſs,* Pſal. 37. 2. which this Moment faceth the Sun, triumphing in its natural Bravery, and the next Moment is cut off from its Root with one ſhave of a Sythe. He quencheth them as Tow is quench'd in Water, *Iſa.* 43. 17. as the Snuff of a Candle is quench'd by being bruis'd by the Fingers. He cuts them off as foam, the excrement of the Water, *Hoſ.* 10. 7. which burſts in pieces like a Bubble, on the ſudden. Vengeance comes upon *Tyre* and *Sidon* ſwiftly and ſpeedily, *Joel* 3. 4. *Tyre* comes of צור, which ſignifies to *afflict, to ſtraiten. Sidon* of צרה, the word ſignifies to Purſue. All Perſecutors are threatned in *Tyre* and *Sidon* with a ſwift Deſtruction. God delays the time to try the Faith and Patience of his People, to make the expected Deliverance more ſweet and welcome, and Mercy more ſingular. He may have ſome of the Seed of Chriſt in the Loins of ſome of his Enemies. But when he doth draw his Sword, he gives a ſudden Blow before the Enemy fears it, or his People expect it. The *Jews* in *Babylon,* when the Chains of their Captivity were unlooſed, were like thoſe that Dream, they could ſcarce believe they were freed, when the Enemy felt himſelf puniſh'd. In all other Plagues God ſent *Moſes* as an Herauld, with warning to *Pharaoh*; but in this God ſurpriſed him, and hurried him to Deſtruction, without giving him any Caution; Like *Chaff that the Tempeſt carrieth away,* and is ſeen no more, *Job* 21. 18. So ſhall the Plagues of ſpiritual *Ægypt* come *in one day,* Rev. 18. 8. yea, in *one hour,* v. 17. And the Church ſhall be like a Lilly, which by the aſſiſtance of the Dew, flouriſheth in the Morning, when over Night it looked as if it were withered.

2. *Magnificently.* Sometimes in Deliverance God puts the frame of Nature in Confuſion. He *melts the Mountains, cleaves the Vallies: as Wax before the Fire, and as Waters poured down a ſteep place,* Mic. 1. 4. *i. e.* He waſtes the Strength and Riches of his Enemies when he comes to judge. When he appears in the generation of the Righteous, he ſhall appear in ſuch Glory, as to make the Adverſaries in great Fear, and ſtrike a Terror into them, *Pſal.* 14. 5. God will perform it in a prodigious and unuſual way. God might have taken off the Wheels of the *Ægyptian* Chariots before they had entred the gap of the Sea, and hindred them from approaching ſo near his beloved People; he might have afflicted their Hands with the Palſie, and rendred them uncapable to manage their Weapons; or might have ſent a Spirit of Emulation among them, and made them ſheath their Swords in one anothers Bowels. But though this had ſecured his People, it would not have rendred his Operation ſo illuſtrious, as the making that which was a means of his Peoples Security, to be his Enemies Deſtruction, and the Waters at once Indulgent to the *Iſraelites,* and ſevere to the *Ægyptians.* He magnifies his Judgments and Mercies, by one and the ſame Stroke, and drowns the Enemies in the Sea, whereby he delivers the *Iſraelites.* So he preſerved *Daniel* in the midſt of thoſe Lions which devoured his Accuſers. The more contrary things are to an Eye of Reaſon, the fitter Subjects they are for the exaltation of God. As Chriſt the Head, ſo the Church the Body is raiſed out of the Grave by the Glory of God the Father, *Rom.* 6. 4. His Right-hand ſhall find his Enemies, *Pſal.* 21. 8. his *Right-hand ſhall teach him terrible things,* Pſal. 45. 4. Then ſhall he come with a ſhout, as one refreſhed with Wine, recruited with new Spirits, and riſen from Sleep, *Pſal.* 78. 65. He calls upon all Creatures to be aſſiſtant to *Cyrus* in the deſign of his Peoples Deliverance, *Iſa.* 45. 8. He will perfect it by a way of Creation. (*I have created Righteouſneſs* to Deliverance) with the manifeſtation of a creative Power, and he makes things ſerve againſt their natural order appointed by God. Thus, when God ſhall appear for the final overthrow of ſpiritual *Ægypt,* he ſhall come with Voices, Thunders, and Lightnings, an Earthquake out of the Temple, and appear as magnificently in the garb of a Judge, as he did on *Sinai* in that

of

* *They came out as a whirlwind to ſcatter me,* Hab. 3. 14.

of a Law-giver, *Rev.* 16. 19. and make the Ten Horns, which were the ſupport of the Beaſt, to be the Inſtruments of her Deſolation, *Rev.* 17. 16.

3. *Severely. They ſank to the bottom like Lead in the mighty Waters.* God ſends out the greateſt Judgments againſt thoſe that deal ſharply with his People, greater than againſt any other part of the World, *Zac.* 6. 6. The black Horſes, the Inſtrument of the execution of his Anger, were ſent towards *Babylon*, where his People were in Captivity; but the bay Horſes of a mixt Colour, noting a mixture of Mercy and Judgments, are ſent towards other Parts of the World, to walk, not to run, ſignifying the Patience of God to thoſe Parts which had not yet oppreſt his People; God deals not ſo ſmartly with thoſe, as with them that are Enemies to *Iſrael.* In ſuch Concerns he Anſwers his People *by terrible things in Righteouſneſs:* When he appears as a God of Salvation to his People, he appears terrible in his Righteouſneſs to his Enemies, *Pſal.* 65. 5. *By terrible things in Righteouſneſs wilt thou anſwer us, O God of our Salvation.* His Judgments ſhall be as terrible as they are righteous. The Executioners of his Vengeance ride upon Horſes, to ſhew their readineſs to any warlike Engagement; upon red Horſes, of a bloody Colour, to ſhew the ſeverity of their Commiſſion againſt the Enemies of God, *Zac.* 1. 8. He will pay all Arrears together, that they ſhall be forced to ſay, God is true to the word of his Threatning, as well as that of his Promiſe: As the *Amalekites* in *Samuel's* Time payed the Scores of their Anceſtors in the time of the *Iſraelites* Travel through the Wilderneſs, 1 *Sam.* 15. 2. *I remember that which* Amalek *did to* Iſrael, *how he laid wait for him in the way when they came up from* Ægypt. So when God reckons with *Babylon* for all the Blood of the Saints and Prophets, *Rev.* 18. 20. *The Blood of all the Prophets and Saints that were ſlain upon the Earth, ſhall be found upon her ſkirts, and avenged on her*; and gives unto her the Cup of the Wine of the fierceneſs of his Wrath, all that ſhe hath done ſhall come into his Remembrance, *Rev.* 16. 19. And how ſevere it ſhall be is expreſt, *Rev.* 14. 19, 20. ſhe ſhall be caſt into the *great Wine-preſs of the wrath of God*, as Grapes bruiſed with the greateſt ſtrength, and cruſhed in pieces both Skin and Stones. And to expreſs it more ſenſibly to our Underſtandings, he ſpeaks of the flowing of the *Blood out of the Wine-preſs unto the Horſe-Bridles*, by the ſpace of a 1000 *and* 600 *furlongs*, two hundred Miles; not that we ſhould underſtand it litterally, but the Spirit of God is ſo particular in deſcribing the height of the Deluge of Blood to the Bridles of the Horſes, the length of the Flood to the ſpace of two hundred Miles, to ſet before our Apprehenſion the ſeverity of the Wrath that ſhall be poured out upon them. And as God never repented of his Judgments upon *Ægypt*, ſo never will he of thoſe which are to come upon *Babylon.*

4. *Univerſally*; and therefore ſeverely. *The Horſe and the Rider did God caſt into the Sea*; the Chariots, the Hoſt, and the choſen Captains were drowned there, *Exod.* 15. 1, 4. The Waters covered the Enemy, there was not one of them left, *Pſal.* 60. 11. *Exod.* 14. 28. Not a Meſſenger to carry back the news; their floating Bodies and Wracks were the firſt that gave notice of the defeat to their remaining Countrymen. God throws off all tenderneſs, his Bowels are ſilent, he ſtrikes like a wrathful Enemy, lanceth not like a tender Chirurgeon; ſo ſhall it be with their Partners in their Sins, every Man that worſhips the Beaſt and his Image ſhall drink of the Wrath of God, which is poured out without Mixture into the Cup of his Indignation, and whoever receives the mark of his Name, *Rev.* 14. 9, 10, 11. The Sun, the political Power that defends it, ſhall be darkened; the Rivers, whereby their Traffick and Riches come into them, ſhall be dried up; all that have any dependance on them, recourſe to them, ſtand in the defence of the Power of *Ægypt*, ſhall fall under the Indignation of God.

5. *Totally*; Irrecoverably. They ſank *as Lead.* God will make *an utter end, Affliction ſhall not riſe up a ſecond time*, Nahum 1. 9, 10. He overtakes them when they are drunk in the height of their Pleaſure, while they are making their Confederacies againſt the Church, while *they are folden together like Thorns, they ſhall be devoured like Stubble fully dry.* Ποιήσει τὴν ἐκδίκησιν, Luke 18. 7. *He will avenge his own, he will avenge them ſpeedily*; he will act ſo as if Wrath were his only and proper work, he will do it to purpoſe, and perfectly; The *Ægyptian* Carcaſſes lay as Trophies of the Victory, *Ex.* 14. 30. Their former Plagues had ſomething of Patience; Puniſhment was inflicted, but Life preſerved; Judgments ſent, but upon promiſe of Reformation quite removed: Now Patience folds her hands, and ſtands Spectator, while Juſtice opens hers, and becomes a ſole Actor; Mercy runs on the ſide of *Iſrael*, and Wrath marcheth without any Impediment againſt the *Ægyptians.* As they like lead, ſo irrecoverably ſhall *Babylon* fall like a Milſtone, in the depths of the Sea, and ſhall be found no more at all; all her Mirth and Jollity ſhall for ever ceaſe, *Rev.* 18. 21, 22. 23. When things fall to the bottom of the Sea, they are entombed there for ever, no Skill can reſtore them to their former Station; when Judgment turneth the Key, and locks them in, there is no more opening the Door.

6. *And all this juſtly. Pharaoh* had commanded that the *Hebrew* Male-children ſhould be expoſed to the Mercy of the River, to find their Death in the Water as ſoon as they had breathed in the Air, *Exod.* 1. 22. And God makes them periſh in that Element, to which they had adjudged the harmleſs Infants. Now God pays the Law-maker, and his Counſellors with the ſame Coin, and makes the Malefactors Food for the Inhabitants of the Deep, who had before fed the Crocodiles with the Blood of the Innocent. God ſhall reward *Babylon* as ſhe hath rewarded his People, and double unto her the Cup ſhe hath filled for others, *Rev.* 18. 6. Upon this account ſhall Praiſe be given to God, that he hath given them Blood to drink, who have ſhed the Blood of his Saints and Prophets, *Rev.* 16. 6. Thou *art Righteous, O Lord, becauſe thou haſt judged thus.* As ſhe hath kindled Fires to conſume the Witneſſes of Chriſt, ſo God ſhall kindle a Fire to conſume her, *Rev.* 17. 16. *She ſhall be utterly burnt with Fire*, Rev. 18. 8. Some think *Rome* will at length be conſumed with Fire from Heaven; ſhe is indeed Spiritual *Sodom*, *Rev.* 11. 8. And as ſhe anſwers it in Carnal and Spiritual Sins, ſhe may partake of the ſame viſible and ſpiritual Judgments: Whether the Puniſhment will be the ſame for kind I know not, but certainly it will be ſuch a kind of Puniſhment, whereby the Judgments of God ſhall be read both in proportion, and kind of it, as a Retaliation for her ſins; and the Scripture ſpeaks of Fire coming down from God out of Heaven, upon the laſt Enemies of the Church, that ſhall afflict the beloved City, alluding to the Fire upon *Sodom*, and that which deſcended upon the Perſecutors of *Elijah*, *Rev.* 20. 9.

7. *Wiſely. He cuts off the Spirits of Princes*, as he took off the Wheels of the *Ægyptian* Chariots, *Pſal.* 76. 12. Either by infatuating their Counſels, or turning them as the Rivers of Waters into other Channels. He ſtript the *Ægyptians*, firſt of their Wealth, and now Spoils them of their Strength;

he kept a Bridle upon the Waters, till the Enemies were got into the midſt of them, and then commands the Sea to ſwallow them up in the depths of her Bowels. When Men lay their Counſels deep, ſecond them by an invincible Strength, have almoſt brought them to their imagin'd Period ready to bring forth, God diſappoints their Hopes, baffles their Counſels, renders their Projects frothy, raiſeth a Storm, and blows the Ship from its Harbour, contrary to its intended Courſe, and glorifies his Wiſdom, by overthrowing their Deſigns, when they have brought them to a Birth. He watches upon the Evil to divert it from the innocent Object upon the malicious Actor. As God watches for the fitteſt Seaſon to bring evil upon his People, *Dan.* 9. 14. he will be as diligent to watch for the fitteſt Opportunity to bring Judgment on his Enemies. God hath promiſed Vengeance, but he hath reſerved the knowledge of the *due time* to himſelf, when he will make their *foot to ſlide*, *Deut.* 32. 35. Every Mercy is then moſt ſeaſonable. Uſually God lets Men bring the Ball almoſt to the Goal, and then kicks it from them, and them from it: And the Wiſdom of God hath been, and will be glorious in the Overthrow of the remaining Enemies of the Church, in making them which were Horns to defend the Beaſt, to be Carpenters to ruine him, *Rev.* 17. 16.

Uſe 1. *Of Comfort.* How dear is the Church to God! When God was engag'd in the Deliverance of his People, he ſinks the Strength of *Ægypt* rather than one Hair of the *Iſraelites* Heads ſhou'd periſh; they went ſafe over, while no Man or Horſe of the Enemies eſcap'd. God gave *Ægypt* for *Iſrael*'s Ranſom, *Iſa.* 43. 3. And the Sea ſhou'd have drown'd the whole Land, rather than the Enemies have hurt his People. So did the Contrivers of the Powder-Plot come to deſtruction, when not one Hair of a Head was loſt, or one ſplinter of the place they intended was ſhav'd off, by the prepar'd Gunpowder. God ſits in Heaven, and laughs at the little petty Deſigns of Men, *Pſa.* 2. 4. God that is infinite to countermine them, infinitely powerful to defeat them, hath them in deriſion. Chriſt in Glory mocks at the Folly of Earth-Worms. The Decree of God, which ſettles Chriſt a King, aſſures him a Kingdom, and ſecures his People as it did his Perſon, *Pſa.* 2. 7. God is *a Sun and a Shield*; *Pſa.* 84. 11. a Shield to defend them, and a Sun to extinguiſh the Fire of the Enemy's Fury, by ſhining upon it. God values no Nation for the ſecurity of his People. The *Babylonians*, a warlike Nation, ſhall ſink under the Army of *Cyrus*, for the Reſtauration of the captive *Jews*, *Iſa.* 43. 4. *I will give Men for thee, and People for thy Life.* He had given *Ægypt* for their Ranſom before, and *Æthiopia* and *Seba*, in the time of *Aſa*; and ſtill in after-Ages God was of the ſame Mind. God is as gracious to his People, as terrible to his Enemies: He is Light to the one, when he is Fire to the Souls and Bodies of the other, *Iſa.* 10. 17. Chriſt ſtill ſits the Watchman of *Ephraim* with God, *Hoſ.* 9. 8. He inſpects his Church, and waits to bring the Day of Viſitation upon his Enemies. The Covenant is of ſpecial force with God, to move him to deliver his People, *Iſa.* 63. 8. He ſaid, *Surely they are my People, ſo he was their Saviour.* It ſeems to refer to the deliverance from *Ægypt*. Shall I have ſo little regard to the League I have entred into with their Fathers, as to be unconcern'd in their Miſery? There is hope in *Iſrael* till God forgets his Covenant, and Chriſt ſtrip himſelf of the Name of a Saviour. Chriſt hath his Prieſtly Habit in Heaven for his People, but Eyes as Flames of Fire, quick and piercing, to conſume the very Hearts of his Enemies; and Feet like fine Braſs, to trample upon them, *Rev.* 1. 13, 14, 15. He is the Lion of the Tribe of *Judah*, to tear his Enemies, as well as a Lamb ſlain, to expiate the ſins of his People. He hath Meekneſs for his Friends, and terrible Majeſty for his Enemies, *Pſa.* 45. 4. *In thy Majeſty ride proſperouſly, becauſe of Meekneſs.* His Kindneſs to his People makes him ride in Majeſty againſt the others. God will not be at reſt till he hath reveng'd the Cauſe of his People. *Ægypt* will be drown'd, *Babylon* will fall, *Rev.* 18. 2. Chriſt can have no ſatisfaction without it. The Executioners of his Judgments in the North-Country, which was *Babylon*, lying Northward from *Jeruſalem*, do quiet his Spirit; both as tending to the Glory of his Juſtice, and the Manifeſtation of his Mercy to his People, *Zach.* 6. 3. Chriſt will ſtain his Garments in the Blood of *Edom* and *Bozra*, *Iſa.* 63. 2, 3. *Edom* the Poſterity of *Eſau*, *Bozra* a City of *Moab*, Types of the Church's Enemies. The *Jewiſh* Doctors by *Edom* in the Prophets underſtand *Rome*. Chriſt ſits in Heaven, *till his Enemies be made his Footſtool.* All the time of his ſitting God is acting and preparing things for a final Iſſue. There is a ſtrong cry of Blood, and a File of Prayers; the one will be reveng'd, and the other will be anſwer'd. Their own Pride and Cruelty witneſs againſt them. God hath a Noiſe of Petitions every day for a full end; a combin'd Importunity will prevail. But Clouds now hang over us, a gloomy Storm ſeems to threaten us. God may indeed blow over the Cloud. Our Saviour hath the command of the Storms and Winds in Heaven, as well as he had upon the Earth; the Pillar of the Cloud, which hath hitherto conducted us, may be our Guardian in the Rear to defend us. But yet if he doth ſuffer them to prevail, they ſhall be but as Whisks to bruſh off the Duſt, Wiſps of Straw to cleanſe the filthy Pot. You know what is to be done with them when their Work is done. Their Language indeed is, *Let Sion be defiled*; but they underſtand not the Counſel of the Lord, who in time will make the Horn of *Sion* Iron, and her Hoofs Braſs, *Micah* 4. 11. Though the Beaſts that aſcend out of the Bottomleſs Pit do kill God's People, *Rev.* 11. 7. yet even in this Victory of theirs Satan himſelf ſhall be overcome. As when Chriſt was taken out from among the Living by Satan's means, it was but for a time; but himſelf was caſt out for ever; ſo after this Victory the Church ſhall overcome, *Rev.* 11. and God ſhall break the Head of the Leviathan in the Waters; and when he doth by his Wiſdom contrive ways of Salvation, he will by his Power execute them, and ſave in ſuch a way as may moſt glorifie himſelf, and witneſs that the Salvation was the immediate Work of his Arm, *Hoſ.* 2. 7. *I will ſave them by the Lord their God.*

2. *Remember former Deliverances in time of Straits.* In our plenty of Mercies we ſhould not be unmindful how near we were to the Pit, nor let the Impreſſion of God's Power, Wiſdom, and Mercy wear off from our Hearts. The *Iſraelites* were apt to forget the moſt ſignal Mercies, though they had ſeen them, and had more ſenſibly taſted the Sweetneſs of them, than their Poſterity. God therefore often puts them in mind of them; The Lord that brought them *out of the Land of Ægypt*, out of the *Iron Furnace*, *Deut.* 4. 20. *Hoſ.* 12. 9. *I the Lord your God from the Land of Ægypt*, *Ezek.* 23. 3. It was the more fit to be remembred by them, becauſe many of them were

fitter

fitter Subjects for God's Wrath with the *Ægyptians*, than for his Delivering-Kindneſs, ſince *ſhe committed Whoredoms in Ægypt in her Youth*, *i. e.* had been guilty of the *Ægyptian* Idolatry. Unmindfulneſs of former Experiences may make you hopeleſs of future Deliverances: The Remembrance of former Mercies is a ground of Confidence in God for the like Mercies for the future. God recalls to his People's Minds, in their Afflictions, the memorable Defeat of the *Moabites*, by his ſole Power, in the time of *Jehoſaphat*'s Reign; they ſhould from that Deliverance hope for as great from the hands of God in their Straits. And *Zech.* 10. 11. God would have them conſider their Deliverance at the Red-Sea, as a ground of Hope in the time of their Diſtreſs.

3. *Thankfully remember former Deliverances.* If we have not ſome Praiſe for God, we may ſuſpect our ſelves. * 'Tis obſerv'd of the City *Shuſhan*, the Royal Seat of the *Perſian* Monarchy, was pourtray'd upon the Eaſt-Gate of the Temple, not becauſe of the *Perſian* Command, or becauſe of their Fear of that King, as ſome think; but to have a thankful Remembrance of the wonderful Deliverance of *Purim*, which was wrought in *Shuſhan*, *Eſt.* 9. 26. If it had been only by the *Perſians* command, it would have been defaced after the Fall of that Monarchy, which held but thirty four Years after the building of the ſecond Temple. The 136. *Pſalm* is a good Copy, where is a threefold exhortation to thankfulneſs, in the beginning, and one at the end, and in the Record of every Mercy, the Burden of every Verſe is, *his Mercy endureth for ever*. How ſhould we imitate the Pſalmiſt? He broke the Teeth of the invincible *Leviathan* in 88, and ſent a ſtrong Wind to diſperſe the Fleet, *for his Mercy endureth for ever*; God prevented the dreadful blaſt of Gunpowder, *for his Mercy endureth for ever*; God ſent the Light of the Goſpel into *England*, and freed it from the Yoke of Antichriſt's Tyranny, *for his Mercy endureth for ever*; God hath been a Wall of Fire about *Ireland* in the Protection of it, *for his Mercy endureth for ever*. Let Mercy receive the Praiſe of what our own Wiſdom and Power could not effect. The way to overcome the ſame Enemies we fear, is to praiſe God for what he hath before acted againſt them. The Strength of a People conſiſts in Praiſes, as well as praying, *Pſa.* 8. 2. *Out of the Mouths of Babes and Sucklings haſt thou ordained Strength.* In the Evangeliſt, *thou haſt perfected Praiſe*, *Mat.* 21. 16. The more *Hallelujahs* we put up, the more occaſion God may give us for them. If we have any fears of the overflowing Deluge God formerly deliver'd us from, our non-improvement of thoſe Deliverances, the Fruits whereof we enjoy this day, may ſtrengthen our Fears. When *Iſrael* was idolatrous in *Jeroboam*'s Reign, yet God deliver'd them from the *Syrians*, becauſe he ſaw their Affliction was bitter, and there was no Helper; yet when they did not thankfully improve it to a Reformation, God denounc'd Judgments againſt them for their Idolatry, 2 *Kings* 14. 26, 27. *The Lord ſaid not that he would blot out the Name of Iſrael*; ſo that he had not yet denounc'd it, for he waited to ſee the improvement of this Mercy. But before the end of *Jeroboam*'s Reign by the Prophet *Hoſea*, who began to propheſie in his time, he declar'd their final Captivity, from whence they are not reſtor'd to this day. Praiſe for former Mercies is a means to gain future ones; The Muſick of Voices in *Jehoſaphat*'s Camp, praiſing the beauty of Holineſs, was a Prologue of a Deliverance from a formidable Army, 2 *Chron.* 20. 21, 22. and more ſucceſsful than the warlike Muſick of Drums and Trumpets.

* Lightfoot Temple, *cap.* 3. *p.* 9.

4. *Exerciſe Faith on the Power of God manifeſted in Deliverances in the time of Straits.* 'Tis not for want of Ability in God, but for want of Faith in us, that we at any time go groaning under Miſery; Faith would quiet the Soul: When *David* rely'd upon God, and found by experience God ſuſtaining him, he would not then be afraid of ten thouſand, *Pſa.* 3. 5, 6. Let that be our Carriage which is recorded of the *Iſraelites* after this memorable Defeat, *Exod.* 14. 31. *They believed the Lord, and his Servant Moſes.* We muſt never expect to ſee God's Arm bare, without Faith in him. Chriſt can do no great Work where Unbelief is predominant. Unbelief doth not ſtrip God of his Power and Mercy, but it ſtops the Streams and Efluxes of it. Unbelief againſt Experience is a double Sin; 'Tis groſs when againſt a bare Word, worſe when againſt the Word confirm'd by a Witneſs. *Iſrael* was paſt thoughts of any Relief in this Strait, but expected to periſh by the hand of their Enemies, yet God brought them into Straits in Mercy, to bring them out of Straits with Power; he makes their Diſtreſs a Snare to their Enemies, and a Scaffold for their Faith. That Deliverance ought to be a Foundation for our Truſt in God, though beſtow'd upon another Nation; yet not ſo much upon them as a State, but as a Church, and a Type of thoſe future ones under the Goſpel, which are yet expected. Well then, truſt upon this Foundation. Great Truſt in God is a ſort of Obligation upon God: Men out of Generoſity will do much for them that depend upon them. Dependance on God magnifies his Attributes, this will bring Deliverance, whereby God will magnifie himſelf. Do not diſtruſt him, till you meet with an Enemy too ſtrong for him to quell, a Red-Sea too deep for him to divide, an Affliction too ſturdy for him to rebuke, an *Ægyptian* too proud for him to maſter; Then part with your Faith, but not till God hath parted with his Power, which he hath formerly evidenc'd.

5. *Expect and provide for ſharp Conflicts.* God brings into Straits before he delivers; Another Deliverance is yet to come; the Church's Diſtreſſes are not come to a Period, *Babylon* hath another Game to play. The right of the Devil to tyrannize over the Myſtical Body was taken away at the death of the Head, yet he ſtill bruiſeth Chriſt's Heel, and bites, though he cannot totally overcome. As long as Chriſt's Enemies are not made his Foot-ſtool, as long as there is the Seed of the Serpent in the World, as long as Chriſt's Members want a conformity to the Head, *Satan*'s Pinches muſt be expected; as long as the Beaſt is in being, he will make War with the Followers of the Lamb; his Power is to continue forty two Months, to make War with the Saints, and to overcome them, *Revel.* 13. 5, 7. Forty two Months or Years. 'Tis like the time is not expir'd: One thouſand ſix hundred and twenty Years, which make forty two Months; no ending ſince he firſt had his Power; when his time draws near to an end, he will bite ſharpeſt. This Deliverance from *Ægypt* is yet again to be acted over, and that muſt be at the end, when the whole *Iſrael* of God ſhall be freed from Antichriſt, the Antitype of *Pharaoh*.

6. *Yet let us not be afraid.* Apoſtacies may be great; there will be but two Witneſſes; not two in number, but in regard of the fewneſs of thoſe that ſhall bear teſtimony to the Doctrine of Chriſt:

There may be no Advocate for the Church: *Sion* may be an out-caſt, caſt out of the Affection of many that ſerved or favoured her: But the ſharpeſt Convulſions in the World are preſages of an approaching Redemption, *Luke* 21. 28. and the Goſpel will ſhine clearer, as the Sun doth, after it hath been muffled with a thick Cloud. The words in the mouths of the Witneſſes, will be moſt killing and convincing. Fear not a natural above a ſupernatural Power. Was not all the Church God had in the World in as low a condition at the Red-Sea? Not a Soul, that we read of, exempt, (or but few, as *Job*, and ſome few others in other Parts) yet the Church was then delivered for a Pattern, to ſhew forth the Power of God in the Ages to come. What though there may be a want of Inſtruments? Are not all Inſtruments out-liv'd by God? Has God diſmiſt the care of his People? Is he not always the Church's Guardian? He muſt be dethron'd before he can be diſarm'd. While Heaven is too high for human Hands to reach, the Church is too well guarded for them to conquer: Fear not, till Chriſt lets the Scepter fall out of his Hands, and ceaſes to Rule in the midſt of his Enemies, and flings away the Keys of Death and Hell; fear not till God ſtrips himſelf of his *ſtrength*, wherewith he is *clothed*; *He is clothed with ſtrength*, *Pſal.* 93. 1. Though there be little ſtrength in the Church, there is an Almighty one in their Confederate. 'Tis no matter what the Enemy reſolves againſt what God ordains. *Pharaoh* intended to Deſtroy, God intended to Deliver. God will have his Will, and *Pharaoh*'s Luſt goes unſatisfied. When the Enemies are moſt numerous, God ſhall darken their Glory and Strength, and then ſhall he be the hope and ſtrength of his People, *Joel* 3. 14, 15, 16. The Valley of *Achor*, the Valley of the ſharpeſt Trouble, ſhall be a door of Hope, *Hoſ.* 2. 15. That God, that can create a World out of nothing, can create Deliverance when there is no viſible means to produce it. What can be too hard for him that can work without Materials, that can make Matter when it is wanting, and call Non-Entities into Being? He created the World with a word, and can deſtroy the ſturdieſt Men in the World with a Look. The ſtrongeſt Devil trembles before him, and the whole Seed of the Serpent is but as the duſt of the Ballance before the breath of his Mouth. He looked the *Ægyptian* Hoſt into diſorder, and their Chariot-wheels into a falling-ſickneſs, *Exod.* 14. 24. He created the World by a word: He reſtored *Jeruſalem* by a word, *Iſa.* 44. 26, 27. diſpirited *Ægypt* by a Look. There is no need of an Arm; a Word, and a Look of Omnipotency will be efficacious both for the one and the other; one Royal Edict from him will perform it, *Pſal.* 44. 4. *Thou art my King*, *command deliverance for* Jacob. He hath Authority as a King, Engagement as the Church's King: As he hath right of Dominion, ſo he hath an Office of Protection, which the Church of right may claim; and is it *Jacob* that wants Deliverance? be not afraid, but ſanctifie the *Lord of Hoſts himſelf*, Iſai. 8. 12, 13. To truſt in his Power, is to ſanctifie his Name, and regard him as the Sovereign of all Creatures, and the Lord of Hoſts. If we ſanctifie his Name by relying on his Power, he will ſanctifie his Name by engaging his Power.

7. To this end, *ſtudy the Promiſes God hath made to his Church, and what Predictions are upon Record.* 'Tis a Title of the Faithful, that they are ſuch as keep the Sayings of the Book of the *Revelation*, *Rev.* 22. 9. The Angel that came to *John*, owns himſelf his *Fellow-ſervant*, and *of the Prophets, and thoſe that keep the ſayings of that Book.* See God's Bond, and behold his Witneſs; compare the Promiſe, the Prophecy, and Performance: See his Mercy in making them, his Truth in performing them; let theſe be as the *Hur* and *Aaron* to ſupport the Glory of God in our Souls. This will be a matter of Praiſe, and furniſh us with Arguments to ſpread before God. *Daniel* firſt looked into the Book for the ſet time of the *Jews* return from *Babylon*, *Dan.* 9. 2. and took his Riſe for Pleas from thence. You may have need of this Food; a Divine Promiſe is the beſt Cordial at a *Stake or Gibbet*, or when a Sword is at your Breaſt.

8. *When a time of Straits comes, wait patiently upon God:* Let not Hope ſink, when Reaſon is non-pluſt by Storms, and ſees nothing but Wracks. Wait upon God in the way of his Judgments, *Iſa.* 26. 8. in his Storms as well as Calms. God waits to be Gracious, and therefore we ſhould wait to be gratified. Not to wait, is to be Partners in that Sin which brought deſtruction upon the Church's Enemies, *viz.* Pride. It concerns God more in point of his Glory, to haſten Deliverance in its due time, than us in point of Security; but there is as much danger in coming too ſoon, as too late. By waiting we imitate the higheſt Pattern, who waits with Patience for the Reformation of his Enemies, and Chriſt who waits for the total Victory. The longer God keeps the Church at any time under the Enemies Chains, the ſweeter will be his Mercy to the one, and the ſeverer his Juſtice on the other. The *Iſraelites* waited, and God followed *Pharaoh* with Plagues, as he followed them with Burdens, and took his time to cut off their Oppreſſors with moſt Glory to himſelf, and moſt Comfort to them. The Viſion hath its appointed time: Impatience will not make God break the Chains of his Reſolves, but Patience will bring down the Bleſſing with great Succeſs, and big with noble Births. God is not out of the way of his Wiſdom and Grace, and we can never keep in our way but by Patience in waiting: By this we give him the honour of his Wiſdom; by too much haſtineſs we check and controul him, and will not let him be the Maſter and Conductor of his own Bleſſings. We many times get more good by waiting, than we do by enjoying a Mercy: Such a poſture keeps the Soul humble and believing, whereas many times when we receive a Mercy too haſtily with one hand, we let go Faith and Humility with the other. Sincere Souls have the ſtrongeſt and moſt Heavenly Raptures in a time of waiting, *Iſa.* 40. 31. *They mount up with wings like Eagles.*

9. In times of ſuch ſtraits, *Be found only in a way of Duty.* If our Straits ſhould ever prove as hard as the *Iſraelites* at the Red Sea, *i. e.* have ſomething of a reſemblance to their caſe, let us follow *Moſes* his Counſel to them, *Exod.* 14. 13. *Stand ſtill and ſee the ſalvation of the Lord.* Let us not anticipate God's gracious Deſigns; if we will have our Finger, where God only will have his Arm, God may withdraw this Arm, and leave us to the weakneſs of our own Fingers. Let them that want a God to relieve them, uſe ſinful and unworthy ſhifts for their deliverance. If any Succeſs be found out of the way of Duty, it may be attended with a Curſe, and want that favour of God which only can ſanctify it; We may purchaſe a preſent Deliverance with a more durable plague at the end of it, becauſe we forfeit that Favour which only can work a real freedom. Sinful ways do not glorifie God, but diſparage him; our Actions at ſuch a time particularly ſhould adorn the Goſpel, not diſcredit it, for it is by the Sword of his Mouth that ſuch Enemies will be deſtroyed, and every Sword cuts beſt when it is ſharpeſt and cleaneſt,

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not when it is blunt and rusty. Not but that lawful Means may, nay, they must be used. *Noah*, though he went into the Ark by God's Command, and was not to stir out without his Order, yet he sets open the Windows, and sends forth a *Raven* and a *Dove* to bring him notice when the Waters were dried up. 'Tis a foolish thing to offend God who only can help us in our Straits, and by our sin to hold his Sword in his Sheath, which upon our Obedience would be drawn for our Relief. We know not how soon we may need him, and our Distress be such, that none but he can bring Salvation; let no sin be a bar in the way.

10. *Be much in Prayer.* *Israel* cried unto the Lord before God did relieve. *Exod.* 14. 10. The persecuted Church cried travelling in Birth, and found a security both for her self and her Offspring, *Rev.* 12. 2, *&c.* The distress of the Time is an Argument to be used, *Psal.* 123. 34. *Have Mercy on us Lord, for we are exceedingly filled with Contempt.* When Enemies are high, and access to God free, 'tis an high contempt of God not to use the Priviledge he allows us; and 'tis to trust in an Arm of Flesh rather than an Arm of Omnipotence; to think him either inexorable, or unable. And for Encouragement consider, you have Christ arm'd against his Spouses Enemies, and provided with Merit to make her Prayers successful. Our Prayers may at last be turned into Praises: And we may say with *David*, Psal. 9. 6. *Oh thou Enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end.*

A DISCOURSE OF Delight in Prayer.

Psal. 37. 4.

Delight thy self also in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thy Heart.

THis Psalm in the beginning is a heap of Instructions: The great Lesson intended in it is plac'd in *ver.* 1. *Fret not thy self because of evil-doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.* 'Tis resum'd, *ver.* 7, 8. where many Reasons are alledged to enforce it.

Fret not.]

1. *Do not Envy them.* Be not troubled at their Prosperity.

2. *Do not Imitate them.* Be not provoked by their Glow-worm Happiness, to practice the same wickedness to arrive to the same Prosperity.

3. *Be not sinfully impatient, and quarrel not with God,* because he hath not by his Providence allowed thee the same measures of Prosperity in the World. Accuse him not of Injustice and Cruelty, because he afflicts the Good, and is indulgent to the Wicked. Leave him to dispense his Blessings according to his own Mind.

4. *Condemn not the way of Piety and Religion wherein thou art.* Think not the worse of thy Profession, because it is attended with Affliction.

The reason of this Exhortation is rendred, *v.* 2. *For they shall soon be cut down as the Grass, and wither as the green Herb*; amplified by a similitude or resemblance of their Prosperity to Grass: Their happiness hath no Stability; it hath like Grass, more of colour and show, than strength and substance. Grass nods this and that way with every Wind. The Mouth of a Beast may pull it up, or the Foot of a Beast may tread it down; the scorching Sun in Summer, or the fainting Sun in Winter, will deface its Complexion.

The Psalmist then proceeds to positive Duties, *ver.* 3.

1. *Faith. Trust in the Lord.* This is a Grace most fit to quell such Impatiencies. The stronger the Faith, the weaker the Passion. Impatient Motions are signs of a flagging Faith. Many times Men are ready to cast off their help in *Jehovah*, and address to the God of *Ekron*, multitudes of Friends or Riches. But *trust* thou *in the Lord*; in the Promises of God, in the Providence of God.

2. *Obedience. Do good.* Trust in God's Promises, and observance of his Precepts must be link'd together. 'Tis but a pretended trust in God, where there is a real walking in the paths of Wickedness. Let not the Glister of the World render thee faint and languid in a course of Piety.

3. *The keeping our Station. Do good.* Because wicked Men flourish, hide not thy self therefore in a Corner, but keep thy Sphere, run thy Race. *And verily thou shalt be fed*; have every thing needful for thee. And now, because Men delight in that wherein they Trust, the Psalmist diverts us from all other objects of Delight, to God as the the true Object. *Delight thy self in the Lord*; place all thy Pleasure and Joy in him. And because the Motive expresseth the answer of Prayer, the Duty enjoyned seems to respect the act of Prayer, as well as the object of Prayer; Prayer coming from a delight in God, and a delight in seeking him. Trust is both the spring of Joy and the spring of Supplication. When we trust him for Sustenance and Preservation, we shall receive them; so when we delight in seeking him, we shall be answered by him.

1. *The Duty.* In the Act, *Delight.* In the Object, *the Lord.*

2. *The Motive. He shall give thee the desires of thy Heart,*

heart, the moſt ſubſtantial Deſires, thoſe Deſires which he approves of; The deſire of thy Heart as Gracious, though not the deſire of thy Heart as Carnal: The deſire of thy Heart as a Chriſtian, though not the deſire of thy Heart as a Creature. He ſhall give; God is the Object of our Joy, and the Author of our Comfort.

Doctrine. *Delight in God, in ſeeking him only, procures gracious Anſwers*; or, *without chearful Prayers, we cannot have gracious Anſwers.*

There are two Parts. 1. Chearfulneſs on our parts. 2. Grants on God's part.

1. Chearfulneſs and delight on our Parts. Joy is the tuning the Soul. The Command to Rejoyce precedes the Command to Pray, 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 16, 17. *Rejoyce evermore, pray without ceaſing.* Delight makes the Melody, Prayer elſe will be but a harſh ſound. God accepts the Heart only, when it is a Gift given, not forc'd. Delight is the Marrow of Religion.

1. *Dulneſs is not ſuitable to the great things we are chiefly to beg for.* Goſpel-diſcoveries are a Feaſt, *Iſa.* 25. 6. Dulneſs becomes not ſuch a Solemnity. Manna muſt not be ſought for with a dumpiſh Heart. With Joy we are to draw Water out of the Wells of Salvation, *Iſa.* 12. 3. Faith is the Bucket, but Joy and Love are the hands that move it. They are the *Hur* and *Aaron* that hold up the hands of this *Moſes*. God doth not value that Man's Service, who accounts not his Service a priviledge and a pleaſure.

2. *Dulneſs is not ſuitable to the Duty.* Goſpel-duties are to be performed with a Goſpel-temper. God's People ought to be a willing People, *Pſal.* 110. 3. נדבות, a People of Willingneſs: As tho' in Prayer no other faculty of the Soul had its exerciſe but the Will. This muſt breathe fully in every word; as the Spirit in *Ezekiel*'s Wheels. Delight, like the Angel *, muſt aſcend in the ſmoke and flame of the Soul. Though there be a kind of union by Contemplation, yet the real union is by Affection. A Man cannot be ſaid to be a ſpiritual King, if he doth not preſent his performances with a Royal and Prince-like Spirit. 'Tis for vigorous wreſtling that *Jacob* is called a Prince, *Gen.* 32. 28.

* Judg. 30. 20.

This Temper is eſſential to Grace. Natural Men are deſcribed to be of a heavy and weary Temper in the offering of Sacrifices, *Mal.* 1. 13. It was but a ſickly, lame Lamb they brought for an Offering, and yet weary of it; that which was not fit for their Table, they thought fit for the Altar.

In the handling this Doctrine I ſhall ſhew,

1. *What this Delight is.*
2. *Whence it ſprings.*
3. *The reaſons of the Doctrine.*
4. *The Uſe.*

1. *What this Delight is.* Delight properly is an affection of the Mind that ſprings from the poſſeſſion of a Good which hath been ardently deſired. This is the top Stone, the higheſt Step, Delight is but an *Embryo* till it come to fruition, and that certain and immutable: Otherwiſe, if there be probability or poſſibility of loſing that which we have preſent poſſeſſion of, the fear of it is as a drop of Gall that infects the ſweetneſs of this Paſſion; Delight properly is a ſilencing of Deſire, and the Banquet of the Soul on the preſence of its deſired Object.

But there is a Delight of a lower ſtamp.

1. *In Deſires.* There is a delight in Deſire, as well as in fruition. A chearfulneſs in Labour, as well as in Attainment. The deſire of *Canaan* made the good *Iſraelites* chearful in the Wilderneſs. There is an inchoate delight in Motion, but a conſummate delight in Reſt and Fruition.

2. *In hopes.* Deſired happineſs affects the Soul; much more expected happineſs, *Rom.* 5. 2. *We rejoyce in the hope of the glory of God.* Joy is the natural iſſue of a well-grounded Hope. A tottering Expectation will engender but a tottering Delight: Such a delight will Mad-men have, which is rather to be pitied than deſired. But if an imaginary Hope can affect the Heart with ſome real Joy, much more a Hope ſettled upon a ſure bottom, and raiſed upon a good Foundation, there may be joy in a Title as well as in Poſſeſſion.

3. *In Contemplation.* The conſideration and ſerious thoughts of Heaven do affect a gracious Heart, and fill it with Pleaſure, tho' it ſelf be as if in a Wilderneſs. The near approach to a deſired Good doth much affect the Heart. *Moſes* was ſurely more pleaſed with the ſight of *Canaan* from *Piſgah*, than with the hopes of it in the Deſert. A Travellers Delight is more raiſed when he is neareſt his Journeys end, and a hungry Stomach hath a greater Joy when he ſees the Meat approaching which muſt ſatisfie the Appetite. As the Union with the Object is nearer, ſo the Delight is ſtronger. Now this Delight the Soul hath in Duty, is not a delight of Fruition, but of Deſire, Hope, or Contemplation; *Gaudium viæ*, not *Patriæ*.

1. We may conſider Delight as *Active* or *Paſſive*.

1. *Active*, which is an act of our Souls in our approaches to God. When the Heart, like the Sun, rouzeth up it ſelf as a Gyant to run a ſpiritual Race.

2. *Paſſive.* Which is God's diſpenſation in approaches to us, and often met with in our chearful addreſſes to God, *Iſa.* 64. 5. *Thou meeteſt him that rejoiceth and works righteouſneſs.* When we delightfully claſp about the Throne of Grace, God doth often caſt his Arms about our Necks: Eſpecially when chearful Prayer is accompanied with a chearful Obedience. This Joy is, when Chriſt meets us in Prayer with a *be of good cheer, thy ſins are forgiven*, thy Requeſt granted. The active delight is the health of the Soul, the paſſive is the good complexion of the Soul. The one is Man's Duty, the other God's peculiar Gift. The one is the inſeparable property of the new Birth, the other a ſeparable priviledge. There may be a joy in God, when there is little joy from God. *There may be Gold in the Mine, when no Flowers on the ſurface.*

2. We may conſider Delight as ſettled or tranſient: As Spiritual or Senſitive.

1. *A ſettled Delight.* In ſtrong and grown Chriſtians, when Prayer proceeds out of a thankfulneſs to God, a judicious knowledge and apprehenſion of God. The nearer to God the more Delight: As the motion of a Stone is moſt ſpeedy when neareſt its Center.

2. *A Senſitive Delight.* As in Perſons troubled in Mind, there may be a kind of delight in Prayer, becauſe there is ſome ſenſe of eaſe in the very venting it ſelf; And in ſome, becauſe of the novelty of a Duty they were not accuſtom'd to before. Many Prayers may be put up by Perſons in neceſſity, without any ſpiritual Delight in them; As crazy Perſons take more Phyſick than thoſe that are healthful, and obſerve the Spring and Fall, yet they delight not in that Phyſick. The Phariſee could pray longer, and perhaps with ſome delight too, but upon a ſenſual Ground, with a proud

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and a vaunting kind of Chearfulneſs; a delight in himſelf; when the Publican had a more ſpiritual Delight; though a humble Sorrow in the conſideration of his own vileneſs, yet a Delight in the conſideration of God's Mercy. This ſenſitive Delight may be more ſenſible in a young, than in a grown Chriſtian. There is a more ſenſible Affection at the firſt meeting of Friends, though more ſolid after ſome Converſe; as there is a love which is called the *love of* the *Eſpouſals*. As it is in ſorrow for ſin, ſo in this Delight: A young Convert hath a greater Torrent, a grown Chriſtian a more conſtant Stream; As at the firſt Converſion of a Sinner there is an overflowing joy among the Angels, which we read not of after, though without queſtion there is a ſettled Joy in them at the growth of a Chriſtian. An elder Son may have a delight in his Father's Preſence more rooted, firm, and rational, than a younger Child that clings more about him with affectionate Expreſſions. As ſincerity is the Soul of all Graces and Duties, ſo this Delight is the luſtre and embroidery of them.

Now this Delight in Prayer,

1. *Tis an inward and hearty Delight.* As to the Subject of it, it is ſeated in the Heart. A Man in Prayer may have a chearful Countenance and a drowſie Spirit. The Spirit of God dwells in the Heart, and Love and Joy are the firſt-fruits of it, *Gal.* 5. 22. Love to Duty, and Joy in it; Joy as a Grace, not as a meer Comfort. As God is hearty in offering Mercy, ſo is the Soul in petitioning for it. There is a harmony between God and the Heart. Where there is Delight, there is great pains taken with the Heart; a gracious Heart ſtrikes it ſelf again and again; as *Moſes* did the Rock twice. Thoſe ends which God hath in giving, are a Chriſtians ends in asking. Now the more of our Hearts in the Requeſts, the more of God's Heart in the Grants. The Emphaſis of Mercy is *God's whole Heart* and *whole Soul* in it, *Jer.* 22. 41. So the Emphaſis of Duty is our whole Heart and whole Soul. As without God's chearful anſwering, a gracious Soul would not reliſh a Mercy, ſo without our hearty asking God doth not reliſh our Prayer.

2. *'Tis a delight in God, who is the Object of Prayer.* The glory of God, communion with him, enjoyment of him is the great end of a Believer in his Supplications. That delight which is in Prayer, is chiefly in it as a means conducing to ſuch an end, and is but a ſpark of that Delight which the Soul hath in the object of Prayer. God is the Center wherein the Soul reſts, and the End which the Soul aims at. According to our apprehenſions of God are our deſires for him; when we apprehend him as the chiefeſt Good, we ſhall deſire him, and delight in him, as the chiefeſt Good. There muſt firſt be a delight in God, before there can be a ſpiritual delight, or a permanency in Duty, *Job* 27. 10. *Will he delight himſelf in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?* Delight is a Grace; and as Faith, Deſire, and Love, have God for their Object, ſo hath this. And according to the ſtrength of our delight in the Object or End, is the ſtrength of our delight in the means of Attainment. When we delight in God as glorious, we ſhall delight to honour him; when we regard him as Good, we ſhall delight to purſue and enjoy him, and delight in that which brings us to an intercourſe with him. He that rejoyces in God, will rejoyce in every approach to him. *The joy of the Lord is our ſtrength*, Neh. 8. 10. The more Joy in God, the more Strength to come to him. The want of this is the reaſon of our Snail-like motion to him. Men have no ſweet thoughts of God, and therefore no mind to converſe with him. We cannot judge our delight in Prayer to be right, if we have not a delight in God; for natural Men may have a delight in Prayer, when they have corrupt and ſelfiſh Ends; they may have a delight in a Duty, as it is a means, according to their Apprehenſions, to gain ſuch an end: As *Balaam* and *Balak* offered their Sacrifice chearfully, hoping to ingratiate themſelves with God, and to have liberty to curſe his People.

3. *A delight in the Precepts and Promiſes of God, which are the ground and rules of Prayer.* Firſt, *David* delights in God's Teſtimonies, and then calls upon him with his whole Heart. A gracious Heart muſt firſt delight in Precepts and Promiſes, before it can turn them into Prayers: For Prayer is nothing elſe but a preſenting God with his own Promiſe, deſiring to work that in us and for us, which he hath promiſed to us. None was more chearful in Prayer than *David*, becauſe none was more rejoycing in the Statutes of God. God's Statutes were his *Songs*, *Pſal.* 119. 54. And the divine Word was ſweeter to him than the Honey and Honey-comb. If our Hearts leap not at divine Promiſes, we are like to have but drowſie Souls in deſiring them. If our Eye be not upon the dainties God ſets before us, our Deſires cannot be ſtrong for him. If we have no delight in the great Charters of Heaven, the rich Legacies of God, how can we ſue for them? If we delight not in the Covenant of Grace, we ſhall not delight in Prayers for Grace. It was the hopes of Reward made *Moſes* ſo valiant in Suffering, and the joy ſet before Chriſt in a Promiſe, made him ſo chearful in enduring the Shame, *Heb.* 12. 1, 2.

4. *A delight in Prayer it ſelf.* A Chriſtians Heart is in ſecret raviſh'd into Heaven. There is a delight in coming near God, and warming the Soul by the fire of his Love: The Angels are chearful in the act of Praiſe, their work is their Glory. A holy Soul doth ſo delight in this Duty, that if there were no Command to engage him, no Promiſe to encourage him, he would be ſtepping into God's Courts. He thinks it not a good Day, that paſſeth without ſome intercourſe with God. *David* would have taken up his Lodgings in the Courts of God, and regards it as the only Bleſſedneſs, *Pſalm* 65. 4. And ſo great a delight he had in being in God's Preſence, that he envies the Birds the happineſs of building their Neſts near his Tabernacle. A delight there is in the holineſs of Prayer; a natural Man under ſome Troubles may delight in God's comforting and eaſing Preſence, but not in his ſanctifying Preſence. He may delight to pray to God as a Store-houſe to ſupply his Wants, but not as a Refiners Fire to purge away his Droſs. Prayer, as Praiſe, is a melody to God in the Heart, *Eph.* 5. 19. And the Soul loves to be fingring the Inſtrument and touching the Strings.

5. *A delight in the things askt.* This heavenly Chearfulneſs is moſt in heavenly things. What delight others have in asking worldly Goods, that a gracious Heart hath in begging the Light of God's Countenance. That Soul cannot be dull in Prayer, that ſeriouſly conſiders he prays for no leſs than Heaven and Happineſs; no leſs than the Glory of the great God. A gracious Man is never weary of ſpiritual things, as Men are never weary of the Sun, but though it is enjoy'd every day, yet long for the riſing of it again. From this delight in the matter of Prayer it is, that the Saints have redoubl'd and repeated their Petitions, and often double the *Amen* at the end of Prayer, to manifeſt the great Affections to thoſe

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things they have askt. The Soul loves to think of thoſe things the Heart is ſet upon; and frequent Thoughts expreſs a Delight.

6. *A Delight in thoſe Graces and Affections which are exerciſed in Prayer.* A gracious Heart is moſt delighted with that Prayer wherein Grace hath been more ſtirring, and gracious Affections have been boiling over. The Soul deſires not only to ſpeak to God, but to make Melody to God; the Heart is the Inſtrument, but Graces are the Strings, and Prayer the touching them, and therefore he is more diſpleaſed with the flagging of his Graces than with miſſing an Anſwer. There may be a delight in Gifts, in a Man's own Gifts, in the Gifts of another, in the Pomp and Varniſh of Devotion; but a delight in exerciſing ſpiritual Graces is an Ingredient in this true Delight. The *Phariſees* are markt by Chriſt to make *long Prayers*, vaunting in an outward bravery of Words, as if they were playing the Courtiers with God, and complementing him: But the *Publican* had a ſhort Prayer, but more Grace, *Lord be merciful to me a Sinner*; There is Reliance and Humility; A gracious Heart labours to bring flaming Affections; and if he cannot bring flaming Grace, he will bring ſmoking Grace: he deſires the preparation of his Heart as well as the anſwer of his Prayer, *Pſal.* 10. 17.

2. *Whence this Delight ſprings.*

1. *From the Spirit of God.* Not a Spark of Fire upon our own Hearth, that is able to kindle this ſpiritual Delight; 'Tis the Holy Ghoſt that breaths ſuch a heavenly Heat into our Affections. The Spirit is the Fire that kindles the Soul, the Spring that moves the Watch, the Wind that drives the Ship. The ſwifteſt Ship with ſpread Sails will be but ſluggiſh in its Motion, unleſs the Wind fills its Sails; without this Spirit we are but in a weak and ſickly condition, our Breath but ſhort, a heavy and troubleſome Aſthma is upon us, *Pſal.* 138. 3. When I cry'd unto thee, thou didſt *ſtrengthen me with ſtrength in my Soul.* As Prayer is the work of the Spirit in the Heart, ſo doth Delight in Prayer owe it ſelf to the ſame Author. God will make them joyful in his Houſe of Prayer, *Iſa.* 56. 7.

2. *From Grace.* The Spirit kindles, but gives us the Oil of Grace to make the Lamp burn clear. There muſt not only be Wind to drive, but Sails to catch it; a Prayer without Grace is a Prayer without Wings. There muſt be *Grace to begin it.* A dead Man cannot rejoyce in his Land, Money, or Food, he cannot act, and therefore cannot be chearful in action: Chearfulneſs ſuppoſeth Life: dead Men cannot perform a Duty, (*Pſal.* 115. 17. *The dead praiſe not the Lord*) nor dead Souls a chearful Duty. There muſt not only be Grace infuſed, but *Grace actuated.* No Man in a Sleep or Swoon can rejoyce. There muſt not only be a living Principle, but a lively Operation. If the Sap lurk only in the Root, the Branches can bring forth no Fruit: Our beſt Prayers without the Sap of Grace diffuſing it ſelf, will be but as withered Branches. Grace actuated puts Heat into performances, without which they are but benumm'd and frozen *. Ruſty Grace, as a ruſty Key, will not unlock, will not enlarge the Heart. There muſt be *Grace to maintain it.* There is not only need of Fire to kindle the Lamp, but of Oil to preſerve the Flame: Natural Men may have their Affections kindled in a way of common working, but they will preſently faint and die, as the Flame of Cotton will dim and vaniſh if there be no Oil to nouriſh it. There is a temporary Joy in hearing the Word; and if in one Duty, why not in another? why not in Prayer? *Mat.* 13. 20. Like a Fire of Thorns that makes a great blaze, but a ſhort ſtay.

* *Reynolds.*

3. *From a good Conſcience.* A good Heart is a continual Feaſt, *Prov.* 15. 15. He that hath a good Conſcience muſt needs be chearful in his religious and civil Duties. Guilt will come trembling and with a ſad Countenance into the Preſence of God's Majeſty. A guilty Child cannot with chearfulneſs come into a diſpleaſed Father's Preſence. A Soul ſmoakt with Hell cannot with delight approach to Heaven. Guilty Souls in regard of the injury they have done to God, will be afraid to come; and in regard of the Soot of Sin wherewith they are defiled, and the blackneſs they have contracted, they will be aſham'd to come. They know that by their Sins they ſhould provoke his Anger, not allure his Love. A Soul under conſcience of Sin cannot look up to God, *Pſal.* 40. 12. Nor will God with favour look down upon it, *Pſal.* 59. 2. It muſt be a pure Heart that muſt ſee him with pleaſure, *Mat.* 5. 8. And pure Hands muſt be lifted up to him, 1 *Tim.* 2. 8. *Jonah* was aſleep after his Sin, and was out-ſtript in quickneſs to pray, even by Idolaters. The Mariners jogg him, but could not get him, that we read of, to call upon that God whom he had offended, *Jon.* 1. Where there is Corruption, the Sparks of Sin will kindle that Tinder, and weaken a ſpiritual Delight. A *perfect Heart* and a *willing Mind* are put together, 1 *Chron.* 29. 2. There cannot be willingneſs without ſincerity, nor ſincerity without willingneſs.

4. *From a holy and frequent Familiarity with God.* Where there is a great Familiarity there is a great Delight; delight in one anothers Company, and delight in one anothers Converſe; Strangeneſs contracts, and Familiarity dilates the Soul. There is more alacrity in going to a God with whom we are acquainted, than to a God to whom we are Strangers. This doth encourage the Soul to go to God; I go to a God whoſe Face I have ſeen, whoſe Goodneſs I have taſted, with whom I have often met in Prayer. Frequent Familiarity makes us more apprehenſive of the Excellency of another; an Excellency apprehended will be belov'd, and being belov'd, will be delighted in.

5. *From hopes of ſpeeding.* There is an expectative Delight which ariſeth from hopes of enjoying, *Rom.* 12. 12. *Rejoycing in hope.* There cannot be a pleaſant Motion where there is a Palſie of Doubts. How full of Delight muſt that Soul be, that can plead a Promiſe, and carry God's Hand and Seal to Heaven, and ſhew him his own Bond; when it can be pleaded not only as a Favour to engage his Mercy, but in ſome ſenſe a Debt to engage his Truth and Righteouſneſs! Chriſt in his Prayer, which was his Swan-like Song, *John* 17. pleads the Terms of the Covenant between his Father and himſelf; *I have glorified thee on Earth, glorifie me with that Glory I had with thee before the World was.* This is the Caſe of a delightful Approach, when we carry a Covenant of Grace with us for our ſelves, and a Promiſe of Security and Perpetuity for the Church. Upon this account we have more cauſe of a pleaſant Motion to God, than the ancient Believers had. Fear acted them under the Law, Love us under the Goſpel. He cannot but delight in Prayer that hath Arguments of God's own framing to plead with God, who cannot deny his own Arguments and Reaſonings. Little Comfort can be ſuckt from a *perhaps.* But when we come to ſeek Covenant-Mercies, God's Faithfulneſs to his Covenant puts the

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Mercy paſt a Perhaps. We come to a God ſitting upon a Throne of Grace, upon Mount *Sion*, not on Mount *Sinai*; to a God that deſires our Preſence, more than we deſire his Aſſiſtance.

6. *From a ſenſe of former Mercies and Acceptation.* If Manna be rained down, it doth not only take off our Thoughts from *Ægyptian* Garlick, but quickens our Deſires for a ſecond Shower. A ſenſe of God's Majeſty will make us loſe our gariſhneſs; and a ſenſe of God's Love will make us loſe our dumpiſhneſs. We may as well come again with a merry Heart, when God accepts our Prayers, as go away and eat our Bread with Joy when God accepts our Works, *Eccleſ.* 9. 7. The Doves will readily fly to the Windows, where they have formerly found ſhelter; and the Beggar to the Door where he hath often receiv'd an Alms. *Becauſe he hath inclined his Ear to hear me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live, Pſal.* 116. 2. I have found Refuge with God before; I have found my Wants ſupplied, my Soul raiſed, my Temptations check'd, my Doubts anſwered, and my Prayers accepted, therefore I will repeat my Addreſſes with chearfulneſs.

I might add alſo other Cauſes; as a love to God, a heavenlineſs of Spirit, a conſideration of Chriſt's Interceſſion, a deep Humiliation. The more unpleaſant Sin is to our Reliſh, the more delightful will God be, and the more chearful our Souls in Addreſſes to him. The more unpleaſant Sin is to us, the more ſpiritual our Souls are; and the more ſpiritual our Souls, the more ſpiritual our Affections: The more ſtony, the more lumpiſh and unapt for Motion; the more contrite, the more agil. From a ſpiritual Taſte; Report of a thing may contribute ſome Pleaſure, but a Taſte greater.

3. Reaſons. *Without chearful ſeeking we cannot have a gracious Anſwer.*

1. *God will not give an Anſwer to thoſe Prayers that diſhonour him.* A flat and dumpiſh Temper is not for his Honour. The Heathens themſelves thought their Gods ſhould not be put off with a Sacrifice dragg'd to the Altar. We read of no Lead, that lumpiſh earthly Metal, imploy'd about the Tabernacle or Temple, but the purer and moſt gliſtering ſorts of Metals. God will have the moſt excellent Service, becauſe he is the moſt excellent Being. He will have the moſt delightful Service, becauſe he beſtows the moſt delightful and excellent Gifts. All Sacrifices were to be offered up with Fire, which is the quickeſt and moſt active Element. 'Tis a diſhonour to ſo great, ſo glorious a Majeſty, to put him off with ſuch low and dead-hearted Services. Thoſe Petitions cannot expect an Anſwer, which are offered in a manner injurious to the Perſon we addreſs to. 'Tis not for the Credit of our great Maſter, to have his Servants dejected in his Work: As though his Service were an uncomfortable thing; as though God were a Wilderneſs, and the World a Paradiſe.

2. *Dull and lumpiſh Prayer doth not reach him, and therefore cannot expect an Anſwer.* Such Deſires are as Arrows that ſink down at our Feet; there is no Force to carry them to Heaven: The Heart is an unbent Bow, that hath no Strength. When God will hear, he makes firſt a prepared Heart, *Pſalm* 10. 17. He firſt ſtrings the Inſtrument, and then receives the Sound. An *enlarged Heart* only *runs*, *Pſalm* 119. 32. A contracted Heart moves ſlowly, and often faints in the Journey.

3. *Lumpiſhneſs ſpeaks an unwillingneſs that God ſhould hear us.* It ſpeaks a kind of a Fear that God ſhould grant our Petitions. He that puts up a Petition to a Prince coldly and dully, gives him good reaſon to think that he doth not care for an Anſwer. That Husbandman hath no great mind to Harveſt, that is lazy in tilling his Ground, and ſowing his Seed. How can we think God ſhould delight to read over our Petitions, when we take ſo little delight in preſenting them? God gives not Mercy to an unwilling Perſon. The firſt thing God doth is to make his People willing. Dull Spirits ſeek God as if they did not care for finding him: Such Tempers either account not God real, or their Petitions unneceſſary.

4. *Without Delight we are not fit to receive a Mercy.* Delight in a Mercy wanted makes room for Deſire; and large Deſires make room for Mercy. If no delight in begging, there will be no delight in enjoying. If there be no chearfulneſs to quicken our Prayers when we need a Bleſſing, there will be little joy to quicken our Praiſe when we receive a Bleſſing. A weak ſickly Stomack is not fit to be ſeated at a plentiful Table. Where there is a dull asking Supply, there is none, or a very dull ſenſe of Wants. Now God will not ſend his Mercies but to a Soul that will welcome them. The deeper the ſenſe of our Wants, the higher the eſtimation of our Supplies. A chearful Soul is fit to receive the leaſt, and fit to receive the greateſt Mercy. He will more prize a little Mercy than a dull Petitioner ſhall prize a greater, becauſe he hath a ſenſe of his Wants. Had not *Zacheus* had a great Joy at the News of Chriſt's coming by his Door, he had not ſo readily entertained and welcomed him.

Uſe 1. *Of Information.*

1. *There is a great Pleaſure in the ways of God, if rightly underſtood.* Prayer, which is a Duty wherein we expreſs our Wants, is delightful. There is more ſweetneſs in a Chriſtian's asking than in a wicked Man's enjoying Bleſſings.

2. *What Delight will there be in Heaven!* If there be ſuch ſweetneſs in Deſire, what will there be in a full Fruition! There is Joy in ſeeking, what is there then in finding! Duty hath its Sweets, its Thouſands, but Glory its Ten thouſands. If the Pleaſure of the Seed-time be ſo great, what will the Pleaſure of the Harveſt be!

3. *The miſerable Condition of thoſe who can delight in any thing but Prayer.* 'Tis an aggravation of our Enmity to God, when we can ſin chearfully, and pray dully: When Duty is more loathſome than Iniquity.

Uſe 2. *Of Examination.* We pray, but how are our Hearts? If it be for what concerns our momentary Being, is not our running like the running of *Ahimaaz*? But when for ſpiritual things, do not our Hearts ſink within us, like *Nabal's*? Let us therefore follow our Hearts cloſe, ſuffer them not to give us the ſlip in our examination of them, reſolve not to take the firſt Anſwer, but ſearch to the bottom.

1. *Whether we delight at all in Prayer?*

1. *How do we prize the Opportunities of Duty?* There is an Opportunity of an Earthly, and an Opportunity of a Heavenly Gain; Conſider which our Hearts more readily cloſe with. Can we with much Pleaſure follow a vain World, and heartleſly welcome an Opportunity of Duty, delight more with *Judas* in Bags, than in Chriſt's Company? This is ſad. But are praying Opportunities our feſtival times? Do we go to the

Houſe of God with the Voice of Joy and Praiſe?

2. *Whether we ſtudy Excuſes to waive a preſent Duty, when Conſcience and Opportunity urge and invite us to it?* Are our Souls more skilful in Delays than in Performances? Are there no Excuſes when Sin calls us, and ſtudy'd Put-offs when God invites us? Like the Sluggard, folding our Arms, yet a little while longer? Or do our Hearts riſe and beat quick againſt frivolous Excuſes that ſtep in to hinder us from Prayer?

3. *How are our Hearts affected in Prayer?* Are we more ready to pray our ſelves aſleep, than into a vigorous Frame? Do we enter into it with ſome Life, and find our Hearts quickly tire and jade us? Are we more awake when we are up, than we were all the time upon our Knees? Are our Hearts in Prayer like withered ſapleſs things, and very quick afterwards if any worldly Buſineſs invite us? Are we like Logs and Blocks in Prayer, and like a Roe upon the Mountains in earthly Concerns? Surely what our Pulſe beats quickeſt to, is the Object moſt delighted in.

4. *What time is it we chooſe for Prayer?* Is it not our drowzieſt lazieſt time, when our Nods are as many, or more than our Petitions; as though the dulleſt time, and the deadeſt frame were moſt ſuitable to a living God? Do we come with our Hearts full of the World to pray for Heaven? Or do we pick out the moſt lively Seaſons? *Luther* choſe thoſe Hours for Prayer and Meditation, wherein he found himſelf moſt lively for ſtudy.

5. *Do we not often wiſh a Duty over?* As thoſe in the Prophet that were glad when the Sabbath was over, that they might run to their buying and ſelling? Or, are we of *Peter*'s Temper, and expreſs *Peter*'s Language, *'Tis good to be here* with Chriſt on the Mount?

6. *Do we prepare our ſelves by delightful and enlivening Conſiderations?* Do we think of the Precept of God, which ſhould ſpur us, and of the Promiſe of God, which ſhould allure us? Do we rub our Souls to heat them? Do we blow them to kindle them into a Flame? Do we ſend up Ejaculations for a quickening Spirit? If Thoughts of God be a Burden, Requeſts to him will not be a Pleaſure. If we have a coldneſs in our Thoughts of God and Duty, we can have no warmth in our Deſire, no delight in our Petitions.

7. *Do we content our ſelves with dull Motions, or do we give Check to them?* Can we, though our Hearts be never ſo lazy, ſtroke our ſelves at the end, and call our ſelves good and faithful Servants? Do we take our Souls to task afterwards, and examine why they are ſo lazy, why ſo heavy? Do we enquire into the cauſes of our deadneſs? A gracious Soul is more troubled at its dulneſs in Prayer, than a natural Conſcience is at the omiſſion of Prayer. He will complain of his ſluggiſhneſs, and mend his pace.

2. If we find we have a Delight, let us examine *whether it be a Delight of the right kind.*

1. *Do we delight in it, becauſe of the Gifts we have our ſelves, or the Gifts of others we joyn with?* A Man may rejoyce in hearing the Word, not becauſe of the holineſs and ſpirituality of the Matter, but becauſe of the goodneſs of the Dreſs, and the elegancy of the Expreſſion, *Ezek.* 33. 32. The Prophet was unto them as a lovely Song, as one that had a pleaſant Voice. He may upon the ſame ground delight in Prayer. But this is a Temper not kindled by the true Fire of the Sanctuary. Or, do we delight in it, not when our Tongues are moſt quick, but our Hearts moſt warm; not becauſe we have the beſt Words, but the moſt ſpiritualiz'd Affections? We may have Angels Gifts in Prayer, without an Angels Spirit.

2. *Is there a Delight in all parts of a Duty?* Not only in asking temporal Bleſſings, or ſome ſpiritual, as pardoning Mercy, but in begging for refining Grace? Are we earneſt only when we have boſom Quarrels, and Conſcience-Convulſions, but flag when we come to pray for ſanctifying Mercy? The Riſe of this is a diſplicency with the Trouble and Danger, not with the Sin and Cauſe.

3. *Doth our Delight in Prayer, and ſpiritual things, out-do our Delight in outward things?* The Pſalmiſt's Joy in God was more than his Delight in the Harveſt or Vintage, *Pſal.* 4. 4. Are we like Ravens that delight to hover in the Air ſometimes, but our greateſt delight is to feed upon Carrion? Though we have, and may have a ſenſible Delight in worldly things, yet is it as ſolid and rational as that we have in duty?

4. *Is our Delight in Prayer an humble Delight?* Is it a Rejoycing with Humbling? *Pſal.* 2. 11. *Serve the Lord with gladneſs, and rejoyce before him with trembling.* If our Service be right, it will be chearful; and if truly chearful, it will be humble.

5. *Is our Delight in Prayer accompany'd with a Delight in Waiting?* Do we, like Merchants, not only delight in the firſt lanching of a Ship, or the ſetting it out of the Haven with a full Fraught, but alſo in expectations of a rich Return of ſpiritual Mercies? Do we delight to pray, though God for the preſent doth not delight to give, and wait like *David* with an owning God's Wiſdom in delaying? *Pſal.* 30. 6. Or do we ſhoot them only as Arrows at random, and never look after them where they light, or where to find them?

6. *Is our Delight in praiſing God when Mercy comes, anſwerable to the Delight in praying, when a wanted Mercy was begged?* The ten Lepers deſired Mercy with an equal Chearfulneſs, in hopes of having their Leproſie cured; but his Delight that returned only was genuine. As he prayed with a loud Voice, ſo he praiſed with a loud Voice, *Luke* 17. 13, 15. And Chriſt tells him, his Faith had made him whole. As he had an Anſwer in a way of Grace, ſo he had before a gracious Delight in his asking; the others had a natural Delight, and ſo a Return in a way of common Providence.

3. Uſe. *Of Exhortation. Let us delight in Prayer.* God loves a chearful Giver in Alms, and a chearful Petitioner in Prayer. God would have his Children free with him. He takes ſpecial notice of a ſpiritual Frame, *Jer.* 30. 21. *Who hath engaged his Heart?* The more Delight we have in God, the more Delight he will have in us. He takes no pleaſure in a lumpiſh Service. 'Tis an uncomely ſight to ſee a joyful Sinner and a dumpiſh Petitioner. Why ſhould we not exerciſe as much Joy in holy Duties, as formerly we did in ſinful Practiſes? How delightfully will Men ſit at their Games, and ſpend their days in Gluttony and Luxury? And ſhall not a Chriſtian find much more Delight in applying himſelf to God? We ſhould delight that we can, and have Hearts to ask ſuch Gifts, that thouſands in the World never dream of begging. To be dull is a Diſcontentedneſs with our own Petitions. Delight in Prayer is the way to gain Aſſurance. To ſeek God, and treat him as our chiefeſt Good, endears the Soul to him. Delighting in Acceſſes to him,

will

will enflame our Love. And there is no greater ſign of an Intereſt in him, than a prevalent Eſtimation of him. God caſts off none that affectionately claſp about his Throne.

To this purpoſe,

1. *Pray for quickening Grace.* How often do we find *David* upon his Knees for it? God only gives this Grace, and God only ſtirs this Grace.

2. *Meditate on the Promiſes you intend to plead.* Unbelief is the great Root of all Dumpiſhneſs. It was by the belief of the Word we had Life at firſt, and by an exerciſe of that Belief we gain livelineſs. What maintains our Love will maintain our Delight; the amiableneſs of God, and the excellency of the Promiſes, are the Incentives and Fuel both of the one and of the other. Think that they are eternal things you are to pray for, and that you have as much Invitation to beg them, and as good a Promiſe to attain them as *David*, *Paul*, or any other ever had. How would this awaken our drowſie Souls, and elevate our heavy Hearts, and open the lazy Eye-lids to look up! And whatever Meditation we find begin to kindle our Souls, let us follow it on, that the Spark may not go out.

3. *Chuſe the time when your Hearts are moſt revived.* Obſerve when God ſends an Invitation, and hoiſt up the Sails when the Wind begins to blow. There is no Chriſtian but hath one time or another a greater activeneſs of Spirit. Chuſe none of thoſe Seaſons which may quench the Heat, and dull the ſpritelineſs of your Affections. Reſolve before-hand this, To *delight* your ſelves *in the Lord, and* thereby you ſhall gain *the deſire of* your *Hearts.*

A

DISCOURSE

OF

Mourning for other Mens Sins.

Ezekiel 9. 4.

And the Lord ſaid unto him, Go thorow the midſt of the City, thorow the midſt of Jeruſalem, and ſet a Mark upon the Foreheads of the Men that ſigh, and that cry for all the Abominations that be done in the midſt thereof.

WHEN God in the *former Chapter* had charged the *Jews* with their *Idolatry*, and the multiplicity of Abominations committed in his Temple; and *v.* 18. had paſt a Reſolve that he would not ſpare them, but deal in Fury with them, though they ſhould ſolicit him with the ſtrongeſt and moſt importunate Supplications; In *this Chapter* he calls and commiſſions the Executioners of his juſt Decree. *Ver.* 1. *He cryed alſo in mine Ears with a loud Voice, ſaying, Cauſe them that have charge over the City to draw near, even every Man with his deſtroying Weapon in his Hand.* And declares whom, and in what manner he would puniſh, and whom he would pardon. The Executioners of God's Vengeance are the *Chaldeans*, deſcribed by the ſituation of them from *Judea*, and the direct Road from that Country to *Jeruſalem*, *v.* 2. *Six Men came from the way of the higher Gate, which lies towards the North. Babylon* lay North-Eaſt from *Jeruſalem*; and this Gate was the Way of Entrance for Travellers from thoſe Parts; it led alſo into the Court of the Prieſts, which ſhews from whence the Judgment ſhould come, and upon whom it ſhould light.

Six Men] A certain number. Whether the Holy Ghoſt alludes to a particular number of Nations, which the *Chaldean* Army might be compoſed of under their Prince, who reign'd over ſeveral Countries; or reſpects the other chief Captains or Marſhals of his Army which are *nam'd*, *Jer.* 39. 3. or ſpeaks with reference to the other places wherein the City was aſſaulted by that Army, as ſome think, is uncertain.

And every Man a Slaughter-Weapon in his Hand.] A Hammer of Deſtruction, an Inſtrument of Death; the Word ſeems to ſignifie a Weapon much like a Pole-Ax.

And one of them clothed with Linnen, with a Writers Ink-horn by his ſide.] Chriſt, ſay the Ancients, (and ſo they underſtood it before, and in *Hierom's* time) who appears here in his Prieſtly Habit; a *Linnen Garment* being the Veſtment of the Prieſts, *Levit.* 16. 4. White is an Emblem of Peace. Chriſt ſeals his People with his Spirit, the Spirit of Peace. *Calvin* rejects not this Interpretation, but rather underſtands it of an Angel whom God commiſſioned to ſecure his People in this deſtroying Judgment. And indeed Angels have often appear'd in the form of Men, and clothed with Linnen, as to *Daniel*, *Dan.* 10. 5. *Dan.* 12. 6, 7. Chriſt's Royal Power is founded upon his Prieſtly Office, which is the ground of all the ſpiritual and temporal Salvation Believers have from God.

Ink-horn.] The Word is ſo tranſlated. Though the Word, ſay ſome, ſignifies a *Table*, ſuch as they then uſed to write upon with a Pen of Iron. Or rather it ſignifies a Caſe to put thoſe Pens in wherewith they wrote.

And they went and ſtood beſides the Brazen Altar.] 'Tis uncertain whether this reſpects the original Cauſe of their Puniſhment, *viz.* Their offering

Sacrifices to their Idols upon that Altar which was conſecrated to the Service of God: Or elſe reſpects the Sacrifices of Vengeance; thoſe were inſtrumentally to offer to God's Juſtice. The Judicial Puniſhment of God's Enemies is called a Sacrifice in Scripture, *Iſa.* 34. 6. *A Sacrifice in Bozrah, Jer.* 46. 10. *God's Day of Vengeance* is called *God's Sacrifice in the North Country.*

Obſerve, 1. *With what a ſmall number if God pleaſe, can he deſtroy a City or Nation?* But Six mentioned. Almightineſs needs not great Numbers to effect his Will; no, not a Man, ſince he can do it by his immediate Hand, and command Judgment in a trice.

2. *How quick are God's Creatures to obey his Call for the Puniſhment of a rebellious People?* He calls thoſe *Six Men*, and they preſently appear ready to execute God's Pleaſure.

3. *God doth not bring Judgments on a People, till their Wickedneſs hath overgrown the Goodneſs of his own Children.* Six to deſtroy, But One to preſerve. A Sixfold work of Judgment to one of Preſervation, intimating that there were Six bad to One good in the City.

4. *The Security of God's People in this World, as well as that to come, depends upon the Prieſtly Office of Chriſt.*

V. 3. *And the Glory of the God of Iſrael was gone up from the Cherub whereupon he was, to the Threſhold of the Houſe.*] The Glory of God, which was in the Propitiatory above the *Cherubims*, went from one *Cherub* to another, till it came to the Threſhold; as Birds that are leaving their Neſts leap from one Branch to another till they fly quite away.

Obſerve, 1. *God is not fixed to any one Place.* He hath his Temple among his People, diſcovers himſelf in his Ordinances, but upon Provocations departs. The Glory of God, and his Ordinances, are not entayl'd upon any Nation longer than they walk worthy of them,

2. *The Glory of God's Ordinances is obſcured among a People, before Judgments come upon them.* The *Glory of God went up from the Cherub. I will take away the Hedge of my Vineyard, and it ſhall be eaten up, and break down the Wall thereof, and it ſhall be trodden down, Iſa.* 5. 5. The Ordinances of God are underſtood by ſome Interpreters to be the Hedge and Wall of a People; when God takes away the Hedge, the Breach is made wide for every wild Beaſt to enter, and tread it down. The Preſence of God in his Ordinances, the Preſence of God in his Providences is the Hedge of a People. The *Temple* is forſaken by God, and then polluted, in Judgment, by Men, *v.* 7. God then comes to the Man clothed with Linnen, that had the Writers Inkhorn by his Side, and ſaid unto him, *Go thorow the midſt of Jeruſalem, and ſet a Mark upon the Foreheads of the Men that ſigh, and that cry for all the Abominations that be done in the midſt thereof, v.* 4. And *v.* 5. he commands the Executioners of his Wrath to go after him, and *ſmite* without any pity *both ſmall and great, beginning at his Sanctuary.* תו. *Interpreters* trouble themſelves much what this Mark ſhould be, and tells us from *Origen*, that a believing *Jew* told him the ancient *Samaritan* Letter called *Tau* was written like a Croſs. But that is a Fancy, the ancient *Samaritan* Letter being the ſame with the *Phœnician*, was not writ in that form. * Some ſay it was the Law, becauſe the *Hebrew* Word תורה ſignifying the Law, begins with that Letter, to ſhew that ſuch were to be marked that were devoted to the Obſervance of the Law. Markt they were, ſaith *Calvin*, with a *Tau*, becauſe that being the laſt Letter in the Alphabet, ſhews that the People of God are of the loweſt account among Men, and the Off-ſcouring of the World, ת being the firſt Letter of תחיה *vives*, noted the Preſervation of them. *On the Foreheads* *.] * Alluding to the Cuſtom of the Eaſtern Countries, to mark their Servants on the Foreheads with the Names of their Maſters. * Not on their viſible Foreheads, but on their inviſible Conſciences; the Conſcience is the Forehead of the Soul; as eminent in the Heart as a Forehead in the Body.

* Vossius de arte Grammat. *l.* 1. *c.*

* *Grotius.*

* *Oecolampad.*

The Blood of Chriſt upon the Conſcience is the beſt Mark of Diſtinction, as the Blood of the Paſchal Lamb upon the Poſts was the Mark whereby the *Iſraelites* were diſcerned from the *Ægyptians*, and the Edge of the Angel's deſtroying Sword diverted from them. It was a Mark of a ſpecial Providence of God. The deſtroying Judgments were to follow the Sealing Angel, and not touch thoſe that were mark'd by him on the Forehead.

Obſerve 1. *All Judgments have their Commiſſions from God, whom to touch, whom to overthrow.* God doth not ſtrike at random. The Man in the Linnen Garment was to bridle the *Chaldeans*, and direct their Swords to the right Objects. God overpowers the natural Inclinations of all his Creatures, whom he appoints Executioners. God hath a Hook in the Noſtrils of *Leviathan*; nothing can be done without the leave of Providence; Man forms the Weapons, God gives the Edge, and directs the Stroak.

2. *In the higheſt Fury and Vengeance, God hath Reſerves of Mercy for his own People.* Angels are appointed to be Preſervers of his Children in the midſt of the deſtroying of a People. Inviſible Angels are joyned with viſible Enemies, to conduct and govern their Motions according to the Command of their great General. God's Judgments are diſpenſed with greater Kindneſs to his People, than deſires to take Vengeance upon his Enemies. He hath a Heart of Mercy as well as a Hand of Juſtice.

3. *God is more careful of his People than revengeful againſt his Enemies.* He firſt orders the ſealing of the Mourners, before he orders the deſtruction of the Rebels; he will firſt honour his Mercy in the protection of the one, before he will glorifie his Juſtice in the deſtruction of the other. The Angel hath orders to ſecure *Lot* before *Sodom* was fir'd. The Executioners of his Wrath were to march after the ſecuring Angel, not before him, nor equal with him: And were only to cut off thoſe whom the Angel had paſſed by.

4. If you take this Mark for a Mark on the Conſcience, then obſerve, *That Serenity of Conſcience is a Gift of God to his People in the time of ſevere Judgments.* As when Death is near, the Conſcience of a good Man is moſt ſerene, and ſings ſweetly in his Breaſt the Notes of his own Integrity. In Judgments as well as in Death, God ſets Conſcience upon its pleaſant Notes. But this Mark is not properly meant here; the Conſcience is a Mark to our ſelves, but this is a Mark to the Executioners.

5. *The places where God hath manifeſted the Glory of his Ordinances, are the Subjects of his greateſt Judgments upon their Provocations. Go through the City, through Jeruſalem:* That *Jeruſalem* wherein I have manifeſted my Glory, which I have intruſted with my Oracles, which I have protected in the midſt of Enemies, like a Spark in the midſt of many Waters. Go thorow that City into the midſt of it, and let not your Eye ſpare.

6. *The*

6. *The greatest Fury of God in a time of Judgment often lights upon the Sanctuary*, v. 6. *Begin at the Sanctuary, defile the House.* Not a Man of them escaped as *Oecolampad* notes. v. 7. *I was left:* He saw not in the Vision what was done in the City, but he was left alone in the Temple. The whole *Sanhedrim*, the 70 Ancients had revolted to Idolatry, *Ezek.* 8. 11. and the Stroke first lights upon them, v. 6. *Then they began at the Ancient Men which were before the House.*

In the v. *observe,*

1. *God's Care in the preserving his People.* He commands the Angel to go thorow the midst of the City, and set a Mark, a visible Mark upon their Foreheads.

2. *The Qualification of the Persons so preserved.* He doth not say, All that have not committed Idolatry, but such as *sigh*; which signifies,

1. *The intenseness of their Grief.* [*Sigh and cry*, נאק, notes an intense groaning and sorrow.

2. *The extensiveness of the Object.* [*All the Abominations.*

Doctrine. *Lamenting the Sins of the Times and Places wherein we live, is a Duty incumbent on us, acceptable to God, and a great means of Preservation under Publick Judgments.*

There are Three Branches.

1. *'Tis a Duty.*

2. *A Duty acceptable to God.* God has his Eye particularly upon them that practice it.

3. *'Tis a means of Preservation under Publick Judgments.*

1. *'Tis a Duty.* If we are by the *Præscript* of God to bewail in Confession the Sins of our Forefathers, committed before our being in the World, certainly much more are we to lament the Sins of the Age wherein we live, as well as our own, *Levit.* 26. 40. *If they shall confess their Iniquity, and the Iniquity of their Fathers. If then their uncircumcised Hearts be humbled, then will I remember my Covenant.* Posterity are part of the same Body with their Ancestors, and every Member in a Nation is part of the Body of a Nation; every Drop in the Sea is a part of the Ocean. God made a standing Law for an annual Fast, wherein they should afflict their Souls, the *tenth day of the seventh month*, answering to our *September*, and backed it with a severe Penalty. *He whose Soul was not afflicted in that day, should be cut off from among his People*; which the *Jews* understand of *cutting off by the Hand of the Lord, Levit.* 23. 27, 29. The particular Sin for which they were thus annually to afflict their Souls, was that National Sin of the Golden Calf, in the judgment of the *Jewish* Doctors.

It was also the practice of Holy Men in their private Retirements; as *Daniel*, *Dan.* 9. 5, 6. He bewails the Sins of his Ancestors; and *Nehemiah*, *Neh.* 1. 6. Much more it is our Duty to bewail a present Guilt. The Churches Eyes are compared to the *Fish-pools of Heshbon*, *Cant.* 7. 4. in her weeping for her own, and others Sins. To what purpose has God given us Passions, but to honour him withal? And our Affections of Grief and Anger cannot be better employ'd than for the Interest, nor better bestow'd than for the Service of him, who implanted those Passions in us. Our Natural Motions should be ordered for the God of Nature, and Spiritual ordered for the God of Grace.

1. *This was the Practice of Believers in all Ages.* Before the Deluge *Seth* called the Name of his Son, which was born at the time of the profaning the Name of God in worship, *Enosh*, which signifies *sorrowful*, or miserable; that he might in the sight of his Son have a constant Monitor to excite him to an holy Grief for the Profaneness and Idolatry that entred into the Worship of God, *Gen.* 4. 26. *He called his Name Enos, then began Men to call upon the Name of the Lord*, חוחל, *profane it by calling upon it.* *Brought on Lives of the Fathers, p. 7. Grot. in loc.*

The rational and most precious part of *Lot* was vexed with the unlawful Deeds of the Generation of *Sodom*, among whom he lived, 2 *Pet.* 2. 7, 8. he had a Horrour and Torment in his righteous Soul at the execrable Villanies he saw committed by his Neighbours, καταπονούμενον afflicted under it, as under a grievous Burden. It was a rack to him, as the other Word, *v.* 8. ἐβασάνιζεν signifies. The meekest Man upon Earth, with Grief and Indignation breaks the Tables of the Law, when he saw the Holiness of it broken by the *Israelites*, and expresseth more his Regret for that, than his Honour for the material Stones, wherein God had with his own Finger engraven the Orders of his Will. He is more desirous to destroy the Idol, than preserve the Tables: Such an Indignation against their Sin could not well be without Grief for it. *David*, a Man of the greatest Goodness upon Record, had a Deluge of Tears, *because they kept not God's Law*, *Psal.* 119. 136. *Rivers of Waters run down mine Eyes, because they keep not thy Law.* Besides, his Grief, which was not a small one, *Horrour* seiz'd him upon the same account, *Psal.* 119. 53. like a Storm that tost him to and fro. How doth poor *Isaiah* bewail himself, and the People among whom he liv'd, as *Men of polluted Lips? Isa.* 6. 5. Perhaps such as could hardly speak a Word without an Oath, or by hypocritical Lip-service, mocked God in the very Temple.

Jeremy is upon the same practice, *Jer.* 13. 17. when his Soul should *weep in secret for the Pride* of the People, and, as if he were not satisfy'd with a few Tears, wisheth his *Head* were a full springing *Fountain* to weep for the slain of the Daughter of his People; for the Sin the Cause, as well as the Calamity the Effect, *Jer.* 9. 1. He wishes his Head to be filled with the Vapours from his Heart, and become a Fountain.

What a transport of Sorrow had *Ezra* when he heard of the Peoples Sins, and the mingling the holy Seed with that of Idolaters! A Horrour run thorow his whole Soul; his *Astonishment* is twice repeated, *Ezra* 9. 3, 4. Every Faculty was alarm'd at the Sin of the People.

'Tis probable *John Baptist* used himself to those Severities which are mentioned, *Mat.* 3. 4. because of the sinfulness of that Generation among whom he lived.

Paul discovers it to be a Duty, when he reproves the *Corinthians* for being puft up, instead of mourning for that *Fornication* which had been committed by one of their Profession, 1 *Cor.* 5. 2. And when he writes of some that made the glorious Gospel subservient to their own *Bellies*, he mixes his Tears with his Ink, *Phil.* 3. 18, 19. *I tell you weeping, they are Enemies to the Cross of Christ.* The Primitive Christians did much bewail the Lapses of their Fellows. *Celerinus*, among the Epistles of *Cyprian*, acquaints *Lucian* of his great Grief for the Apostacy of a Woman, through fear of Persecution, which afflicted him so, that in the time of *Easter*, the time of their Joy in that Age, he wept Night and Day, and was resolved

solved that no Delight should enter into his Heart, till through the Mercy of Christ she should be recovered to the Church. And we find *the Witnesses clothed in Sackcloth*, when they prophesied in a sinful time, to shew their Grief for the publick Abominations, *Rev.* 11. 3. The Kingdom of *Satan* can be no pleasure to a Christian, and must therefore be a torment.

2. *It was our Saviour's Practice.* As he had the highest Love to God, so he must needs have the greatest Grief for his Dishonour. *He sighed in his Spirit* for the Incredulity of that Generation, when they asked a *Sign*, after so many had been presented to their Eyes, *Mark* 8. 12. *He sighed deeply in his Spirit.* And the hardness of their Hearts at another time raised his *Grief*, as well as his Indignation, *Mark* 3. 5. He was sensible of the least Dishonour of his Father, *Psalm* 69. 9. *The Reproaches of them that reproached thee, fell upon me.* I took them to Heart. Christ pleased not himself when his Father was injured; as the Apostle descants upon it, when he applies it to Christ, *Rom.* 15. 3. His Soul was more pierced with the Wrongs done to God, than the Reproaches which were directed against his own Person. His Grief was unexpressibly greater than can be in any Creature, because of the unimitable ardency of his Love to God, the nearness of his Relation to him, and the unspotted Purity of his Soul. Christ had a *double* Relation; to *Man*, to *God*. His Compassion to Men afflicted him with Groans and Tears at their bodily Distempers; his Affection to his Father would make him grieve as much to see him dishonour'd, as his Love to Man made him groan to see Man afflicted. This Grief for Sin was one part of Christ's Sacrifice and Suffering; for he came to make a full satisfaction to the Justice of God by enduring his Wrath, to the Holiness of God by offering up an infinite Sorrow for Sin, which it was impossible for a Creature to do. We cannot suppose that Christ should only accept the Punishment, but not bewail the Offence which was the cause of it. A Sacrifice for the Sins of others, without remorse for those Sins, had not been acceptable; it had not been agreeable to the Purity of his Humane Nature. He wept at *Jerusalem*'s Obstinacy, as well as for her Misery, and that in the time of his Triumph. The loud *Hosanna's* could not silence his Grief, and stop the Expressions of it, *Luke* 19. 41. It was like a Shower when the Sun shined. If Christ as our Head was filled with inward Sorrow for Men's displeasing the Holiness of God, 'tis surely our Duty as his Members, to imitate the Afflictions of the Head. He is unworthy of the Name of Christ, who is not afflicted as Christ was; nor can call Christ his Master, who doth not imitate his Graces, as well as pretend to believe his Doctrine; he cannot see that God who hath distinguisht him from the World, dishonoured, his Precepts contemned, but he must have his Soul overcast with a gloomy Cloud. 'Tis our glory to value the things he esteem'd, to despise the things he contemn'd, to rejoyce in that wherein he was delighted, and to grieve for that which was the Matter of his Sorrow and Indignation. Thus was he afflicted, though he had a Joy in the Assurance of his Father's Favour, and the Assistance of his Father's Power. The highest Assurance of God's Love in particular to us, ought not to hinder the Impressions of Grief for the Dishonour of his Name. Did Christ ever look upon the swinish World, without melting into Pity? Did he bleed for the Sins of the World, and shall not we mourn for them?

3. *Angels, as far as they are capable, have their Grief for the Sins of Men.* The *Jewish* Doctors often bring in the Angels weeping for Sin*. And one tells us, that in an ancient *Mahumetan* Book, he finds an Answer of God to *Moses*; Even about this Throne of mine, there stand those, and they are many, that shed Tears for the Sins of Men. But the *Scripture* tells us, they rejoyce at the Repentance of Men, *Luke* 15. 10. Their Lord is glorify'd by a Return of a Subject; the Subject advantag'd by casting down his Arms at the Feet of his Lord. They do therefore, as far as they are capable, mourn for the Revolts of Men, *suo modo*, as *Beza* upon the place. They can scarce rejoyce at Mens Repentance without having a contrary Affection for Mens Profaneness: If they are glad at Mens Return, because God is thereby glorify'd, it cannot be conceiv'd but they mourn for, and are angry with their Sins, because God is thereby slighted. Unconcernedness at the Dishonour of God cannot consist with their shining Knowledge, and burning Love. They cannot behold a God so Holy, so Glorious, so worthy to be beloved, without having some Regret for the Neglects and Abuses of him by the Sons of Men. How can they be Instruments of God's Justice, if they are without Anger against the Deservers of it?

* *Grotius Luc.* 15. 7. *Ob peccatum Hebræi Angelos flentes induunt.*

II. *'Tis an acceptable Duty to God.* Since it is an imitating the Copy of our Saviour, it is acceptable to God; nothing can please him more than to see his Creatures tread in the Steps of his Son.

1. *'Tis a fulfilling the whole Law*, which consists of Love to God, and Love to our Neighbours: 'Tis set down as a Character of Charity both as it respects God and Man, *Not to rejoyce in Iniquity*, 1 *Cor.* 13. 5. *i. e.* to be mightily troubled at it.

1. *'Tis a high Testimony of Love to God.* The nature of true Love is to wish all Good to them we love, to rejoyce when any Good we wish doth arrive unto them, to mourn when any Evil afflicts them, and that with a respect to the belov'd Object. Τὸ φιλεῖν, τὸ βούλεσθαι ἅπερ ἃ αὐτῷ ἀγαθὰ, ἐκεῖνα ἕνεκα, ἀλλὰ μὴ αὐτῷ συναλγεῖν τοῖς λυπουμένοις *. Where there is this Love, there is a Rejoycing at one another's Happiness, a grieving at one another's Misfortunes. If it be a part of Love to rejoyce at that whereby God is glorify'd, 'tis no less a part of Love to mourn for that whereby God is vilify'd. So strait is the Union of Affection between God and a righteous Soul, that their Blessings and Injuries, Joys and Sorrows are twisted together. The increase of God's Glory is the greatest Good that can happen to a Soul enamoured of him; his Dishonour then is the greatest Misery. A gracious Soul is like *John Baptist*, content to decrease, that Christ might encrease, in the esteem of Men. He is like *Jonathan*, that would rather have the Crown upon *David's* Head than his own, as the Words intimate, 1 *Sam.* 23. 17. *Thou shalt be King over Israel, I shall be next unto thee:* And grieved more for his Father's Displeasure against *David* than against himself. So doth a Christian grieve more for the Wrongs of God, than for those in his own Liberty, Estate, or Life.

* *Aristot. Rhetor.* l. 1. c. 4.

Joshua was more careful of the Name of God, than of the Safety of the People singly consider'd, *Josh.* 7. 9. *What wilt thou do unto thy great Name?* The Glory of God is not dear to that Man, that can without any Regret look upon his bespatter'd Name. What Affection hath he to his Friend, who can see him torn in pieces by Dogs, and stand

ſtand unconcern'd at his Calamity? God indeed is uncapable of ſuffering; but what rending is to a Creature, that is Sin to the Divine Majeſty. Can that Man be ſaid to love God who hath no Reflection when he ſees others tumbling God from his Throne, and ſetting up the Devil in his ſtead? Who can hear the tremendous Name of God belcht out by polluted Lips upon every vile Occaſion, and made the ſport of Stage and Stews, without any inward Reſentment?

He only eſteems God as his King, who cannot ſee his Laws broken without Remorſe. How loyally did *Moſes* his Affection to God work, when he heard the Name of God blaſphemed, and ſaw a *Calf* uſurp the Adoration due to the God of Heaven? And *David* felt the Stroke of that Sword in his own Bowels, which was directed againſt the Heart of God, *Pſal.* 139. 20, 21, 22. The dearer God's Name is to any, the more affected they are that God and Chriſt are loved and honoured leſs than they deſire they ſhould be.

'Tis hard ſometimes to diſcern this Love to God, when God's Intereſt and ours are joyned, when we would mask our Diſpleaſure againſt ſome Mens Offences, with a care of God's Honour, which is nothing but a hatred of the Perſon ſinning, or Revenge againſt him for ſome conceiv'd Injury to us. The *Apoſtles* calling for *Fire from Heaven* upon the *Samaritans* when they refuſed Chriſt, *Luke* 9. 53, 54, 55. might ſeem to be a generous Concern for their Maſter's Honour, but Chriſt knew it proceeded much from that natural Enmity which the *Jews* bore to the *Samaritans*. The beſt way to judge is, when the Intereſt is purely Gods, and hath no Fuel of our own Diſcontents to boil up, either Grief or Anger. Such an Affection cannot but be highly acceptable to God, who is affected with the Love of the Creature, and honours them that honour him, as well as deſpiſes thoſe that lightly concern themſelves for him.

2. *Love to our Neighbours.* Nothing can evidence our Love to Man more, than a ſorrowful Reflection upon that Wickedneſs which is the Ruine of his Soul, the Diſturbance of Humane Society, and unlocks the Treaſures of God's Judgments to fall upon Mankind. *Sin is a Reproach to a People, Prov.* 14. 34. 'Tis always an Act of Charity to mourn for the Reproaches and Ruine of a People. 'Tis a groſs Enmity to others, to ſee them ſtab themſelves to the Heart, jeſt with Eternal Flames, wiſh their Damnation at every Word, run merrily to the bottomleſs Gulf, and all this without beſtowing a Sigh upon them, and pitying their Madneſs; the greater ſhould be our Grief, by how much the further they are from any for their own Deſtruction. If *Cain* diſcover'd both his Enmity to God, and alſo to his Brother, in grieving that his Brother's Works were ſo good, *Abel* muſt needs in the practice of the contrary Duty, manifeſt his Love to *Cain* in grieving that his Works were ſo bad. Our Saviour's Tears for the *Jews* diſcover'd no leſs a Concern for their Miſery than for God's Diſhonour. Anger for Sin may have ſomething of Revenge in it: Grief for Sin diſcovers an Affection both to God and the Sinner. A Duty which reſpects at once the Subſtance of *both* the *Tables*, cannot but be pleaſing to God.

2. *'Tis an imitating Return for God's Affection.* How doth God reſent the Injuries done to his People as much as thoſe done to himſelf? Thoſe Sins that immediately ſtrike at his Glory are not accompany'd with ſuch quick Judgments as thoſe that grate upon his Servants. Sharp Perſecutions that tear the People of God in pieces, have fuller Vials of Judgments here, than Vollies of other Sins which rend the Name of God. When *Cain* affronted God by his Sacrifice, God comes not to a Reckoning with him, till he had added the Murther of his Brother to his former Crimes againſt his Maker. A ſweeter and more thankful Return, and a more affectionate Imitation of God there cannot be, than to reſent the Injuries done to God more than thoſe done to our ſelves. The pinching of his People doth moſt pierce his Heart; a Stab to his Honour, in gratitude, ſhould moſt pierce theirs. The *Four Kings* that came againſt *Sodom*, *Gen.* 14. 9, *&c.* ſped well enough in their Invaſion, gained the Victory, and had been in a fair way to have enjoy'd the Spoil, had they not laid their hands upon *Lot*, which was the occaſion of their diſgorging their Prey. As God ingaged himſelf in the Recovery of *Lot*, ſo *Lot* concern'd himſelf in the Honour of God; God's Anger is ſtirr'd at the Captivity of *Lot*, and *Lot*'s Vexation is awaken'd at the Injuries againſt God. What troubles his Children raiſes ſenſible Compaſſion in him to the Sufferer, and Revenge upon the Perſecutor: Whatſoever doth blaſpheme the Name of God, doth at the ſame time rack a ſincere Heart. A Perſecutor cannot injure a Believer, but Chriſt records it as a Wrong done to Himſelf; and Chriſt cannot be diſhonour'd by Men, but a Righteous Soul doubles his Grief. Here is a mutual Return of Affection and Eſtimation, which is highly pleaſing.

3. *This Temper juſtifies God's Law and his Juſtice* *. When we diſlike and diſapprove of others Sins as well as our own, we acknowledge the Glory of the Law, that it is juſt, holy, and good, and ſet our Seal of Approbation to it. It juſtifies the holineſs of the Law in prohibiting Sin, the righteouſneſs of the Law in condemning Sin. It owns the Soveraignty of God in commanding, and the Juſtice of God in puniſhing. The Law requires two things; Obedience to it, and Suffering for the Tranſgreſſion of it. This Frame of Heart approves of the Obedience the Law requires of Men as rational Creatures, and juſtifies the Sufferings the Law inflicts upon Men as impenitent Sinners. Unleſs we mourn for the Sins of others, and thereby ſhew our Diſtaſt, we cannot give God the Glory of his Judgments which he ſends upon a People. This Diſowning of Sin is very acceptable to God, becauſe by it Men honour that Law for whoſe Violations they are ſo troubled, and own God's right of impoſing a Law upon his Creatures, and the Creatures vileneſs in diſgracing that Law.

* *David's* Grief being for Man's forſaking the Law, teſtify'd his choice valuation of it.

4. *'Tis a ſign of ſuch a Temper God hath evidenc'd himſelf in Scripture much affected with.* 'Tis a ſign of a Heart of Fleſh, the nobleſt Work of God in the Creature. A ſign of a contrite Heart, the beſt Sacrifice that can ſmoke upon his Altar next to that of his Son. This he will not deſpiſe, becauſe it is a Beam of Glory dropped down from him, and aſcending in a *ſweet ſavour* to him, *Pſal.* 51. 17. Without this, we cannot have a ſufficient Evidence that we are truly broken-hearted. We may mourn for our own Sins for ſecret By-ends, becauſe they are againſt our worldly Intereſts, and have Reproaches treading upon the Heels of them; we may mourn for the Sins of our Friends, out of a natural Compaſſion to them, and as they are the Prognoſticks of ſome approaching Miſery to them; but in ſorrowing for the Sins of the World, we have not

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ſo many, and ſo affecting Obligations to divert us from a ſound aim in our Sorrow. To be affected with the Diſhonour of God by the Sins of others, is a diſtinguiſhing Character of a ſpiritual Conſtitution from a natural Tenderneſs. 'Tis both our Duty, and God's Pleaſure. No Grief is ſweeter to God, nor more becoming us.

III. *'Tis a means of preſervation from Publick Judgments.* *Noah* did not preach Righteouſneſs without a ſenſible Reflection on that Unrighteouſneſs he preached againſt; and he of all the World had the ſecurity of an Ark for him and his Family, when all the reſt ſtruggled for Life, and ſunk in the Waters. No meer Man ever wore more Black for the Funeral of God's Honour, than *David*, nor was any bleſſed with more gracious Deliverances. The more Zeal we have for God, (which is an Affection made up of Grief and Anger) the more protection we have from him *. The more Courage we have for God, the more we may expect both his Conduct and Security. If there be any *hope* in a time of actual or threatned Judgments, 'tis by laying our *Mouths in the Duſt*, *Lam.* 3. 29. If there be any ground of Hope, it will ſhine forth when we are in ſuch a Poſture. There might be others in *Jeruſalem* who had not complied with the Idolatry of that Age; but none exempted from the Stroke of the *Six* Deſtroyers, but thoſe whoſe Mouths lay in the Duſt, and whoſe Cries againſt the common Sin aſcended to Heaven; only the Mourners among the good Men are marked by the Angel for Indemnity from the publick Puniſhment.

* *The Steps of a Man* [good Man, our Tranſlation renders it. But the Word is, גבר a valiant Man] *are ordered by the Lord, and he delights in his way,* Pſ. 37. 23.

1. *Sincerity always eſcapes beſt in common Judgments; and this Temper of Mourning for Publick Sins, is the greateſt Note of it.* This is the greateſt Note of Sincerity. We read of an *Ahab* who put on Sackcloth for his own Sin, and humbled himſelf before the Lord; of a *Judas* ſorrowing that he betray'd his Maſter: Self-intereſt might broach their Tears, and force out their Sorrow; but never an *Ahab*, or *Judas*, or any other ungodly Perſon in Scripture, lamented the Sins of others. Nay, they were all eminent for Holineſs, that were noted for this frame, whom we have mention'd before. *Moſes*, a Non-ſuch for ſpeaking with God Face to Face. *David*, who only had that honourable Title of a Man after God's own Heart. *Iſay*, who had the fulleſt Proſpect of Evangelical Glory, of all the Prophets. *Ezra*, a Reſtorer of his Country. *Daniel*, a Man greatly beloved. *Chriſt*, the Redeemer of the World; and *Paul*, the only Apoſtle wrapt up in the third Heaven, he was alſo humbled for the *Sins of the Corinthians*, 2 *Corinth.* 12. 21. *Ezra* hath a mighty Character, *Ezra* 7. 10. *He prepared his Heart to ſeek the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Iſrael Statutes and Judgments.* And he both mourned for, and prayed againſt the common Sin. *Lot* is not recorded for this without a glorious Epithete: The Spirit of God over-looks thoſe Sins of his mentioned in Scripture, and ſpeaks not of him by his ſingle Name, but *juſt Lot*, his *righteous Soul*, 2 *Pet.* 2. 7, 8. A ſincere Righteouſneſs glitter'd in his Vexation for the wronged Intereſt of God. What a Mark of Honour doth the Holy Ghoſt ſet upon this Temper! 'Tis not drunken *Lot*, or inceſtuous *Lot*, with which Sins he is taxed in Scripture. This publickly-religious Spirit covered thoſe temporary Spots in his Scutcheon. When all other Signs of Righteouſneſs may have their Exceptions, this Temper is the utmoſt Term, which we cannot go beyond in our Self-Examination. The utmoſt proſpect *David* had of his Sincerity, when he was upon a diligent Enquiry after it, was his Anger and Grief for the Sin of others; when he had reached ſo far, he was at a ſtand, and knew not what more to add, *Pſal.* 139. 21, 22, 23, 24. *Am I not grieved with thoſe that riſe up againſt thee? I hate them with perfect hatred; I count them mine Enemies. Search me, O God, and know my Heart; try me, and know my Thoughts, and ſee if there be any wicked way in me.* If there be any thing that better can evidence my Sincerity, than this, Lord acquaint me with it; *know my Heart*; *i. e.* make me to know it. He whoſe Sorrow is only for Matter confin'd within his own Breaſt, or Streams of it in his Life, has reaſon many times to queſtion the truth of it. But when a Man cannot behold Sin as Sin in another, without ſenſible Regret, 'tis a ſign he hath ſavingly felt the bitterneſs of it in his own Soul. 'Tis a high pitch and growth, and a Conſent between the Spirit of God and the Soul of a Chriſtian, when he can lament thoſe Sins in others whereby the Spirit is grieved, when he can rejoyce with the Spirit rejoycing, and mourn with the Spirit mourning. This is a clear Teſtimony that we have not Self-ends in the Service of God, that we take not up Religion to ſerve a Turn, that God is our Aim, and Chriſt our Beloved. Now *Upright* Perſons have ſpecial Promiſes for Protection, *Pſal.* 37. 18, 19. *The Lord knows the way of the Upright, they ſhall not be aſhamed in an evil time*; they ſhall not be aſhamed *in* it, though they may be daſht *by* it; they ſhall have a bleſſed inward Security, though they may not always have an outward, when the Wicked ſhall conſume away as the Fat of Lambs, and exhale in the Smoke. God's Eyes are upon them in the worſt of Straits. If ever he ſhew himſelf ſtrong, 'tis for thoſe that are *perfect in Heart* before him. This is the end of the rouling and running of his *Eyes about the Earth*, 2 *Chron.* 16. 9. To ſuch he is both a *Sun*, and a *Shield*; a Sun to comfort them, and a Shield to defend them that *walk uprightly*, *Pſal.* 84. 11. There may be an Uprightneſs in the Heart, when there is an unknown, or a negligent Crookedneſs in ſome particular Path; and when Men are negligent in reproving others for ſuch Sins as open the Clouds of Judgments, God may be a Sun to ſuch, to give them ſome Comfort in a common Calamity, but ſcarce a Shield to defend them from it.

2. *This frame clears us from the guilt of common ſins.* He that is not afflicted with them, contracts a guilt of thoſe Inſolencies againſt God by a tacit approbation, or not hindering the torrent by his Prayers, Tears, Endeavours. Sin is not to be viewed without Horror: We ſhare in the Guilt, if we manifeſt not our deteſtation of the Practice. The *Corinthians* had not approved themſelves clear in the matter of the inceſtuous Perſon till they had mourned for it, 2 *Cor.* 7. 11. *Jacob* was afraid he ſhould be charged by God as a Murtherer and Thief, as well as *Simeon* and *Levi*, if he did not profeſs his loathing of it, *Gen.* 49. 6. *Oh my Soul come not thou into their Secrets, unto their aſſembly mine Honour be not thou united; for in their Anger they ſlew a Man, and in their Self-will they digged down a Wall.* His Soul ſhould bear a teſtimony againſt their Secrets; he would count it his diſhonour to give their Sin any countenance before God or Man. *David* intimates, *Pſal.* 101. 3. that if he did not hate the works of thoſe that turn aſide, the guilt of them would cleave to him. If we can patiently bear the diſhonour of God, without marks of our diſpleaſure, we ſhall be reckoned in the common

mon Infection, as one lump with the greateſt Sinners. He that is not with Chriſt, is againſt him; he that is not on the ſide of God by a holy Grief, is on the ſide of Sin by a ſilent Conſent. A thorow diſtaſt of Sins upon the account of their abomination to God, frees us from the guilt of them in the ſight of God. To mourn for them, and pray againſt them, is a ſign we would have prevented them if it had lain in our power; and where we have contributed to them, we by thoſe Acts revoke the Crime. When we cannot be Reformers, all that we can do is to turn Mourners, and in our places Admoniſhers and Reprovers, and God is righteous, not to charge the Guilt where it is not contracted or revoked. But where any are infected with common Sins, they muſt expect to taſte of ſome common Judgments †. The *Iſraelites* did partake of ſome of the *Ægyptian* Sins; and though God was upon their Deliverance, yet he inflicted upon them ſome of the *Ægyptian* Plagues; the Plague of Lice, which was the firſt God brought, without being imitated by the *Magicians*, was common upon the *Iſraelites* as well as the *Ægyptians*; for God did not ſever *Goſhen* from *Ægypt* till the Plague of *Flies*, Exod. 8. 12, 23. *In that day will I ſever the Land of* Goſhen, *I will put a diviſion between my People and thy People.* And therefore in *Pſal.* 78. the *Pſalmiſt* reckoning thoſe *Plagues*, never mentions the *Lice*, becauſe that was inflicted upon *Iſrael* as well as *Ægypt*. This is a way to keep the Soul from common Infection. 'Tis difficult for a Soul to defile it ſelf with the Sins of the Times, when Tears are continually running down the Eyes for them. 'Tis an Antidote againſt the Sin, and againſt the Plague which follows at the heels of it. If we look not upon them with Grief, we are in danger to be ſnar'd in the ſame Temptation. Beſides, not ſorrowing for them is an implicit conſent to them, and by conſenting to them, we are little better than Actors in them. By grieving for them, we enter our Diſſent, and paſs our Vote againſt them. When any Sin becomes National, it is imputed to the Body of the Nation; as in ſome Tranſgreſſions of the Law, the whole Body of the Nation of the *Jews* was involved; and there is no way for any particular Perſon to remove the guilt from him, but by diſowning it before God.

† *Lightfoot, Glean. on Exo. 6.13.*

3. *A grief for common ſins, is an endeavour to repair the Honour God has loſt.* 'Tis a paying to God that by Repentance (as much as lies in a Creature) which is due from the worſt Sinner himſelf; 'tis to keep up ſome of God's Glory, when ſo much is trodden down. And when the Grief is accompanied with a more exact Obedience, it repairs the Honour God hath loſt by the miſcarriage of others. 'Tis an endeavour to wipe off the Stains from the Robe of the Glory of God. And thoſe that bear up God's Glory in the World, ſhall find, if need be, the Creative, Omnipotent Power of God ſtretched out for their Defence, in as eminent a manner as the Cloud by Day, which preſerved the *Iſraelites* from the ſcorching of the Sun, or the flaming Fire by Night, which prevented their wandring into By-ways and Precipices; *for upon all the Glory ſhall be a defence*, Iſa. 4. 5. *i. e.* upon thoſe that bear the Mark of his glorious Redemption, and bear up his Honour among the Sons of Men. When we concern our ſelves for God's Honour, God will concern himſelf for our Protection. God never was, nor ever will be behind-hand with his Creature in Affection. *Moſes* was zealous for God's Glory againſt the golden Calf, and God concern'd himſelf for his Honour againſt *Aaron* and *Miriam*, *Num.* 12. and then againſt the Tumults of the People.

4. *The Mourners in* Sion *are humble, and Humility is preventive of Judgments.* To lie flat upon the Ground, is a means to avoid the ſtroke of a Cannon-bullet. *When Men are caſt down, he ſhall ſave the humble Perſon*, Job. 22. 29. They lie loweſt in the Duſt before God, who concern themſelves not only with the weight of their own ſins, but with that of others. Pride is a preparation for Judgment; the higher the Tower aſpires, the fitter Tinder it is for Lightning; the bigger any thing ſwells, the nearer it is to burſting; the prouder any Man is, the plainer Butt he is for an Arrow of God's Wrath. Pride lifts up it ſelf againſt God's Laws and Sovereignty, as much as this frame of Spirit acknowledges, and ſubmits to him. It was a Temper contrary to this, cauſed God to ſend Worms to banquet upon *Herod*, *Acts* 12. 23. *He gave not God the Glory.* He was not afflicted with the Sin of the People, nor reproved them for aſcribing to him the Honour of God. A Soul-affliction for common Sin is a bar to Judgments. God *revives the ſpirit of the humble*, Iſa. 57. 15. They that ſhare in the griefs of the Spirit, ſhall not want the comforts of the Spirit. God is concern'd in Honour, by virtue of his Promiſe, not to neglect thoſe whom he hath promiſed to revive. He dwells with the contrite Spirit; who more contrite than he that grieves for publick Sins, and Family Sins, and City Sins, as well as his own private? Men do not uſe to fire their own Houſes, much leſs God the Houſe and Heart, which is dearer to him than either firſt or ſecond Temple, or local Heaven it ſelf. I might add,

5. That ſuch *keep Covenant with God.* The Contract runs on God's part, to be an *Enemy to his Peoples Enemies*, Exod. 23. 22. It muſt run on our parts, to love that which God loves, hate that which God hates, grieve for that which grieves and diſhonours him; Who can do this by an unconcernedneſs? Thoſe that keep Covenant with God, ſhall not fail of one tittle of it on God's part. 7. Such alſo *fear God's Judgments*, as fear is a good means to prevent them. The Old World feared not God's threatning of the Deluge, and that came and ſwallowed them up. The *Sodomites* feared not God's Judgments, and that haſtened the deſtroying Shower. The Advice of the Angel upon the approach of Judgments, is to *fear God, and give glory to him*, Rev. 14. 7. And then follows another, *v.* 8. with the news of *Babylon*'s fall; *Babylon is fallen, is fallen.* The fall of *Babylon* is the preſervation of his People.

4. The *Uſe*. 1. *Reproof* for us. Where is the Man that hangs his Harp upon the Willows at the time the Temple of God is prophaned? A Head, a Fountain of Tears for common Sins, is a Commodity rare to be found even in Hearts otherwiſe gracious. The Mourners have been for number but a few, like the gleanings of the Vintage; but the Sinners in *Sion* for multitude, like the Weeds in fallow Ground. What multitudes of thoſe that diſparage God, and trample upon his Sovereign Commands, rend in pieces the very Law of Nature, as well as the Rights of Religion? It were well if there were one to Six, as was intimated in the beginning there might be in *Jeruſalem*; but we have reaſon to fear, that one Marker for the ſecret Mourners would be too much for an hundred Deſtroyers. I do not queſtion but there are ſome that ſigh for the Abominations they ſee, and hear of, and that becauſe they are diſhonourable to God, as well as injurious to themſelves. But who of us preſent here can ſay, we have been deeply enough, and graciouſly enough affected with them? Certainly both you and I may bring a Charge againſt our

our ſelves before the Throne of God for this neglect, that we have not been throughly humbled for, and frequently bewailed publick Iniquities, and ſpread them before God in Secret. If we are unconcern'd in common Sins, can we imagine God will leave us unconcern'd in common Judgments? If we endeavour not to keep up the Glory of God, he will extract Glory to himſelf out of our Aſhes. If this frame be ſo little regarded among Profeſſors, what ſhall we ſay to many others that have as little remorſe for the ſtabs of God's Honour, as they would have for the *Tragedy* of an *Eaſt-India* Prince, nay, for the death of ſome inconſiderable Fly? that have reſentments for Wrongs done to themſelves, and Sorrow at Command for any worldly Loſs, but not one ſpark of regret for Affronts offered to God? In this Cauſe their Hearts are as dry as a Heath in a parching Summer. Who laments the tearing the Name of God in pieces by execrable Oaths? Who bewails the impudent uncleanneſs boaſted of by Concubines in the face of the Sun? Who mourns for ſo many thouſand Foreheads bearing the mark of the Beaſt, and ſo many thouſands more preparing to receive it? It reproves then,

1. *Thoſe that make a mock and ſport of ſin*, ſo far they are from mourning for it. The wiſe Man gives them the title of *Fools*, *Prov.* 14. 9. *Fools make a mock at ſin.* Which though it ſeems too low a Character for ſuch abominable works, yet in Scripture it hath a greater import than in our common Diſcourſe, it ſignifies an *Atheiſt*, *Pſal.* 14. 1. Prodigious Madneſs! to make that our Sport which is the diſhonour of God, the murderer of Chriſt, the grief of the Spirit, and the deſtruction of the Soul; that which opens the flood-gates of Wrath, and brings Famines, Plagues, Wars upon a People! If mourning for others Sins be an Affection like that of Angels, delighting in others Sins is an Affection like that of Devils. He is at the greateſt diſtance from Chriſt, that looks pleaſantly upon that which Chriſt could not regard without Grief and Anger. God ſeems to ſeal up ſuch to deſtruction, as well as the Mourners to preſervation, *Iſa.* 22. 12, 13. *And in that day did the Lord God of Hoſts call to weeping and mourning, to baldneſs and girding with Sackcloth, and behold joy and gladneſs, ſlaying Oxen and killing Sheep, eating Fleſh and drinking Wine, let us eat and drink, for to morrow we ſhall dye. And it was revealed in mine Ears by the Lord of Hoſts, ſurely this Iniquity ſhall not be purged from you till you dye*; they were Ranters inſtead of Mourners, and God paſſes this Sentence on them, *their Iniquity ſhall not be purged from them till they dye.* If we carry our ſelves Jollily at the Sins of others, we evidence that the concerns of God are of little concern to us, that we have ſlight thoughts of his Glory, and caſt it at the heels of our own Paſſions.

2. *Thoſe that make others Sins the matter of Invectives, rather than of Lamentations, and beſpatter the Man without bewailing the ſin.* We ſhould conſider common Sins with affection to God, and pity to the Offenders; with a deſire that they may reſtore, by a true Converſion, the glory they have robb'd God of by an accurſed Rebellion. While we hate the Sin, we ſhould evidence that we love the Man*. We muſt never love the Wickedneſs, nor hate the Perſon. We pity a Sick-man, though we loath his Diſeaſe. Sinners are miſerable enough without our Hatred, and by hating them we make our ſelves more miſerable, by committing a fault againſt Reaſon and Nature, and do them no good. The more wicked any Man is, the more worthy of pity, by how much the more his Crime is our hatred. God, who is infinite Purity, hates Mens Sins, becauſe they are Enemies to this Holineſs; but he hath a common affection to their Perſons, as they are the effects of his Goodneſs and creative Power. Our *exclamations* againſt common Sins ought not to exceed *lamentations* for them. There ought to be more Grief in our Hearts, than Fire in our Tongues. They break the whole Law, that lament not the Crime out of love to the Law-maker, and grieve not for the Sinner out of love to their Neighbour.

3. *Thoſe who are imitators of common Sins, inſtead of being mourners for them.* As though others did not pilfer God's Right faſt enough, and were too ſlow in pulling him from his Throne; as if they grieved that others had got the ſtart of them in Wickedneſs. 'Tis a pious Sadneſs, and a bleſſed Grief to be affected with common Sins, without being fetter'd by them; to mourn for them, without cleaving to them; to be tranſported with Sorrow for them, without being drawn by a love to them.

4. *Thoſe that fret againſt God, inſtead of fretting againſt their own fooliſhneſs*, Prov. 19. 3. The ſins of good Men, are many times provocations to God to draw up the Sluce from the Hearts of wicked Men, and give liberty to their Luſts for the chaſtening of others; and therefore in grieving for the Sins of others, they implicitly grieve for their own.

5. *Thoſe who are more tranſported againſt others ſins, as they are, or may be occaſions of hurt to them, than as they are injuries to God.* How warm are we often in our own Cauſe, and how cold in God's? We partly ſatisfie our own Diſcontent by ſuch a Carriage, but not our Duty.

6. *Thoſe who are ſo far from Mourning for common Sins, that they never truly mourned for their own.* Who have yet the *Treaſures of wickedneſs*, after the Rod of God hath been upon them, *Mich.* 6. 9, 10. *Are there yet the treaſures of wickedneſs in the houſe of the wicked* reflecting upon the Rod they had felt? Common Sins are but a Glaſs wherein we may ſee our common Nature. The beſt Men have the worſt Sins in their Nature, though by Grace they have them not in their Practice. He that grieves not for other Mens Sins, more or leſs, never grieved truly for his own. He that is not concerned for the diſhonours of God by others, is little concerned for the diſhonour of God by himſelf. Let us uſe our Eyes for thoſe ends for which God hath given them; they are inſtruments of Sight, and inſtruments of Sorrow.

It is neceſſary for us to mourn for our own ſins. We can never mourn for others Sins, unleſs we mourn for our own. If we ſorrow not for our own, the Sorrow we may pretend to have for others, proceeds not from a right cauſe. We have that one Sin of *Adam* in our Nature, which ſubjected the whole World to an *Anathema*. Let us not ſtay in Generals; every Man will lay the fault upon Sin in the bulk, without reflecting on the Sin in his own Bowels. We can complain particularly of thoſe Sins that are common, and why ſhould we reſt in Generals, when we come to our own? *Dolus verſatur in univerſalibus*, 'tis a deceitful Sorrow that is for Sin in a heap. Is there not perfidiouſneſs to God, coldneſs in his ways, too much ſlighting the Goſpel, want of Bowels and Compaſſion, incorrigibleneſs under Judgments, Houſes fir'd and Pride not conſum'd; falſeneſs in Reſolutions, like Oxen moving with the touch of the Goad, and preſently ſtanding ſtill; *deceitful Bows*, letting the String ſlip after they have ſtood fully bent, *Hoſ.* 10. 4. There may be Sins among us that may cauſe a Storm that we little think of: The Mariners little ſuſpected *Jonah* to be the cauſe of the Tempeſt till he diſcovered it himſelf. He that never mourned for his own Sins, cannot perform this Duty ſo neceſſary for his Preſervation, and therefore

* *Nonnunquam ſæviturus in culpam ſæviens in hominem.* Proſper.

fore cannot expect the mark of God in a time of publick Judgment. He that would rightly mourn for the Corruptions of others, muſt enquire whether he hath not the ſame in his own Bowels, and fling the hardeſt Stone at them. *Judah* calls for *Tamar* to the flames for that Crime which himſelf had been a Partner and Actor in; ſo apt are we to be ſevere againſt others Sins, and indulgent to our own. The beſt have need to mourn for their own Sins in relation to the Publick: The only good Man in the Ship was *Jonah*, and for his Sin was the Storm ſent, and the reſt like to be wrack'd.

2 Uſe. Of *Comfort to ſuch as mourn for common Sins.* All the carnal World hath not ſuch a Writ of Protection to ſhew in the whole ſtrength of Nature, as the meaneſt *Mourner in* Sion hath in his Sighs and Tears. Chriſt's Mark is above all the Shields of the Earth, and thoſe that are ſtamp'd with it, have his Wiſdom to guard them againſt Folly, his Power againſt Weakneſs, the everlaſting Father againſt Man, whoſe Breath is in his Noſtrils. We ſee that God doth not ſtrike at random, but reſerves a ſweetneſs for his Servants in the midſt of his Fury againſt his Enemies; he hath his Meſſengers to mark, as well as his Executioners to ſtrike; the iſſuing the reſolute Orders of his Fury, hinders not thoſe of his Grace and Compaſſion to his own. He will have a care of his Balſom-trees that diſtil this precious Liquor, no leſs than he commanded the *Iſraelites* in their ſharpeſt Wars to have a care of the *fruitful Trees of a Land*, Deut. 20. 19. God in the 6. *v.* following the Text, gives the like Charge to the executioners of his Judgments, as *David* did to the Army concerning *Abſalom*, 2 Sam. 18. 5. *Deal gently with the young Man*, Ezek. 9. 6. *Come not near any Man upon whom is the Mark.* He makes proviſion firſt for the Security of thoſe, before he unſheaths his Sword againſt his Enemies. The Deluge flows not from Heaven till *Noah* be caſed in the Ark; nor is *Sodom* on Fire till *Lot* be lodged in the Mountain. God will always have a Church in the World, and ſuffer a Generation of his own to inhabit the Earth: God's Attributes ſhall not interfere one with another; his Truth remains firm, notwithſtanding the provocations of Men. When thoſe People were ripe for Judgments, God had his Mourners among the Idolaters, which he marks for Preſervation; when he had threatned great Judgments, *Joel* 2. 30, 31. the turning the Sun into Darkneſs, and the Moon into Blood, he promiſes a remnant in *Jeruſalem* and *Sion*, *v.* 32. *And it ſhall come to paſs, that whoſoever ſhall call upon the name of the Lord ſhall be delivered; for in Mount* Sion, *and in* Jeruſalem, *ſhall be deliverance as the Lord hath ſaid, and in the remnant whom the Lord ſhall call.* Neither the fury of Men ſhall, nor the Judgments of God will extinguiſh the Ch[illegible] Malice of Men, becauſe of God's [illegible] himſelf, becauſe of his Truth; [illegible] G[illegible] will either preſerve [illegible] take a[illegible] in them, to a place [illegible] though[illegible] y ſome, that the [illegible] h'd to [illegible]aven in the midſt of his [illegible] the ra[illegible] of living in that Age, wa[illegible] afflicte[illegible] with the ſins of [illegible]e amo[illegible] lived. [illegible]nd indeed he [illegible] ſcarce[illegible] with[illegible] grieving that [illegible] diſdain[illegible] h him[illegible]nd acted contrary to him: [illegible] e hi[illegible]rom that Affli[illegible] as well as fro[illegible]nge[illegible] of being corrupted by the Age. H[illegible]her [illegible]ve his *Chambers* wherein to hide them[illegible] *ll t[illegible] Indignation be over-paſt*, Iſa. 26. 20, 21. [illegible]a[illegible]ns to lodge them in for ever with him[illegible] hurt is it to any to be refuſed a hiding [illegible] hat he may be conducted to the poſſeſſion of a glorious Reſidence for ever? That Judgment that takes off the Fetters of a wicked Man for Execution, knocks off the Fetters of the Godly for a Goal Delivery; like Fire it conſumes the Droſs, and refines the Gold. The Day of God's Wrath is *a day of gloominеſs to the Wicked*, Joel 2. 2. but as the Morning ſpread upon the Mountains to the Godly Mourners, the dawning of Comfort to them. God out of the ſame Pillar of the Cloud diffuſed Light upon the *Iſraelites*, and ſhot Thunders and Lightnings upon the *Ægyptians*, to which perhaps the Prophet might here allude.

3 Uſe. *Mourn for the Sins of the time and place where you live.* 'Tis the leaſt diſlike we can ſhew to them. A flood of Grief becomes us in a flood of Sin. How well would it be, if we were as loud in crying for Mercy, as our Sins at the preſent are in crying for Vengeance? While Judgments march to ſeize our Perſons, our Grief ſhould run to damp the Judgments: Moiſt Walls choak the Bullet. 'Tis far better to mourn for the cauſe of Judgments, than to mourn under them. The jolly Blades were the firſt Prey to the Enemy, *Amos* 6. 1, 2, 3, to *v.* 7. *They that chaunt to the ſound of the Viol, and drink Wine in Bowls, ſhall go captive with the firſt that go captive.* We of this City have moſt reaſon to mourn; the *Metropolis* of a Nation is the *Metropolis* uſually of Sin, and the faireſt Mark for the Arrows of God's Indignation. The chief City of a Nation is uſually threatned in Scripture, *Rabbah* of the *Ammonites*, *Damaſcus* of *Syria*, *Tyrus* of *Phœnicia*, *Babylon* of the *Chaldæan* Empire, *Jeruſalem* of *Judæa*, and ſuitably, why not *London* of *England*? And let no Man think, that Mourning is a degenerate and effeminate Diſpoſition: Doth *Solomon* ever imprint the ſame Character on Mourning as he doth on Laughter? *Eccleſ.* 2. 2. Doth he ever vilifie that with a term of Madneſs, and call the Mourners *Bedlams*? How can any, who hath not put off the Title and Nature of Man, behold, without Amazement and Grief, Men ſo bold, as to pull down the Judgments of God upon them, and force his Indignation? This Temper is a pious embalming Chriſt's crucified Honour; ſhall any Man that profeſſeth Chriſt have ſo little love to him, as not to beſtow a Groan upon him, when he ſees him freſhly diſhonoured and abuſed? If we had not committed any Sin in our whole Life, there is cauſe of Mourning for the Abominations of the World. Chriſt had an unſpotted Innocence, and an unexpreſſible Grief for *Jeruſalems* Sins and Miſery; *Oh* Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, *how often would I have gathered thee, and thou wouldſt not*! Never doth Sorrow more appear in love, than when it is more for what diſhonours God, than what pincheth us. Men may pretend a Grief for the Sins of the Times, when it is only for themſelves, that they have not thoſe pleaſing Opportunities of greatning themſelves, and that eſtimation in the World, that Stage for Pride and Covetouſneſs to act upon which they deſire. Our Mourning is then right, when we grieve not ſo much that we, as that God is a ſufferer. It ſhould be proportionable where there are great Breaches of God's Law; our Grief ſhould be as full, as, if poſſible, to fill up the Ditch that is digg'd; the *Septuagint* in the Text implies it, κατασεισθωσιν. *Paul* and *Barnabas* tore their Garments (a ſign of a great Grief and Indignation) when the *Heathens would have ſacrificed to them as Gods*, Acts 14. 13. they uſed not the ſame Expreſſions in ſmaller Sins; but this was againſt the Nature of God, and a multitude engaged in it. The greater the Sin, the greater the Sorrow. I need

not mention the Sins among us; the impudent Atheism, contempt of the Gospel, putrifying Lust, bare-fac'd Pride, rending Divisions, many Sins visible enough to be grieved for, and too many to be spoken of. The Sorrow should be universal. Not for one Sin which may be against any Man's particular Interest, but for all, even those that our carnal Advantage is not concerned in. God is dishonoured by one as well as by another, and Christ is crucify'd by one as well as by another. It must be attended with a more strict Obedience: 'Tis the highest generosity to wear Christ's Livery, when others put it off, and lay it aside as useless. No doubt but *Joseph* of *Arimathea* mourned as well as the rest for the Sufferings of our Saviour, but he testify'd also an Heroick Affection to him, in going boldly to *Pilate* to beg the Body of *Jesus*, for an honourable Burial, when none of the other Disciples sought after it, but trusted more to the swiftness of their Heels for their own security, than concern'd themselves for the Honour of their Master. While others therefore are defiling the World with their Abominations, let us be washing it with our Tears, and filling Heaven with our Cries, that when God marcheth in his Fury, we may be secure by his acceptance of our Humiliations.

Motives.

1. *This is a means to have great Tokens of the Love of God.* No question but Christ in his Agony bewailed the Sins of the World, and then was an Angel sent to comfort him, and assure him of an happy Issue. It was just after the testimony of his Displeasure against *Peter* for disswading him from that Death, whereby he was to honour God, and wash off the stain of Sin, and repair the Violations of the Law, whereby he manifested a Concern for his Father's Honour, that he was transfigured, and had therein the Earnest of an Heavenly Glory, and that transporting Voice: *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear you him, Mat.* 16. 23. *Mat.* 17. 1, 2, *&c.*

2. *It is a means to prevent Judgments.* Tears cleansed by the Blood of Christ, are a good means to quench that Justice which is a consuming Fire. Sin puts a stop to the working of God's Bowels, and opens the Magazines of Wrath: Grief for it disarms God's Hand of his Thunders, and may divert his Darts from our Hearts. No other Defence is often left against the strength of Judgments after Sin hath made its Entrance. A *holy Seed in Jerusalem*, is the guard of it in the time of *Senacherib*'s Invasion, *Isa.* 6. 13. *The holy Seed shall be the substance thereof.* Growth in Sin ripens Judgments, turns Blossoms and Buds into Fruit, Rods into Scorpions. Grief for it turns Scorpions into Rods, lessens a Judgment, if not wholly prevents it. The Water of Repentance is the best way to quench the Flames of Sin, and Sparks of Wrath. If good Men fall under a common Judgment, it may be often for a Defect in this Temper. This was *Austin*'s Opinion, * That many good Men are taken away with the wicked in Common Judgments; because, though they do not commit the same Sins, yet they connive at their Iniquities, and so are lasht with their Rods, temporally chastened, but not eternally punished.

* *August* de Civit Dei. l. 1. c. 9.

3. *It will sweeten Judgments.* Such may say of Judgment, as *Paul* of Death, Oh Judgment where is thy Sting! 'Tis a double Burden to lie under the weight of common Judgments, and the weight of common Sins; Grief for them is a means to remove the Guilt, and thereby to ease thee of a Judgment. If we are concerned in mourning for Sin, we shall be more fit to honour God, if he makes us fall under his Stroke. A holy Sorrow will bring us into a submissive Frame. *Aaron* had been, without question, humbled for his timorous Compliance with the People in the making of the golden Calf; and when God came to strike him near in his own Children, he *held his Peace, Levit.* 10. 3. No doubt but his former Humiliation fitted him for his present Patience.

4. *Our Repentance for our own Sins was never right, unless we are of this Temper.* Repentance is a Justice towards God, and therefore is conversant about other Mens Sins in a hatred of them. 'Tis for Sin as Sin, and Sin is Sin in whatsoever Subject it be, and worthy of Hatred according to right Reason, and therefore that Grace whereby a Man hates it in his own Person, will engage him to hate it wheresoever it is; and we always grieve for the encrease of that which is the Object of our Hatred. A truly just Man hates the Injury committed against another as well as that against himself. That Filthiness which displeaseth a Penitent in his own Act, displeaseth him in anothers Act, there being the same adequate Reason, and Sin being of the same Nature against God in another as in himself. 'Tis *All Abominations* in the Text; This is an Argument of sincerity: To mourn for One may be from Self-interest, to mourn for All must be from a pure Affection.

5. *'Tis an Argument of a true Affection to God.* To mourn for Sin when it is rare, though gross, is not so much a sign of sincerity, as to mourn for it when it is *Epidemical*, when the Foundations of Godliness are out of course, and the Graces contrary to those Sins are generally discountenanc'd: As it is a greater sign of sincerity to love the Word, when it is generally slighted, than to love it when all admire it. What a noble Affection had that *Lady in Samuel*, 1 *Sam.* 4. 19, *&c.* that grieved not so much for the loss of her Father, Husband, Friends, but bewailed the Departure of the *Glory of Israel*, and implicitly at least, the Sin that occasion'd it? How did her Affection to God drown all carnal Affections? Her sorrow for the *Ark* stifled the sorrow of her Travel, and the joy at the Birth of her Son. *She regarded it not.* This is an evident Token of Affection, when we mourn most for those Sins which most dishonour God, and the Sins of those Persons that seem to be nearer to God, and cast most Reproaches upon his Name.

6. *Shall we be out-stript by Idolaters?* The mourning for others Sins was a Custom kept up in *Israel* after their Revolt from God unto *Jeroboam*. When *Naboth* was put to death [illegible] pretended Crime of Blasphemy, a Fast [illegible] to *lament his Sin*, 1 *King.* 21. 12. and though with a wicked Intention, to palliate a further with the Cloak of Religion, yet it evidenceth this Mourning for the gross Sins of others to be a common Sentiment among them, and practised upon the like Occasions.

7. *We have just Fears of Judgments.* We know not whence they will come, from the *North* or from the *South*. God sets up his Warnings in the Heavens: We behold him frowning and preparing his Arrows; and are we careless in what Posture we shall meet him? He hath *spit in our Faces*, made us a By-word and Reproach? should we not be humbled? *Numb.* 12. 14. *If her Father had spit in her Face, should she not be ashamed?* God seems to be departing. He hath as it were

kept

kept open Market a long time, he ſeems now to be putting up his Wares, removing his Candleſtick, withdrawing the power of his Ordinances, recalling his Meſſengers, the Light is almoſt in the Socket. The Voice of God is received with a deaf Ear, the Reproofs and Admonitions of God have not a kindly Operation, the ſigns of Judgment amaze us, and the Amazement quite vaniſhes. We ſtart like a Man in a Dream, and fall back upon our Pillow, and ſnort out our Sleep. Can we expect God to ſtay? He ſeems to be upon the Threſhold of the Temple, come down already from the *Cherubims*; and is it not high time to bewail our own Sins, and the common Abominations, that have ſo polluted the place of his Habitation, that we may ſay we cannot ſee how God can ſtay with Honour to Himſelf? If we bewail the Sins that provoke him to it, God may ſtay; if he will not, let us at leaſt ſhew this affection to him at parting. This is not a thing unbecoming the higheſt Chriſtian. Doth not the *Spirit grieve* for the Sins of others which play the Wantons with the Grace of God? *Eph.* 4. 30. *Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.* The Holy Spirit hath no Sins of his own to grieve for. Shall we be above that which the Spirit of God thinks himſelf not above? Shall we refuſe mourning for that which goes to the Heart of the Holy Ghoſt? Let us therefore examine what are our own Sins, what are the Abominations of the Times and Places wherein we live; make inquiſition for the one, that we may drag them out before the Lord: And in our places endeavour to ſtop and reform the other. As the true Fire of Love to God will melt us into Tears, ſo it will heat us into Zeal. He is no Friend, that will complain of a Toad's being in anothers Boſom, but not ſtrive to kill it. It will ſhew either Cowardice or Falſeneſs. That Zeal is Wild-fire that is not accompany'd with an holy Sorrow, and that Sorrow is crude which is not accompany'd with a godly Zeal.

A DISCOURSE FOR The Comfort of Child-bearing Women.

1 Tim. 2. 15.

Notwithſtanding ſhe ſhall be ſaved in Child-bearing, if they continue in Faith, and Charity, and Holineſs with Sobriety.

I Shall not take my Riſe any higher than *v.* 12. where the Apoſtle orders that a Woman ſhould not teach. *But I ſuffer not a Woman to teach, i. e.* publickly.

Two Reaſons are rendred;

* *Hierom.* 1. * She was laſt in Creation: *Adam was firſt formed, then Eve.*

2. Firſt in Defection, *v.* 14. *And Adam was not deceived, but the Woman being deceived, was in the Tranſgreſſion.* The Fall of Man was the Fruit of the Woman's firſt Doctrine, and therefore ſhe is not ſuffered to teach any more; the Woman was deceived by the Serpent, and ſo drew her Husband, and whole Poſterity, into ruine. Some of the *Papiſts* bring this place as an Argument againſt Womens reading the Scripture; but no Reaſon can conclude it from this place. How can the Spirit of God prohibit their reading the Scripture in private, and the Inſtruction of their Families, ſince Women are among thoſe who are commended for reading the Scripture? *Acts* 17. 11, 12. where the honourable Women are mention'd. And *Lois* and *Eunice* are applauded for their Inſtruction of *Timothy*. Are not Women bound by that Command of *Peter, to give a Reaſon of their Faith to any that ſhall ask them*, unleſs they would have Women Chriſtians without Reaſon? What was the Office of thoſe Eccleſiaſtical Widdows in the Primitive Times, but to inſtruct the younger Women? But this is not to be charged upon all the *Papiſts: Becanus* only is the Man that *Rivet* mentions *. And becauſe upon this Declaration of the *Apoſtle* ſome might be dejected by the conſideration of the deep Hand the Woman had in the firſt Fall, in the Puniſhment inflicted upon them for it, the *Apoſtle* in the *Text* brings in a *Notwithſtanding* for their Comfort. Notwithſtanding her Guilt in Defection, her Puniſhment in Childbearing, ſhe hath as good a Right to Salvation as the Man: So that the *Apoſtle* here anſwers by way of *anticipation, an Objection* which might be made, whether the Guilt contracted by the Woman, and the Puniſhment inflicted, might not hinder her eternal Salvation. The *Apoſtle* anſwers, *No.* Tho' ſhe was firſt in the Tranſgreſſion, and the Pain of Child-bearing was the Puniſhment of that firſt Sin, yet the Woman may arrive to everlaſting Salvation notwithſtanding that Pain, if ſhe be adorn'd with thoſe Graces which are neceſſary for all Chriſtians. Though the Puniſhment remain, yet the believing Woman is in the Covenant of Grace, under the Wings of the Mediator of that Covenant, if ſhe have Faith, the Condition of the Covenant, which works by Love and Charity, and is attended with Holineſs, and renewal of the Heart.

* *Iſagog. ad Script. c.* 13 *p.* 990, 991

Obſerve; *God hath gracious* [Cordials] *to chear up the Hearts of Believers in their Diſtreſs, and in the midſt of thoſe*

thoſe Caſes which are ſufficient of themſelves to caſt them down. The Apoſtle here alludes to that Curſe upon the Woman, *Gen.* 3. 16. *Unto the Woman he ſaid, I will greatly multiply thy Sorrow, and thy Conception; In Sorrow thou ſhalt bring forth Children.* The Puniſhment is peculiar to the married Woman, beſides that Puniſhment which was common to her with the Man.

Thy Sorrow and thy Conception. Hendiadys ſay ſome; The Sorrow of thy Conception. The Word הרון ſignifies the whole time of the Woman's bearing in the Womb, and ſo includes not only thoſe Pains in the very time of Labour, but alſo all thoſe precurſory Indiſpoſitions, as the weakneſs of the Stomach, heavineſs of the Head, irregular Longings, and thoſe other Symptoms which accompany Conceptions. Though this Pain ſeems to be natural, from the Conſtitution of the Body, yet ſince ſome other Creatures do bring forth with little or no Pain *; It would not have been ſo with the Woman in Innocency, becauſe all Pain which is a puniſhment of Sin, had not been incident to a ſinleſs and immortal Body.

* *Ariſtot. Hiſt. Animall.* 7. c. 9

We will conſider the Words apart.

Saved.] It may either note the Salvation of the Soul, or the Preſervation of the Woman in Child-bearing. The firſt I ſuppoſe is principally intended, (for the Apoſtle here would ſignifie ſome ſpecial Comfort to Women under that Curſe. But the Preſervation of Women in Child-bearing was a common thing teſtify'd by daily Experience in the worſt, as well as in the beſt Women, and Chriſtianity did not bring the Profeſſors of it into a worſe Eſtate in thoſe things which immediately depended upon God, or make the Children Vipers, not to come into the World without the Death of their Mothers.) Yet a temporal Preſervation may be included; for when an eternal Salvation is promis'd, temporal Salvation is alſo promis'd, according to the Methods of God's Wiſdom and Goodneſs in the courſe of his Providence, there being in all ſuch Promiſes a tacit Reſerve, *viz.* if God ſees it good for us; and the manner of their Preſervation alſo, wherein the Preſervation of a Believer differs from that of an unregenerate Perſon. Others are preſerved by God, as a merciful Creator and Governour, in a way of common Providence, for the keeping up of the World; but Believers are preſerved in the way of Promiſe and Covenant, in the exerciſe of Faith, and by the ſpecial Love of God, as a tender Father, and their God in covenant with them through Chriſt.

In Child-bearing.] Διὰ τεκνογονίας through Child-bearing. The Præpoſition διὰ is often taken for ἐν, as *Rom.* 4. 11. *That he might be the Father of all that believe, though they be not circumciſed,* πιστευόντων δι' ἀκροβυστίας *believing in uncircumciſion,* where it notes the ſtate wherein they ſhall be ſaved. So it notes here not the Cauſe of the Salvation of the Woman, but the ſtate wherein ſhe ſhall be ſaved, and amounts to thus much; The Puniſhment inflicted upon the Woman for her firſt Sin, ſhall not be removed in this Life, yet notwithſtanding this, there is a certain way of Salvation by Faith, though ſhe paſs through this Puniſhment. For by τεκνογονία is not meant a ſimple Child-bearing, but a Child-bearing in ſuch a manner as God hath threatned with Sorrow and Grief.

If they continue.] By [*They*] is not meant the Children, as ſome imagine, becauſe of the change of the *ſingular* to the *plural*; the ſenſe then ſhould run thus, ſhe ſhall be ſaved, if the Children remain in Faith, *&c.* That would be abſurd, to think that the Salvation of the Mother ſhould depend upon the Faith and Grace of the Children. When it is ſometimes ſeen that the Children of a godly Mother may prove as wicked as Hell it ſelf. But by [*they*] is meant the Woman. The Name *Woman* is taken collectively for all Women, and therefore the plural number is added. The *Apoſtle* paſſes from the *ſingular* number to the *plural*, as he had done from the *plural* to the *ſingular*, *v.* 9. *In like manner let the Women adorn themſelves* in modeſty, where he uſes the *plural*, but *v.* 11. reaſſumes the other number again in his Diſcourſe. The Graces which are here put as the Conditions, are, *Faith, Charity, Sanctification, Sobriety.* Where the *Apoſtle* ſeems to oppoſe thoſe to the firſt Cauſes or Ingredients of the Defection.

1. *Faith* oppoſed to *Unbelief* of the Precept of God, and the Threatning annext.

2. *Charity* oppoſed to *Diſaffection to God.* As though God were an Enemy to their Happineſs, and commanded a thing which did prejudice their Happineſs, whereupon muſt ariſe ill ſurmiſes of God, and an averſion from him.

3. *Sanctification.* In oppoſition to this *Filthineſs and Pollution* brought upon the Soul by that firſt Defection; there muſt therefore be in them an Aim and Endeavour to attain that primitive Integrity and Purity they then loſt.

4. *Sobriety,* Σωφροσύνη, Temperance. Becauſe the giving the Reins to Senſe, and obeying the Longings thereof, was the Cauſe of the Fall, *Gen.* 3. 6. She ſaw that it was pleaſant to the Eye. Original Sin is called *Concupiſcence,* and Luſting, and to this is oppoſed *Sobriety.*

1. *Faith.*] This is put firſt, becauſe it is the *Fundamental Grace.* It is the employer of Charity, for it works by it; the Root of Sanctification, for by Faith the Heart is purify'd. By Faith is chiefly meant the *Grace of* Faith; (1) *Faith in the Habit,* (2) *Faith in the Exerciſe.*

2. *Charity.*] The firſt Sin was an Enmity againſt God; therefore there is now a neceſſary Love to God. The firſt Sin was virtually an Enmity to all the Poſterity of Man, which were to come out of his Loins; therefore Love to Mankind is neceſſary. And Faith always infers Love to God and Man.

3. *Sanctification*] is here added, becauſe by that both the truth of Faith and Love appears to our ſelves and others. And *Juſtification by Faith is thereby ratify'd, James* 2. 24. By Sanctification is not here meant a particular Holineſs or Chaſtity due to the Marriage-bed, as ſome of the *Papiſts* aſſert, but an univerſal ſanctity of Heart and Life.

4. *Sobriety.*] This is a natural means for Preſervation. Intemperance makes bodily Diſtempers more dangerous in their Aſſaults. True Faith is accompany'd with Temperance and Sobriety in the uſe of lawful Comforts. The *Papiſts,* though without any good ground, frame an Argument from hence to prove Marriage to be a Sacrament, aſſerting that thoſe Graces of Faith and Charity, *&c.* are conferred upon the Woman by vertue of Marriage, and *ex vi inſtitutionis.* How ſevere a Doctrine is it then to engage any in Vows of a ſingle Life, when they might have a readier way to attain Grace with the Satisfaction of Nature? Are not the Virtues mention'd here, as neceſſary to the ſingle, as to the marry'd Chriſtians? Who ever heard that Marriage was appointed to confer thoſe Chriſtian Graces which are neceſſary for Men and Women in all Conditions? Beſides, is

it

it probable that that was instituted to confer Christian Graces, which was instituted in Paradise before Christianity was in being, and had been valid if Man had stood in Innocency, where there had been no need of a justifying Faith?

Observe 1. *The Punishment of the Woman; In Child-bearing.*

2. *The Comfort of the Woman; She shall be saved.*

3. *The Condition of the Salvation; If they continue.* Wherein is imply'd an Exhortation to continue in Faith, &c.

Doct. Many *Observations* might be raised.

1. *The Pain in Child-bearing is a Punishment inflicted upon the Woman for the first Sin.*

2. *The Continuance of this Punishment after Redemption by Christ, doth not hinder the Salvation of the Woman, if there be the Gospel-Conditions requisite.*

3. *The exercise of Faith, with other Christian Graces, is a peculiar means for the Preservation of Believers under God's afflicting Hand.*

I shall sum them up into this One.

Doct. *The continuance of the Punishment inflicted upon the Woman for the first Sin, doth not prejudice her eternal Salvation, nor her Preservation in Child-bearing, where there are the Conditions of Faith, and other Graces.*

Here I shall speak,

1. *Concerning the Punishment, and the Cause of it.*

2. *The Nature of it.*

3. *Its not prejudicing eternal Salvation.*

1. *Concerning the Punishment.* Child-bearing it self is not the Punishment, but the Pain in it. For the Blessing [*Increase and multiply*] was given in Innocency. This Punishment is peculiar to the Woman, and superadded to that inflicted upon the Man, wherein the Woman also hath her share, though it lay heaviest upon *Adam's* Shoulders. And because this Punishment is the greater, it is disputed in the *Schools* whether *Adam's* or *Eve's Sin were the greater.* Various Opinions there are. We may, I think, safely make these *Conclusions.*

1. *In regard of the kind of Sin, it was equal in both.* They both had an equal Pride, an equal aspiring to be like God: For in all probability *Eve* gave not her Husband the Fruit to eat, without acquainting him with the Reasons which moved her to eat it, as also the Advantage she expected from it. And God chargeth this aspiring Humour upon the Man, *Gen.* 3. 22. *The Man* כאחד, *is become like one of us.* Both of them therefore embrac'd the Temptation as it was directed, and swallow'd the Fruit, with an expectation to be like, not the Angels, (as some think, from *Gen.* 3. 5. *You shall be as Gods, Elohim*) but like God Himself, as appears by *v.* 22. in that Ironical Speech, where the Lord God *Jehovah* saith, *The Man is become like one of us.* They both believed the Serpent, both broke the Command in eating the Fruit, both were guilty of this aspiring Ambition. Some indeed think *Eve* ate twice of the Fruit, once before the Serpent, and the other time when she gave her Husband, *Gen.* 3. 6. *She did eat, and gave to her Husband with her, and he did eat* *. But this is not so clear in the Text.

* *Mariana in loc.*

2. *In regard to the first motion to Sin, Eve's Sin was the greater.* She was the seducer of *Adam*, which the Apostle expresseth in the Verse before the *Text. The Woman being deceived, was in the Transgression.* Where the Apostle intimates the Woman's Sin in that respect to be greater than the Man's. *Adam* was in it too, but the Woman deeper.

3. *In regard of the Woman's Condition, the Sin was greater on* Adam's *part* *. * *Estius in Sentent.*

1. Because he, being *the Man, had more power to resist,* more strength to argue the Case.

2. Eve *had a stronger and craftier Adversary to deal with,* the *Subtilest of all the Beasts of the Field, Gen.* 3. 1. animated and inspired by a craftier Devil. The stronger the Tempter, the more excusable the Sin. *Adam* was tempted by *Eve*, but *Eve* by the Serpent.

3. Eve *had the Command of not eating immediately from her Husband*; which laid not altogether so strong a Tie upon her as it did upon him, who had it immediately from the Mouth of God, and therefore was more certain of the verity of the Precept.

2. *Of what nature is this Punishment?*

1. *'Tis not a Punishment in a rigid sense, nor continued as such.*

1. *Because 'tis not commensurate to the nature of the Sin, neither is it that Penalty which the Law required.* Death was due, and Death immediately upon the Offence; but Death was kept off by the Interposition of the Mediator, and this which is less than Death, inflicted at present. The Mediator or Days-man interposed before this Sentence; for the Promise of the Seed which should *bruise the Serpent's Head*, preceded the pronouncing of this Sentence, *Gen.* 3. 15, 16. God arms himself against both, but not with those Weapons they had deserv'd. Capital Crimes are usually attended with capital Punishments, which draw a Destruction upon the Offender. Where Death is deserv'd, and a lighter Punishment inflicted, it is rather an Act of Clemency, than strict Justice, and may be called by the Name of a partial Pardon, or Reprieve, as well as a Punishment. 'Tis indeed a Punishment when Conscience racks a Man with further expectation of Torment, when it is but a Prologue to everlasting Burnings, when through those Pains any fall into the place of everlasting Horrour. 'Tis then more properly a Punishment, when it proceeds from an irreconcileable Justice, arm'd with Omnipotency in the Execution, not when it proceeds from an Anger mixt with Mildness, and mitigated by the Intercessions of a Mediator.

2. *'Tis not a Reparation of the Injury done to God.* One Reason of the Institution of Punishment is to repair the Damage the Person offended sustains by the Malefactor, as far as he is capable. The Injury done to God cannot be repair'd by any temporary Punishment. No nor indeed actually by an eternal one, though an eternal Suffering is all the reparation a finite Creature is capable to make to the Honour of God. A Man is capable of making some kind of Amends to his Neighbour for an Offence done, but God being infinitely our Superiour, cannot have his Honour repaired by any thing a Creature can do or suffer.

3. *'Tis not continued as a part of Satisfaction to the Justice of God.* As though Christ needed the Sufferings of the Creature to make up the Sum which he was to pay for us, and which he hath already paid. 'Tis not on the account of the Death of Christ, purely a vindictive, but a medicinal Act to a Believer. 'Tis rather to awaken us than to satisfie Justice. As we wring a Man by the Nose who is fallen into a Swoon, not to have Satisfaction from him for any Injury he may have done us, but to fetch him out of his Fit. These Punishments are to awaken Men to a sight of their first Sin.

4. *The*

4. *The proper impulſive cauſe of puniſhment is Wrath.* Though this was the firſt cauſe of this Sentence, yet it is not inflicted in Wrath upon a Believer. Though at firſt it was an effect of God's Anger, yet in a Believer it is a fruit of God's fatherly Anger, wherein he acts with a Compoſition of Judge and Father. In inflicting it he preſerves the authority of a Judge: In preſerving under it, and pardoning the ſin for which it was inflicted, he evidenceth the affection of a Father. Puniſhment, as ſuch, is only to hurt, and make Men reap the fruit of their Iniquity: But the end of Affliction, in the intention of the Perſon that doth afflict, is oftentimes to benefit.

2. *Yet it is in ſome ſort a Puniſhment, and ſomething more than an Affliction.*

1. *In reſpect of the meritorious Cauſe, Sin.* This is not inflicted *ratione abſoluti dominii*, but *ratione meriti*. 'Tis not an act of abſolute Sovereignty, but a judicial legal act, upon the demerit of Sin. There are ſome Afflictions which are not Puniſhments, as in the caſe of the Man that was born Blind: Chriſt tells us, that it was *neither for his own Sin, nor for the ſins of his Parents*, but that God might be glorified, *John* 9. 2, 3. *i. e.* God in inflicting that blindneſs, reſpected neither the ſin of the Man, nor the ſin of the Parents, but the making him a paſſive ſubject of his Glory, in our Saviour's miraculous Cure. But in this caſe God reſpected the ſin of the Woman as the cauſe and reaſon of the Puniſhment.

2. *Becauſe if Man had ſtood in Innocency, neither this Grief, nor indeed any other had been.* The Birth in Innocency, would have been without Sorrow and Grief, as the Hunger and Thirſt which would have been in *Adam* in that ſtate, would have been without that gnawing in the Stomach, and that Pain which we find in thoſe Defects, becauſe a ſtate of Integrity and perfect Righteouſneſs muſt needs be without Grief. But after the Fall all thoſe Pains incident to Man or Woman, are fruits of the curſe of Sin.

3. *This puniſhment doth not hinder Salvation, though it be continued.*

I ſhall lay down theſe *Propoſitions*, to clear up this Matter.

1. *God intended not in the acceptance of Chriſt's Mediation to remove in this Life all the Puniſhment, denounced after the Fall.* God takes away the Eternal, but not the Temporal. For this very Puniſhment was threatned after his acceptance of Chriſt's Mediation, and after the Compact and Covenant between the Father and the Son, about their Redemption of Mankind, becauſe the Promiſe preceded the Threatning, and the Mediatory Covenant preceded the Promiſe. Some parts of Chriſt's purchaſe are only payable in another Life, and ſome fruits of Redemption God intends for growth only in another Soil; ſuch are freedom from Pain, Diſeaſes, Death, and Sin. And therefore the laſt Day, when Believers ſhall be gather'd together, is called by way of excellency, the *Day of Redemption*, Eph. 4. 30. as if we had nothing of Redemption properly in this Life, becauſe we have it not compleat. And it is called upon this account, the *time of refreſhing* and *the time of the reſtitution of all things*, Act. 3. 19, 21. when all things ſhall be reſtored to their primitive Compleatneſs, and we ſhall have a full refreſhment by a removal of all the Evils which we ſuffer by reaſon of Sin. So that the Satisfaction made by Chriſt extends not to a preſent removal of all the effects of the Curſe, Pains of the Body, Death of Relations, *&c.* The ground is not reſtored to its original Vigour and Fruitfulneſs, Man muſt ſtill eat his Bread in the ſweat of his Brows, Women muſt ſtill bring forth with Sorrow, our Lives muſt waſte by a continual invaſion of Weakneſſes and Diſeaſes, we muſt drop one after another into the Grave, ſend ſome before us, and leave others to come after us; tho' God in Mercy doth mitigate theſe, in ſome more, in ſome leſs, according to his Sovereign Pleaſure; and tho' thoſe Curſes do materially continue, yet they are attended with a Bleſſing, the fruits of Chriſt's Purchaſe. But the full value of Chriſt's Satisfaction will appear, when there ſhall be a new Heaven, and a new Earth, when the day of Redemption ſhall dawn, and all Tears be wiped from Believers Eyes. But God never promiſed the total removal of them in this Life, to any Saint, no tho' he ſhould have all the Faith and Holineſs of all the Catalogue of Saints in the Book of Life centred in him.

2. *Chriſt never intended in the payment of the price of our Redemption, the preſent removal of them.* He interpoſed himſelf before this Sentence was pronounced (for the Promiſe preceded the Threatning) and therefore ſhew'd himſelf content, that thoſe Marks ſhould be ſet upon that Sin, though he prevented by his Mediation the dreadful Sentence of eternal Death. Chriſt never expected it; for the Compact between the Father and the Son did not run in this Strain. Chriſt's Enemies were not preſently upon his aſcenſion to be made his Foot-ſtool, whereof Death is not the leaſt; but he was to ſit at the right-hand of God expecting it; neither can we expect to be rid of our Burdens, till Chriſt's Victory over his Enemies be fully compleat. He ſent after his Aſcenſion the Spirit to be our Comforter, which ſuppoſeth a ſtate wherein we ſhould need Comfort; and when are we under a greater neceſſity of Comfort, than when the puniſhment of Sin is actually inflicted on us? The Spirit was to comfort us in the abſence of our Saviour, and conſequently in the abſence and want of thoſe fruits of Redemption which are not yet compleated.

3. *Chriſt intended, and did actually take away the Curſe of thoſe Puniſhments from every Believer.* As Chriſt came to take away the guilt of Sin, ſo by conſequence he took away the curſe of Puniſhment; for as he was *not a Miniſter of Sin*, ſo he was not a Miniſter of the Curſe, *Gal.* 2. 17. for he himſelf, by taking the Curſe upon himſelf, took it off from us; ſo that tho' the Curſe remains materially, yet it doth not formally. As when Man felt his Underſtanding and Will were not deſtroyed, but the purity and healthfulneſs of thoſe Faculties which made up his well-being were loſt: So in Redemption, the temporal Puniſhment is not remov'd, but the Curſe, which is the ſting in that Puniſhment, and is indeed the eſſential part of it, is remov'd, ſince the Anger of God is pacified by the death of Chriſt. Death was a Curſe upon Man for Sin, yet the death of a Believer falls not under that title; becauſe Chriſt hath taken away the ſting, 1 *Cor.* 15. 55, 56. *Oh death! where is thy ſting*, &c. And the Victory over it, he ſaith, is given us through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Whence the Apoſtle puts even Death it ſelf, and things preſent, into the Catalogue of Priviledges, upon the account of Chriſt, 1 *Cor.* 3. 22. *Life or Death, or things preſent, or things to come, all are yours, and you are Chriſts, and Chriſt is Gods.* Not that death ſimply in it ſelf is a Priviledge, but death as conquered, and as attended with conſequent Bleſſings, is ſo to a Believer. Now the ſame reaſon is for all the other parts of the Curſe, which were either Prologues to, or Attendants upon Death. And as Chriſt deſtroyed Death by raiſing his own Body from

from the Grave, thereby taking from Death the power of perpetually retaining Man: So in the ſame manner he hath took away thoſe Puniſhments that they ſhall not perpetually remain, tho' they do for a time. But *when Death is ſwallowed up in Victory*, all the Attendants on it ſhall undergo the ſame Fate. Though the Curſe was not immediately the work of the Devil, yet that which procur'd it was; and Chriſt's Intention being to take away Sin, it was alſo to take away the Curſe, which was intentionally the Devil's work, his chief aim being to bring Men under the Curſe, by enticing them to ſin. The end of his Manifeſtation was, *to deſtroy the works of the Devil*, 1 John 3.8. Chriſt therefore bore our Infirmities, our natural penal Infirmities, though not our natural ſinful ones, unleſs Morally, *i. e.* by ſuffering for them; he bore the infirmity of our Nature, though not our perſonal Infirmities. He endur'd Pain, and Grief, and Death, and greater than we can endure; but he did not bear every particular Pain and Diſeaſe which ariſeth from Sin, and a particular Cauſe; yet by ſatisfying the Juſtice of God, which required Death, he ſatisfied for all other Pains, which were parts of the Curſe, though he did not formally feel them; ſo that no longer they remain as a Curſe, no more than death it ſelf is a Curſe to a Believer. Now, as Chriſt by his death upon the Croſs did remove the ſting of Death from every Believer, and ſanctifie it, though he did not die every kind of Death which a Man may die; ſo by enduring Pain and Grief, and being a Man of Sorrows, he took away the ſting of all thoſe Pains, which are fruits of the Curſe, though they were of a different kind from thoſe he hath himſelf endured. This I have added, to prevent an Objection that may be made, that Chriſt endured not this particular Pain, and therefore the Curſe is not taken away.

4. *Hence it will follow, that to a Believer the very nature of theſe Puniſhments is alter'd.* Whence ariſeth a mighty difference between the ſame Puniſhments when ſuffered by a Believer, and by an unregenerate Man. Though they are *materially* the ſame, yet not *formally* nor *eventually*. In the one the ſting remains, in the other it is pull'd out. The one is an earneſt of eternal Torture, and a ſprinkling of Hell; the other is in order to Salvation, and ſanctified by the Blood of Chriſt. Chriſt by his Croſs hath made our Judgments to become Phyſick, and turn'd a Believers Puniſhments into Purges. The intention of the Agent makes a vaſt difference. There is a great difference between a Puniſhment edg'd with a Princes Wrath, and thoſe which are ſweetened with a Father's Affection; much difference between a Chirurgeon's Launce, and a Tyrant's Wound. The Cord that binds a Malefactor and a Patient, may be made of the ſame Hemp, and a Knife only go between; but it binds the Malefactor to Execution, the other to a Cure. In a Believer they bring forth *the peaceable fruits of Righteouſneſs*, Heb. 12. 11. ſuch fruits of Righteouſneſs which engender Peace and Joy in the Soul. That which brings ſuch excellent Effects is rather an Argument of Love in the Inflicter, and ſo cannot come under the full notion of a Puniſhment. God comforts the *Iſraelites* that were to go into Captivity, by a Goſpel Promiſe, *Hoſ.* 14. 4. *I will heal their back-ſlidings, I will love them freely, for mine Anger is turned away from them.* The Puniſhment was continued, for they never returned into their Country in the form of a Common-wealth; but the Anger was removed, ſo that the Captivity of the Believers among them, was not the effect of God's Wrath as a Judge, ſince they were under his magnificent Love as a Father. The change of our relation to God makes a change in the nature of the Puniſhment; though the Puniſhment threatned may be inflicted and continued, yet the Anger in that Puniſhment may be turned away.

5. *Therefore all temporal Puniſhments of Original Sin, though they remain, do not prejudice a Believer's preſent Intereſt.*

1. *They cut not off his relation to God.* A Son is as much a Son under the Rod, as in the Boſom; neither the Father's ſtroke, nor the Child's Grief, diſſolve that dear Relation: Nay, a Father may ſhew more of a true paternal Affection in his Chaſtiſements than in his Careſſes. The Branches which are batter'd with Sticks, may be nearer the Root than thoſe that flouriſh at their eaſe. Chriſt while a Man of Sorrows was pronounced by God, his well beloved Son, and bore our Puniſhment, not only without forfeiting his Father's Affection, but with a high Gratification of him: Neither doth God's viſiting the Seed of Chriſt with Stripes, cut off their Relation to him, *Pſal.* 89. 32. *Then will I viſit their Tranſgreſſions with Rods.* Whoſe Tranſgreſſions? *ver.* 30. *His Children.* Whoſe Children? Even the Children of him whom he would make *the firſt born higher than the King's of the Earth*, *v.* 27. Which cannot be underſtood literally of *David*, or his Lineal Poſterity in the Jewiſh Kingdom, who were never higher than the King's of the Earth.

2. *They debar not from the Preſence of God.* God may be, and is as near to us in ſupporting, as he is in Puniſhing. 'Tis not the Cloud that interpoſeth between the Sun and us, that alters the Sun's courſe, or obſtructs its Influences. Chriſt took not off the badges of Original Guilt from thoſe Diſciples which had the greateſt intereſt in his Affections; he left them in a ſinful World to endure the fruits of Sin; he ſent them not to Eaſe, Pleaſure, and a Quiet and Painleſs Life, but to Labour, Toil, and Sweat; yet promiſed that he would abide with them, that he and his Father would manifeſt themſelves to them. And he turned that Sweat and Pain which was the fruit of Sin, by his Preſence with them, to be inſtrumental for the Glory of God, and the good of themſelves in the World.

3. *They break not the Covenant:* His Rod and his Stripes, tho' they ſeem to break our Backs, make no breaches in his Covenant, *Pſalm* 89. 32, 33, 34. he will viſit Tranſgreſſion with Rods, but he will not *ſuffer his faithfulneſs to fail, nor break his Covenant.* No, they are rather Covenant Mercies, when they break our Hearts, and are means by his Grace to make our Stony Hearts more Fleſhy. He makes even thoſe diſpenſations which were pronounced for Puniſhment, to bring forth Covenant Mercies, and the rich fruits of his Grace to grow upon the ſowre Crab-ſtock of his Judgments. *Jacob* in *Gen.* 49. is ſaid to bleſs his Children, tho' he predicts ſmart Afflictions to come upon them; they are rank'd among the Bleſſings, becauſe the Covenant ſhould remain firm. The Laſh removes not the Inheritance. *Auſtin* ſaith well, *Noli attendere quam pœnam habes in flagello, ſed quem locum in Teſtamento.*

6. Add to all this, *That the firſt Promiſe ſecures a Believer under the ſufferings of thoſe Puniſhments.* God's Affection in the Promiſe of bruiſing the Serpent's Head, was more illuſtrious than his Wrath in the Threatning. There are the Bowels of a Father in the Promiſe, before there was the voice of a Judge in the Sentence. God brought Sugar with his Potion, and adminiſtred his Cordial before he ſtruck with his Launce. And therefore

that Threatning which commenc'd after the Promiſe, can no more prejudice the Fruits of the Promiſe to a Believer, than the Law, which was given 430 Years after the Promiſe to *Abraham*, could diſannul that, and make it of no effect, as the Apoſtle argues in another Caſe, *Gal.* 3. 17. Much leſs can the Threatning denounced immediately after the Promiſe, change the Veracity of God, in that which was freſh in his Mind at the very time of his Threatning.

Ob. But it may be askt, *What is the Reaſon theſe Puniſhments are continued ſince the Redemption wrought by Chriſt?*

Anſ. *'Tis frequent with God to inflict a temporal Puniſhment after Pardon.* Not as the *Papiſts* aſſert, in order to Satisfaction. *Moſes* his Unbelief hindred him from coming unto *Canaan*, ſo that when he deſired to go over *Jordan*, God was wrath with him, cut him off ſhort, and commands him ſilence, *Deut.* 3. 25, 26. *Speak to me no more of this matter.*

There are Reaſons,

1. *On God's part.* 2. *On our part.*

1. *On God's part.*

1. *'Tis congruous to the Wiſdom of God to leave them upon us while we are in the World.* Since God created Man to gain Glory by his Actions, but was preſently after his Creation diſgrac'd and diſparag'd by him; it ſeems agreeable to the Wiſdom of God, not immediately to bring him to his former State, but to leave ſome Marks of his Diſpleaſure upon Man, to mind him of the State whence he was fallen, the Miſery he contracted, and the neceſſity of flying to his Mercy for Succour.

2. *'Tis congruous to the Holineſs of God.* God keeps up thoſe Puniſhments as the Rector and Governour of the World, to ſhew his deteſtation of that Sin which brought a Diſorder and Deformity upon the Creation, and was the firſt Act of Diſhonour to God, and the firſt pollution of the Creature. 'Tis an high Vindication of the Holineſs and Authority of God, and the Majeſty and Purity of his Law, to puniſh Sin in them that are dear to him upon another's Righteouſneſs, whereby he evidenceth, that he hates Sin in all, and will not wink at it, or approve of it. So he pardoned *David*, but for the Honour of his Name, which had been blaſphemed by occaſion of *David*'s Sin, he would leave the Smart of it upon his Family, 2 *Sam.* 12. 10, 14.

3. *'Tis a Declaration of his Juſtice.* 'Tis not congruous to the Juſtice of God not to leave ſome Marks of his Anger againſt that Sin, which cauſed him to be at the expence of his Son's Blood, and is the Source of all thoſe Evils whereby God is injur'd, for which the Redeemer bled, and by which the Spirit is grieved. Since Pardon doth not, neither can alter the demerit of Sin, but that will continue; and what is once meritoriouſly a capital Crime in its own Nature, can never be otherwiſe: God may for the demonſtration of his Juſtice, inflict and continue ſomething upon the Creature, though he free him from actual condemnation. We ſhould not be ſo ſenſible of the Juſtice of God in the Death of Chriſt, did we not feel ſome Strokes of it upon our ſelves, nor what the Purchaſe of our Redemption did coſt our Saviour: What we hear doth not ſo much affect as what we feel. That which brought Diſorder into God's Government of the World, and made him change the Scene of his Providence, may very juſtly have ſome ſignal Remark upon it, notwithſtanding the Redemption, eſpecially when the Fruits of it are not fully compleat. For ſince Man was the immediate End of the Creation of this lower World, and ſince all Creatures were made for the ſervice of Man, that he might be fit for the ſervice of his righteous Creator, he did by his Fall violate the Order of the Creation, and ſubjected it to the ſervice of the Devil, a corrupt Creature, and an Enemy to God the chief Lord of the World, and ſo did deprave the Order of the Univerſe, and endeavour to fruſtrate the End of God, and the End of all the Creatures. 'Tis very rational to think, that tho' God out of his infinite Compaſſion would not loſe his Creature, yet that he ſhould ſet ſuch a Badge upon him, that ſhould make him ſenſible of a Depravation he had wrought in the World.

4. *'Tis uſeful to magnify his Love.* We ſhould not be ſenſible of what our Saviour ſuffered, nor how tranſcendently he lov'd us, if the Puniſhment of Sin had been preſently removed upon the firſt Promiſe. Nay how then could he have died in the fulneſs of Time, which was neceſſary to the demonſtration of God's Love, ſatisfaction of his Juſtice, and the ſecurity of the Creature's Happineſs? God adds the Threatning to the Promiſe, as a dark Colour to ſet off and beautifie the brighter. As Chriſt ſuffer'd that he might have compaſſion on us; ſo are we puniſhed that we might have an Eſtimation of him. When *Paul* cries out of the Body of Death, ſo when we cry out of the Puniſhment of Sin, it ſhould raiſe our Thankfulneſs for redeeming Love, *I thank God through Jeſus Chriſt*, *Rom.* 7. 24, 25. We never know the worth of Mercy, till we feel the weight of Miſery. The ſharper the Pains of Sin, the higher are our Valuations of redeeming Mercy. In *Iſa.* 4. 2, *In that Day ſhall the Branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious.* In what Day? After great Puniſhments, *v.* 1. and in the *foregoing Chapter*. He appears moſt beautiful to us when we are under the laſh for Sin. As Sin continues in us, that the juſtifying Grace of Chriſt's Righteouſneſs might more appear to us, ſo Puniſhment continues on us, that redeeming Love might be more prized by us.

2. *On our parts.* 'Tis uſeful to us,

1. *To make us abhor our firſt Defection and Sin.* 'Twas great, and is not duly conſidered by us. This Sin of *Adam* is the worſt that ever was committed in the World; *Extenſively*, though not *Intenſively*, worſe than the Sin of *Judas*, or the *Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt*. In reſpect that thoſe are but the Effects of it, and Branches of that corrupt Root. Alſo becauſe thoſe Sins hurt only the Perſons ſinning, but this drew down Deſtruction upon the whole World, and drove Thouſands into everlaſting Fire and Brimſtone. 'Tis not fit that this which was the murder of all Mankind, the diſorder of the Creation, the diſturbing of God's Reſt in the Works of his Hands, ſhould be paſt over without a Scar left upon us to make us ſenſible of the greatneſs of the Evil. Though the Wounds be great upon our Souls, yet they do not ſo much affect us as thoſe ſtrokes upon our Bodies. This certainly was one main end of God in this; to what purpoſe elſe did he (after the Promiſe of Reſtauration, and giving our firſt Parents the comfort of hearing the Head of their great Seducer threatned to be bruiſed by the Seed of the Woman) order this Puniſhment, but to put them in mind of the cauſe of it, and ſtir up a ſtanding Abhorrency of it in all Ages of the World? Had not this been his intent, he would never have uſher'd it in by a Promiſe,

* *Kellet. Miſcel.*

but

but *ipso facto*, have showered down a destroying Judgment upon the World, as he did upon *Sodom*, without any comfortable Word preceding. God inflicts those Punishments both to shew his own, and excite our detestation of this Sin: *He binds us in those Fetters to shew us our Work and our Transgression*, wherein we have exceeded, *Job* 36. 8, 9.

2. *To make us fear to sin, and to purge it out.* Sin hath riveted it self so deep, that ealie Medicines will not displace it. It hath so much of our Affections, that gentle means will not divorce us from it: We shall hate it most, when we reap the Punishment of it. Punishment is inflicted as a guard to the Law, and the security of Righteousness from the corrupt Inclinations of the Creature. So it is ἰατρεία ψυχῆς, as *Plato* calls Punishment. As Death is continu'd for the destruction of Sin in the Body, so are the lesser Punishments continu'd for the restraint of Sin in our Lives. We need further Conversions, closer Applications of our selves to God, more quick Walks to him, and Fixedness with him. God's Smitings are to quicken our Turnings. As it was the fruit of *Jacob's trouble to take away Sin*, *Isa.* 27. 9. so it is a great End of God in those common Punishments of Mankind to weaken Corruption in a Believer by them. Therefore when we have any more remarkable Sense of those Punishments, let us see what Wounds our Sin gets thereby: How our Hatred of it is encreased. If we find such gracious Effects, we shall have more reason to bless God for it, than complain of it. Oh happy Troubles, when they repair, not ruine us; when they pinch us and cure us, like Thunder, which, though it trouble the Air, disperses the infectious Vapours mixed with it, or the Tide, which, though turning the Stream of the River against its natural Course, carries away much of the Filth with it at its Departure.

3. *To exercise Grace.* Punishments of themselves have no power to set any Grace on work, but rather excite our Corruptions; but the Grace of God accompanying them makes them beneficial for such an End. God hath to a Believer altered the Commission of such Punishments, they are to exercise our Faith, improve our Patience, draw us nearer in Acts of recumbency; but he hath given them no order to impair our Grace, waste our Faith, or deaden our Hopes.

1. *Faith and Trust*, 1 Tim. 5. 5. *She that is desolate trusts in God.* The lower the State, the greater necessity, and greater obligation to trust; such Exercises manifest, that the Condition we are in is sanctified to us. As Sin is suffered to dwell in a regenerate Man to occasion the Exercise of Faith, so is the Punishment of Sin continued for the same End. The continuance of it is a mighty ground of our confidence in God. We experiment the Righteousness of God in his Threatning; and it is an evidence he will be the same in his Promise. When we bear the Marks of his punitive Justice, it is an evidence that he will keep up the credit of his Mercy in the Promise, as well as of his Justice in the Punishment, both being pronounced at the same time; the Good of the one is as sure by God's Grace to our Faith, as the Smart of the other is by our Desert to that Sin. The continuance therefore of those Punishments may be used by a Believer, as a means to fix a stronger confidence in God; for if he were not true to the one, we might suspect his truth in the other; If God should be careless of maintaining the Honour of his Truth in his Threatnings, we should have reason to think that he would be careless of maintaining the Honour of it in his Promises, and thereupon be filled with Despondencies. What comfort could we have in an Unrighteous God? The Righteousness of God in inflicting Punishment is but a Branch of that essential Righteousness of his Nature, which obligeth him to be righteous in the performing his Promise too. 'Tis a mighty support to Faith, that the Righteous God loveth Righteousness.

2. *Obedience in a Believer hath a greater Lustre by them.* It was the Glory of *Job* that he preserv'd his Integrity under the smartest Troubles. To obey a God always smiling is not so great an Act of Loyalty, as to obey a God frowning and striking. 'Tis the Crown of our Obedience to follow our God, though he visits us with Stripes. 'Tis a noble Temper to love that Hand which strikes us, and chearfully serve that Father which lasheth us: Our Obedience is too low when it must be excited by a succession of Favours, and cannot run to God unless he allures it by Smiles. 'Tis then a generous and sincere Obedience, when we can embrace him with a Sword in his Hand, trust him though he kill us, love him though he stone us, and as the *Persians* did by the Sun, adore him when he scorcheth, as well as when he refresheth us. Were these Punishments wholly absent, we should not have a Rise for so heroick Faith and Love; and our Holiness in this State would want much of its Lustre.

3. *Humility.* These Punishments are left upon us to allay our Pride, and be our Remembrancers of our deplorable Miscarriage. It had been an occasion of Pride in us to be freed from Punishment at the first appearance of a Mediator. 'Tis reasonable the Soul should have occasions to exercise it self in a Grace contrary to that first Sin Pride, which was the cause of the Fall. We affected to be Gods, and Punishment is left that we may know we are but Men, which is the end of Judgments, *Psal.* 9. 20. *Put them in fear, O Lord, that the Nations may know they are but Men*; we should otherwise think our selves Gods. We are so inclined to Sin, that we need strong Restraints, and so swell'd with a natural Pride against God, that we need Thorns in the Flesh to let out the corrupt Matter. The constant hanging the Rod over us makes us lick the Dust, and acknowledge our selves to be altogether at the Lord's Mercy. Though God hath pardon'd us, he will make us wear the Halter about our Necks to humble us.

4. *Patience.* Were there no Punishments, there would be but little occasion for Patience. This Grace would not have had its extensive Exercise, its full Formation without such Strokes left upon the Creature. Resignation to God, which is the beauty of Grace, would not come to its due Maturity and Stature without such Trials. So that in these Reasons of the continuance, we see they are rather Advantages to Salvation, than Hindrances, by promoting through the influence of God's Grace, those Graces in us which are necessary to a happy State.

Use.

1. *See the infinite Mercy of God*, who, when upon the Defection of our first Parents he might have burnt up the whole World as he did *Sodom*, would upon the Redeemers account, who stept in, impose so light a Punishment upon that Sin; 'tis but light in comparison of what the nature of Sin deserves,

deſerves, every Sin being a Contempt of the Majeſty of God, and a Slight of his Authority; and that Sin having greater Aggravations attending it. 'Tis a merciful Puniſhment, it might have been an everlaſting Damnation: God might have left us to the firſt Sentence of the Law, and made no exchange of eternal Death for temporal Pains: He might have been deaf to the Voice of a Mediator, and put his Mercy to Silence as he did *Moſes*, *Speak no more of this matter*; but his Bowels pull his Juſtice by the Arm, and hinder that fatal Stroke; and a Mediator by his interpoſition, breaks off the full Blow from us, by taking it upon himſelf, and ſuffers only ſome few ſmart Drops to light upon us. Oh wonderful Mercy! that our Puniſhment ſhould not hinder, but rather further our everlaſting Happineſs by incomprehenſible Grace. Let not then our Puniſhments for Sin hinder our Thankfulneſs. Let our Mouths ſwell with Praiſe, while our Bodies crumble away by Diſeaſes, and Relations drop from us by Death. Let us love God's Glory, admire his Mercy, while we feel his Arrows: Whatever our Puniſhments are, there is more matter for Praiſe than Murmuring.

2. *How ſhould we bewail Original Sin, the firſt Fall of Man?* 'Tis a great ſlighting of God not to take notice either of his judicial or fatherly Proceedings. As we are to lament any particular Sin more eſpecially when the Judgments of God, which bear the Marks of that Sin in their Foreheads, are upon a Nation or Perſon; ſo, though we are to bewail the Sin of our Nature at all times, yet more ſignally when the Strokes of God, the Remembrancers of it, are moſt ſignally upon us. A Child doth more particularly think of his Fault when he is under the correcting Rod for it. We ſhould ſcarce think of Original Sin, if we did not feel Original Puniſhment. All the Pains of Sin ſhould be conſidered as God's Sermon to us, and we ſhould under them be afflicted with that Sin, as we may ſuppoſe *Adam* and *Eve* were, when they firſt heard the Puniſhment denounc'd in Paradice, when they had a Senſe of the flouriſhing Condition they had loſt for a ſlight Temptation. To turn Sorrow for Pain into Sorrow for our firſt Sin, is to ſpiritualize our Grief, and ſanctifie our Paſſion.

3. *What an Argument for Patience under Puniſhments is here?* The continuance of them doth not hinder our Salvation. *Shall a living Man complain, a Man for the Puniſhment of his Sin?* For ſuch a Puniſhment that doth not hinder his eternal Welfare, but by the Grace of God, and the exerciſe of Faith, rather promote it? God promiſed as well as threatned: Both his Mercy and Righteouſneſs directs him to that which is moſt for his Honour, and our Good. Let us not by any Impatience charge infinite Wiſdom with Blindneſs or Unrighteouſneſs. They were Puniſhments at firſt, but by Faith in Chriſt, the Deportment of a Judge is changed into that of a Father. *Druſius* hath an Obſervation, *Pſal.* 56. 10. *In God will I praiſe his Word, in the Lord will I praiſe his Word.* The firſt Word *Elohim*, is a Name belonging to God as a *Judge*, the ſecond Word *Jehovah* is a Name of *Mercy*; I will praiſe God, whether he deal with me in a way of *Juſtice* or in a way of *Mercy*, when he hath Thunder in his Voice as well as when he hath Honey under his Tongue. Oh how ſhould we praiſe God, and pleaſure our ſelves by ſuch a Frame! When our Diſtreſſes lie hard upon us, we ſhould juſtifie God's Holineſs. So the *Pſalmiſt*, or rather Chriſt in the bearing our Puniſhment, *Pſalm* 22. 1. *But thou art Holy*, when he expoſtulates with God why he had forſaken him, juſtifies God's Holineſs. Howſoever thou dealeſt with me, thou art Holy in all thy ways. Thou doſt me no Wrong; why ſhould I complain when Holineſs and hatred of Sin guides thee, in all thoſe Actings with me?

4. *How earneſt ſhould we be to get rid of Sin?* By Pardon, by Sanctification. Guilt is the Sting of Puniſhment. Sin only embitters Trouble. The Remiſſion and Mortification of Sin is the Health of the Soul. If the Arrow's Head be out of a Wound, the Cure will be more eaſie. *Look upon my Affliction, and my Pain, and forgive all my Sin*, ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*, *Pſal.* 25. 8. Forgiveneſs of Sin would mitigate the ſharpneſs of his Pain.

5. *How ſhould we act Faith on God in Chriſt before, and under ſuch a condition of Puniſhment?* As we can never love God too much, becauſe he is the higheſt Good, ſo we can never truſt God too much, becauſe he is one of immutable Truth; when we are in Straits, it is not for want of Faithfulneſs in God, but for want of Faith in us, that we are many times not preſerved. We diſtruſt God, and this is the cauſe we fall into many Diſtreſſes, which otherwiſe would not come upon us, or be quickly removed from us. Did we graſp the Promiſes cloſely, and plead them earneſtly, we ſhould often find the Deliverance we deſire. We pray, but we pray not in Faith, we cry for Deliverance but not with Confidence, we plead God's Power but forget his Promiſe. Many temporal Promiſes are not perform'd to us, not for want of Truth in God, but for want of Faith in us. Particular fiduciary Acts will draw out the Riches of a Promiſe, for want of which we remain poor in the midſt of Abundance. Some think that the Promiſe made to *Joſiah* of his dying in Peace, which Phraſe is uſually meant in Scripture of a peaceable Death upon the Bed, was not performed, becauſe *Joſiah* was out of the way againſt the Precept of God, and therefore could not act Faith requiſite to the fulfilling of that Promiſe, for Faith is much dampt in its Actings under preſent contracted Guilt. * This Faith in Promiſes for outward Preſervation, is not an abſolute, infallible Aſſurance that God will beſtow ſuch outward things (becauſe the Promiſes themſelves are not abſolute) but it is rather an indefinite act of recumbency, and ſubmiſſion, referring it to his good Pleaſure towards us. But it is certain we are very much defective in acting Faith upon Promiſes for temporal Mercies, becauſe it is an Epidemical Diſtemper in us to truſt God with our Souls rather than with our Bodies and outward Concerns. * *Tho. Good-win.*

1. *Exerciſe Faith before ſuch a time.* Furniſh your ſelves with the Comforts of the Covenant, and the efficacy of the death of Chriſt. In bodily Diſtempers our Minds are diſcompoſed and we cannot have that freedom of Thoughts and ſpiritual Reflections. This is the way to engage God, who is the beſt Aſſiſtant, *a very preſent help in time of Trouble.*

2. *Exerciſe it in the uſe of ſpiritual means.* God never commanded us to truſt him but in his own Methods. That is not truſt in God which is attended with any wilful Omiſſions. If we be careful in doing our Duty, God will be careful in doing what belongs to him. Prayer is the beſt means for Faith to exerciſe it ſelf in. A ſpirit of Prayer before-hand, is a ſign of good Succeſs. When the Heart is drawn out to cry, it is a ſign God ſtands ready with the Mercy in his Hand. Times of

Diſtreſs

Diſtreſs are times of calling upon God, *Pſal.* 18. 6. *In my diſtreſs I called upon the Lord, and he heard my cry.* God is to be acknowledged in all our ways, *Prov.* 3. 6. In the beginning by Prayer for his Direction, in the end by Praiſes for the Succeſs. We are uſually more earneſt in Trouble. We have not at all times an equal Fervency. Chriſt himſelf (ſome ſay) had not, for when he was in his Agony he *prayed more earneſtly* than before, *Luke* 22. 44.

3. *Act Faith upon the Relation God bears to you.* He is our Father. We truſt earthly Fathers, and are confident they will not abuſe us. How much more ought we to truſt our heavenly Father, and not doubt of his Sincerity towards us? The greater the Trouble, the more we ſhould plead God's relation to us. Our Saviour in the Garden, *Mat.* 26. 39, 42. at his entrance into his Paſſion for us, prays to God by the title of *my Father*, whereas at other times he calls God Father without that appropriation; But now he would excite his Confidence, and truſt in God, and thoſe Promiſes he had made him to aſſiſt him in that hour.

4. *Act Faith upon the Attributes of God.* There is nothing in God can affright a Believer. There is not an Attribute but ſeems fixed in God to encourage our dependance on him in any Strait, Wiſdom, Mercy, Truth, Omniſcience, Power, Juſtice too (for what comfort could we have to truſt in an unjuſt God?) All which Attributes are promiſed to be aſſiſtant to a Believer in any caſe of Need, in the Covenant of Grace, where God makes himſelf over to us as our God, and therefore all that God hath, and is, is promiſed there for our good. Upon the Power of God. God's Omnipotence was the ground of our Saviour's Prayer to him in his Diſtreſs, and that which the Apoſtle ſeems to intimate his eying of, *Heb.* 5. 7. *He offered up Prayers unto him that was able to ſave him from death.* And, *Pſal.* 16. 1. The Pſalmiſt, or rather Chriſt, pleads the power of God. *Preſerve me, O Lord, for in thee do I put my truſt,* מכתם *Aquila* renders it *ſtrong.* Plead the truth of God in his Promiſe. The Promiſe that preceded the Threatning, *viz.* The *bruiſing the Serpent's head*, the defeating all his Plots and Deſigns, whereof this was one, to bring Man into a ſtate of Puniſhment. There is a Promiſe which hath been eſpecially tryed and made good, though all in the Book of God have been found true, *Pſal.* 18. 30. *The Word of the Lord is tryed.* Not one word but the truth of it hath been tryed; but eſpecially this word, *That God is a Buckler to them that truſt in him, i. e.* That he will preſerve and defend depending Believers.

5. *Act Faith upon Chriſt.* Hath God delivered Chriſt to Death? It muſt be for ſome glorious end; not for deſtruction of the Creature, that might have been done without the death of his Son; but for remiſſion; if ſo, there is ſufficient ground to truſt him for every thing elſe. We have a merciful High Prieſt, which encourageth us to make our Addreſſes to him. He cannot but be touched with the feeling of our Infirmities, our penal Infirmities which he ſuffered, our ſinful Infirmities for which he ſuffered. Where can he ſhew his Mercy but in our Miſery? Are we under God's Strokes? Chriſt himſelf felt them, that he might the better pity us. Are we in ſuch caſes tempted to deſpond and diſtruſt? He felt ſuch fiery Darts of the Devil that he might the better commiſerate us. Run to him and cry out, Bleſſed Redeemer, Compaſſionate High Prieſt, let thy pity break out to allay my Grief, and ſupport my Weakneſs.

Take a few Encouragements to fiduciary Acts.

1. *Nothing is more pleaſing to God.* The continuance in Faith is the neceſſary condition of our Salvation. Nothing more honours him. We honour his Wiſdom and Goodneſs, when we acknowledge that he hath a ſingular care of his Creatures, and truſt him in his own Methods; we own his Skill in governing, and his Goodneſs in bringing every thing about to the beſt end. Chriſt hath given us the higheſt example of Truſt, and highly pleaſed God in it, in coming into the World to dye upon God's bare Word and Oath. 'Tis all we can do to glorifie God. Other Graces glorifie ſome particular Atribute, but confidence in God glorifies all in the lump, his Wiſdom, Righteouſneſs, Faithfulneſs, Mercy, Truth, Omniſcience, and Power. There is no Attribute but gives a particular encouragement to Faith, and there is no Attribute but Faith returns a Revenue of Glory to. Deſpondency diſparageth the Father's Affection and the Redeemer's Love; if we do not truſt him, we imply that he hath not either Wiſdom, or Love, or Power, or Faithfulneſs enough to be truſted by us, and that his Word is of no value.

2. *Nothing is more ſucceſsful.* 'Tis the Argument the *Pſalmiſt*, or rather *Chriſt* uſeth, *Pſal.* 16. 1. *Preſerve me.* Why? Becauſe *I truſt in thee.* Truſt in God is a ſtrong Argument to prevail with God for Preſervation. All the ancient Fathers were delivered by God upon their *truſt*, Pſal. 22. 4, 5. *Our Fathers truſted in thee, they truſted and thou didſt deliver them, they cryed unto thee, and were delivered, they truſted in thee, and were not confounded.* Faith in Goſpel-promiſes is not a Grace of a new date. 'Tis as old as *Adam*'s fall, as old as the *Patriarchs*, and ſucceſsful in all Ages of the World. They were under New-Covenant Promiſes, and had New-Covenant Deliverances before the Promiſes were actually ſealed by the Blood of Chriſt. How much ſtronger Ground have we of Truſt now? Faith draws out the treaſures of God, and ſets God on work to diſplay both his Wiſdom, Goodneſs, and Power, *Pſal.* 31. 19. *How great is thy Goodneſs which thou haſt laid up for them that fear thee, which thou haſt wrought for them that truſt in thee!* Much more when Faith is vigorouſly acted. Unbelief binds God's hands, Faith then draws forth that Power which unbelief locks up. God is firſt the *hope of Iſrael*, and then *the Saviour thereof in times of Trouble*, Jer. 14. 8. of every one of *Iſrael*. Where God inſpires with a humble Confidence in himſelf, there is hope of Succeſs, for God will not fruſtrate the Expectation of that which he hath been the Author of in his Creature. *David* had found ſuch good evidence of this, that he tells God he would make bold with him upon every occaſion of Fear, *Pſal.* 57. 3. *What time I am afraid I will truſt in thee.*

3. *Nothing more calms the Spirit.* A fiduciary Reliance on God is the way to live free from Fears and Anxieties. Faith is an eſtabliſhing Grace. By Faith we ſtand. What Storms would be in the Minds of poor Paſſengers in a Ship, as great as thoſe in the Sea, if they had no *Pilot* to direct them? How ſoon would the arrival of a skilful Steers-man, in whom they could confide, and that knew their Shelves and Rocks upon the Coaſt, calm their Diſquiets?

Well then, to *ſumm up all*, This very Scripture is a Letter of Comfort, writ only to Women in the ſtate of Child-bearing; claim it as your right by Faith. What Comfort is here to appeal from the Threatning to the Promiſe, from God as a Judge, to God as a Father, from God Angry to God

God pacified in Christ? How comfortable is this, that when God seems to fight against you with his Punishments, you can take off the edge of his Weapons by the Pleas of his Promise? Oh blessed God, who arms a Believer against himself, before he arms himself against a Believer! You can never be under the Curse if you have Faith, as long as God is sensible of his own Credit in the Promise. In the material part of the Punishment there is no difference between a Believer and an Unbeliever; *Jacob* is pinch'd with Famine as well as the *Canaanite*; but *Jacob* is in Covenant, and hath a God in Heaven, and a *Joseph* in *Ægypt* to preserve him. God directs every Pain in all by his Providence, in Believers by a particular Love; every gripe in all the Physick he gives us. He orders even his *Contendings* with his Creature in such a measure as *the Spirit may not fail before him*; Isa. 57. 16.

A DISCOURSE OF THE Sins of the Regenerate.

1 John 3. 9.

Whosoever is born of God doth not commit Sin, for his Seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

THE Apostle having exhorted the Saints to whom he writes in the former Chapter, to *abide* in Christ, and to *do righteousness*, v. 28, 29. follows on this Exhortation, with several Arguments and Demonstrations, that a true Christian is not only bound to do so, but that he indeed doth so.

1. From that *hope* which hath eternal happiness for its Object, v. 2. 3. Where this hope is truly founded, it will inflame us with a desire and endeavour after Holiness, which is a necessary means to attain it. There will be an endeavour to be like that Head here, which they hope to be perfectly like hereafter.

2. From the *contrariety of Sin* to the Law of God. 'Tis not reasonable, neither can there be such a disingenuous disposition in any, to transgress the Laws of that Person from whom only he expects his highest Felicity; and the Law of God being pure and perfect, Sin being contrary unto it, must be filthy and unreasonable. A Christian who is guided by this Law, will not transgress it.

3. From the *End of Christ's coming*, which was to *take away Sin*, v. 5. And a Christian ought not to endeavour to frustrate the Ends of Christ's coming, by the nourishment of that which he came to destroy.

4. From the *Communion they have with Christ*; abiding in him, they sin not; if any Man sin, it is an evident sign he hath not the knowledge of Christ, v. 6. nor ever was conform'd to that Pattern. Where there is a Communion with Christ, it is necessary such an one should be righteous, because Christ was so.

5. From the *first Author of Sin*, the Devil; he that sins, hath a communion with the Devil, v. 8. as he that doth righteousness, hath a communion with Christ. And to maintain the design and works of the Devil, is to walk contrary to the end and design of Christ, which was to destroy the works of the Devil; those therefore that indulge themselves in Sin, are the Seed of the Devil.

6. From the *New Nature of a Christian*, which hinders him from Sin, v. 9. *Whosoever is born of God doth not commit Sin*, &c. Various Expositions there are of this. The greatest difficulty lies in those words; [*Doth not commit sin*, and *cannot sin.*]

1. *He ought not to sin.* Cannot indeed is sometimes taken for ought not; as *Acts* 4. 20. *For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.* They had a *Physical* ability to hold their peace, but *morally* they could not, because of Christ's Precept to them to publish those things. What we cannot lawfully do, we cannot do; *Non possumus quod non jure possumus*; what we cannot honourably do, we are said not to be able to do, *Mark* 6. 5. *He could there do no mighty work.* Christ had *natural* Ability to do mighty Works there, but *morally* he could not, *honourably* he could not, because of their unbelief, which was a moral hindrance; and according to God's Methods, there was no hope of doing any good among them; their unbelief was so strong, they gave him no opportunity to do any mighty work. But this is not the meaning of *cannot* here, *ought not.* For an unrenewed Man ought not to sin any more than a regenerate Man. But the Apostle attributes here something peculiar to the *Regenerate*, adding the reason [*because he is born of God.*] Though it carry in it something of an Obligation in a higher manner than upon a meer natural Man: He ought not to sin, not only upon the general Obligation which

which lies upon all Men not to sin, but upon the more special one of his State, being a Son of God, which ought to be counted a moral impossibility by a righteous Man. Regeneration gives a Man no advantage to sin, no external licence, no internal liberty or ability to sin; for the Apostle useth this as an Argument to them, as well as an establishment, not to sin, because they are born of God, which was a more special Obligation upon them not to sin, than what they had by nature.

2. *He cannot sin so easily.* 'Tis not impossible, but difficult for him to sin, because by receiving Grace, he receives a Principle contrary to Sin, and so hath a Principle of Resistance against it: Or, because by that Grace he is inclined not to sin, and so there is *inchoativè*, an impossibility of sinning, which shall hereafter be perfected; Not a simple impossibility, but *secundum quid*: He endeavours to work as one born of God, and follows the motions of the Spirit against the Sin to which he is tempted.

He cannot sin, i. e. 'tis a hard matter for him to sin; for considering the efficacy of Grace, and the assistances attending it, it is a difficult thing for a righteous Man to be brought under the power of Sin; he may sin easily in respect of the frailty of the Flesh, but not so easily in regard of the *abiding of the Seed* in him, which helps him to beware of Sin. Grace being a divine Habit, hath the nature of a Habit, which is to incline the Person to Acts proper to that Habit, and facilitate those Acts, as a Man that hath the Habit of an Art or Trade, can with more ease work in it than any other.

3. *He cannot sin, in sensu formali*, as he is Regenerate, or *ex vi talis nativitatis*. Grace cannot sin, because it can do nothing but what pertains to the nature of it; as the Heat cannot cool, Unrighteousness cannot do good. Fire doth not moisten, *per se*, nor Water naturally heat. But it is not said, *The Seed of God cannot sin*; but in the Concrete, *He that is born of God*; and *he that hath the Seed remaining in him cannot sin*. A gracious Man, as a gracious Man cannot sin, for Grace being a good Habit, is not capable of producing Acts contrary to its nature. Sin in a regenerate Man proceeds not from his Grace, but from his Corruption. Grace cannot be the Principle of Evil. But because his Grace is imperfect, dwelling among remainers of Sin, therefore a Man's Sins, though this Principle in him keeps Sin from attaining a full dominion and superiority. Yet though he doth sin, his Sin is not the proper fruit of the *form* whereby he is regenerate.

4. *He cannot sin, in sensu composito*; as long as he is Regenerate, as long as the Seed remains in him, as long as he follows the motions of the Spirit, and Grace, which are able to overcome the motions of Concupiscence; but he may give up the Grace. As an impregnable Tower cannot be taken as long as it is defended by those within; but they may fling away their Arms, and deliver it up. Grace *quantum est ex parte sua*, renders a Man impeccable, as long as it continues in him; as Innocency did render *Adam* Immortal, as long as he persisted in it. But we may, *ex culpâ nostrâ*, lose it by mortal sin, and so perish, as *Adam* by his own Will lost the integrity of his Nature, and was thereby made subject to Death. This is founded upon a false *Hypothesis*, viz. *That Grace may be lost*: And the Text renders the being born of God, and the Seed remaining in us, to be the reason why we cannot sin, not the condition of our not sinning; for if it remains, and we cannot sin therefore, how can any sin come in to expel that which preserves us from it? A Man must cease, according to what the Apostle here writes, to be born of God, before he can sin in that sense the Apostle means.

5. *He doth not commit sin, and cannot sin*, i. e. *Grave peccatum*, the mortal Sin, and persist in it. The Sin of unbelief, which is called in Scripture by way of eminency [*Sin*, and *the Sin*] 'tis the chief Sin the Spirit convinceth of; 'tis the Sin that *easily besets us*, Heb. 12. 1. *Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us*, i. e. *especially Unbelief*. Though this be *true*, yet it is not the *full* meaning and sense of it.

6. *He doth not commit sin, and cannot sin*, as the *Devil doth*, or as one that is of a diabolical Nature, as one that is acted by the Devil; which is clear by the Antithesis, v. 8. *He that commits sin, is of the Devil, for the Devil sins from the beginning*. He cannot set himself against Christ, as the *Devil* doth, as the Pharisees did, in which respect our Saviour calls them the *Children of the Devil*, for their remarkable and constant opposition to him. He cannot make a practice of Sin, and persist in it, as the Devil doth, who began to sin presently after the Creation, and continueth in it ever since. He *sins*, the *present* tense noting the continued act of the Devil. Sin may be consider'd *two ways*; *viz.* As to

1. *The Act of sin.* Thus a Believer sins.

2. *The Habit of sin*, or custom in it. When a Man runs to sin freely, willingly, and is not displeased with it. Thus a Believer doth not commit sin, nor cannot sin. He commits it not. *Potiùs patitur quam facit*; he gives not a full consent to it; he hates it while he cannot escape it. He is not such a committer of it, as to be the *servant of sin*, John 8. 34. *He that commits sin, is the servant of sin*; because he serves *with his mind the Law of God*: He bestows not all his Thoughts and Labour upon Sin, in making *provision for the flesh*, Rom. 13. 14. in being a Caterer for sin: He *yields* not up his *Members as Instruments of unrighteousness unto sin*; he doth not let *sin reign in his mortal body*, nor yield a voluntary obedience to it in the Lusts thereof, *Rom.* 6. 12, 13. for, being God's *Son*, he cannot be sins *Servant*; he cannot sin in such a manner, and so absolutely, as one of the Devil's Children, one born of the Devil.

His Seed remains in him.] *His*, refers to God, or the Person born of God. God's Seed efficiently, Man's Seed subjectively.

Born of God.] Twice repeated: In the *first* is chiefly intended the declaration of the State, in the *second*, the disposition or likeness to God.

Observe 1. *The Description of a Christian.* [*Born of God.*

2. *The Priviledge of this Birth*, or *Effects of it.*

1. *Inactivity to sin*; [He *doth not* commit it.

2. *Inability to sin*; [*He cannot.*

3. *The ground and reasons of those Priviledges.*

1. *The inward Form or Principle whereby he is regenerate, which makes him unactive.*

2. *The efficient Cause, which makes him unable*; [*Born of God*; or likeness to God makes him unable.

4. *The latitude of them in regard of the Subject*; [*Whosoever*; every regenerate Man. I intend not to run thorow all the parts of this Text, having only chose it as a bar to presumption, which may be occasioned by the former Doctrine, upon Mens false Suppositions of their having Grace. There needs not any Doctrine from the *Text*; but if you please take this:

Doct.

Doctrine. *There is a mighty difference between the ſinning of a Regenerate and a Natural Man: A Regenerate Man doth not, neither can commit Sin in the ſame manner as an Unregenerate Man doth.*

That I may not be miſtaken, obſerve, when I uſe the Word *May* Sin, I underſtand it of a *May of poſſibility*, not a *May of lawfulneſs*: And when I ſay a Regenerate Man *cannot ſin* ſo or ſo, underſtand it of a ſetled habitual Frame; diſtinguiſh between Paſſion, and Surprize, a ſudden Effort of Nature, and an habitual and deliberate Determination. The Senſe of this *cannot* I ſhall lay down in ſeveral Propoſitions.

1. *It is not meant exclusively of leſſer Sins, or Sins of infirmity.* There are Sins of daily incurſion and lighter Skirmiſhes; there are ſome open, ſome ſecret Aſſaults, a multitude of ſecret *Faults*, *Pſal.* 19. 12. undiſcernable and unknown. Every good Man is like *Jacob*, though he hath one Thigh ſound, he hath another halting. I do not find that ever God intended to free any in this Life from the Remainders of Sin: What he hath not evidenc'd to have done in any, we may ſuppoſe he intended not to do. 'Tis a total Apoſtacy, not a partial Fall, that the Covenant provides againſt. Chriſt in his laſt Prayer, prays for Believers Preſervation, and gradual Sanctification, not for their preſent Perfection. The very Office of Advocacy erected in Heaven, ſuppoſeth Sins after Regeneration, and during our Continuance in the World, 1 *John* 2. 1. *My little Children, I write unto you that you ſin not; and if any Man ſin, we have an Advocate with the Father. In many things we offend all*, *James* 3. 2. Not only you that are the inferiour ſort of Chriſtians, but we *Apoſtles*. *We* is extenſive; All offend *in many things*. 'Tis implyed in the Lord's Prayer, the daily ſtanding Pattern. As we are to pray for our daily Bread, ſo for a daily Pardon, and againſt daily Temptations, which ſuppoſeth our being ſubject to the one, and our commiſſion of the other. The brighteſt Sun hath its Spots; the cleareſt Moon her dark Parts. The Church in her higheſt Comlineſs in this World hath her blackneſs of Sin as well as of Affliction; becauſe, though Sin be diſmounted from its Throne by Grace, it is not expelled out of its Reſidence: It *dwells* in us, tho' it doth not rule over us, *Rom.* 7. 20.. And it cannot but manifeſt it ſelf by its Fruits while it remains. Yet thoſe Sins do not deſtroy our Adoption. *Chriſt* in his Sermon on the *Mount* to his Diſciples, ſuppoſeth the inherency of Sin, with the continuance of the relation of Children, *Matth.* 7. 11. *If then you being evil know how to give good Gifts to your Children, how much more ſhall your Father which is in Heaven give good things to them that ask him?* He doth acknowledge them Evil while he calls God their Father, and gives them the Title of Children. To ſin is to decline from that Rectitude in an Act, which the Agent ought to obſerve. In this reſpect we ſin, according to the tenour of the Law, in every thing we do, though not according to the tenour of the Goſpel.

2. *A Regenerate Man cannot live in the cuſtomary Practice of any known Sin, either of omiſſion or commiſſion.*

1. *Not in a conſtant omiſſion of known Duties.* If a good Man falls into a groſs Sin, he doth not totally omit the performance of common Duties to God: Not that this Attendance on God in his Ordinances doth of it ſelf argue a Man to be a good Man; for many that walk in a conſtant Courſe of Sin, may from natural Conſcience and Education be as conſtant in the performing external Services as he is. 'Tis a proper Note of an Hypocrite, that he will not *always* delight himſelf in the Almighty, nor *always* call upon God, *Job* 27. 10. *i. e.* not cuſtomarily: Whence it follows, that a Delight in God in Duties of Worſhip, is a Property of a Regenerate Man. An Act of Sin may impair his livelineſs in them, but not cauſe him wholly to omit them. We need not queſtion but *David*, in the time of his Impenitency, did go to the Tabernacle, attend upon the Worſhip of God: 'Tis not likely that for *Ten Months* together he ſhould wholly omit it, though no doubt but he was dead-hearted in it, which is intimated when he deſires a *free Spirit*, *Pſal.* 51. and prays for *quickening*, *Pſal.* 143. 11. one of his Penitential Pſalms. A total neglect of Ordinances and Duties, is a ſhrewd ſign of a total Apoſtacy, and that Grace was never in ſuch a Man's Heart; eſpecially a total omiſſion of Prayer; this is an high Contempt of God, denying him to be the Author of our Mercies, depriving him of the Prerogative of governing the World, diſowning any need of him, any ſufficiency in him, declaring we can be our own Gods, and ſubſiſt of our ſelves without him, and that there is no need of his Bleſſing. Grace, though ſunk under a Sin, will more or leſs deſire its proper Nouriſhment, the Milk of the Word, and other Inſtitutions of God. Nature, though oppreſt by a Diſeaſe, will require Food to keep it alive. A good Man in this Caſe is like the Planets, which tho' they be turned about daily from *Eaſt* to *Weſt*, by the motion of the *primum mobile*, yet they ſtill keep up their proper motion from *Weſt* to *Eaſt*, either ſlower or quicker.

2. *Not in a cuſtomary commiſſion of any known Sin.* To *work Iniquity* is the proper Character of Natural Men, hence called *Workers of Iniquity*, *Pſal.* 5. 5. *Thou hateſt all workers of Iniquity.* And by the ſame Title are they called by Chriſt at the Day of Judgment; *Depart from me all you workers of Iniquity*, that contrive, lay the Plat-form of it, and work at it as at a Trade, or as a curious piece of Art. 'Tis one thing to ſin, another to commit or do a Sin, *Pſal.* 119. 3. *They do not Iniquity, they walk in his ways*; their uſual, conſtant Courſe is in the way of God; they *do not Iniquity*, they ſettle not to it, take not pleaſure in it as their Work and way of Livelihood. So it is the Character of an ungodly Man to *walk* in the ways of Sin. *Walking according to the courſe of the World*, and *fulfilling the Deſires of the Fleſh*, are one and the ſame thing, *Eph.* 2. 2, 3. A good Man may ſtep into a way of Sin, but he *walks not* in it, to make it either his Buſineſs or Recreation. So walking in Sin, and living in Sin, are put together: What is called *walking after the Fleſh*, *Rom.* 8. 1. is called *living after the Fleſh*, *v.* 13. which is the ſame with committing Sin in the *Text*: So *ways* and *doings* are joyned together, *Zach.* 1. 6. To make Sin our Way or Walk, is when a Man chuſes it as a particular Trade and way of living. A good Man in Sin is out of his Way; a wicked Man in Sin is in his Way; a good Man will not have ſo much as one way of Sin, a wicked hath many ways, for he ſeeks out many Inventions. Not one Example of the groſs Fall of a good Man in Scripture, will countenance any Pretence for a Courſe in Sin; for either they were not in a *Courſe* of Sin, or it was not a Courſe of known Sins.

Noah was drunk but once, yet that was not a Sin of the ſame Hue with that among us. He firſt found out the Fruits of the *Vine*, *Gen.* 9. 20.

knew

knew nothing of the ſtrength of the Grape, and therefore might eaſily be overcome by an unuſual Liquor.

Lot's Inceſt was but twice, and that unwillingly: He knew not his Daughters lying down or riſing neither time, *Gen.* 19. 33, 35. And for his Daughters, ſome think that they thought there was no Man left upon the Earth but their Father, but that is not clear; for *Lot* had been in *Zoar*, and departed thence to the Mountain where their Fact was committed. His Drunkenneſs admits of ſome Aggravations; it was no fit Seaſon for him to ſwill after ſo ſharp a Judgment upon *Sodom*, ſo ſevere a Remark of God upon his Wife, and ſo great a Deliverance to himſelf: Yet this was not a *Courſe* of Sin; you read no more of it. There is difference between a Man's being drunk, and being a Drunkard, the one notes the Act, the other the Habit and Love of it.

Peter deny'd Chriſt, yet but three times together; not three times with conſiderable Intervals for a full Deliberation. 'Tis probable *Peter*'s Faith was ſo ſtupefy'd (as well as the Faith of thoſe Diſciples that were going to *Emmaus*, *Luke* 24. 21. *We truſted that it had been he which ſhould have redeemed Iſrael*; who (and indeed all the Diſciples in ſeveral Paſſages) ſeem'd to expect a temporal Kingdom to be erected by him) as therefore not to judge it fit to hazard himſelf for a Perſon he thought himſelf ſo much miſtaken in. Howſoever it was, it was not a *Courſe* of Sin, and his Repentance over-rules the Plea for any cuſtomary Tranſgreſſion.

And though the *Corinthians* were charged with Fornication, and eating things ſacrificed to Idols, yet it ſeems to be out of a corrupt Judgment, as appears by the *Apoſtle*'s diſputing againſt the one, 1 *Cor.* 6. 13, 14, 15. and againſt the other, 1 *Cor.* 8. And that neither of thoſe were generally judged to be Sins by the converted Gentiles, as appears by the Decree of the *Apoſtles*, *Acts* 15. 28, 29. where they determine againſt both theſe; tho' this was a Courſe of Sin, yet not a Courſe of known Sins; and after they were informed by the *Apoſtle* of the ſinfulneſs of them, they abſtained: Therefore in the *Second Epiſtle* *, writ the Year after to them, he charges them not with thoſe former Crimes, but comforts them for their being ſo much caſt down with Sorrow.

* The firſt Epiſtle was writ the 25th Year after the Death of Chriſt, and ſecond Epiſtle the 26th Year according to *Baronius*.

David's Sin, though lying upon him for about *ten or twelve Months*, yet it was not a *Courſe* of Sin; and we find a ſignal Repentance afterwards; but of that after. To walk in a Road of known Sins is the next ſtep to committing Sin as Sin, and manifeſts the Habit of Sin to have a ſtrong and fixed Dominion in the Will.

I ſhall confirm this by ſome *Reaſons*, becauſe upon this *Propoſition* depend all the following.

1. *Regeneration gives not a Man a Diſpenſation from the Law of God.* As Chriſt came not to deſtroy the Law, but to eſtabliſh it, ſo Grace doth not diſpenſe with the Law, but confirms the Authority of it. Habitual Grace is not given us to aſſiſt us in the Breaches of it, but to enable us to the Performance of it. As the Grace of God which hath appeared to all Men, teaches the Doctrine of Holineſs, ſo the Grace of God *in us* enables us to walk in the way of Holineſs. Grace *in* a Believer embraceth what the Grace of God teaches. The Moral Laws of God are indiſpenſable in themſelves, and of eternal Verity. Therefore as no Rational Creature, much leſs can a Regenerate Perſon be exempted from that Obedience to the Law, which as a Rational Creature he is bound to obſerve. The Grace of God juſtifying is never conferred without Grace ſanctifying: 'Tis certain, where Chriſt is made *Righteouſneſs*, he is made *Sanctification*. 'Tis not congruous to the Divine Holineſs, to look upon a Perſon as Righteous, who hath not a renewed Principle in him, no more than it is congruous to the Divine Juſtice and Holineſs, to look upon him as Righteous, meerly for this Principle ſo imperfect.

2. *'Tis not for the Honour of God to ſuffer a Cuſtom and Courſe of Sin in a renewed Man.* 'Tis true, a renewed Man ſhould not voluntarily, nor doth commit willingly even Sins of lighter Infirmities; but God ſuffers thoſe, becauſe they do not wound the Honour of Chriſtianity, though they diſcover a remoteneſs from a State of Perfection. But they do not cuſtomarily fall into great Sins, for it ſeems not congruous to permit ſuch Courſes commonly in any one which would diſgrace Religion, and make that deſpicable in the Eyes of the World, which God hath deſigned in all Ages to honour. Since he hath delivered his Son to Death, to preſerve the Honour of his Law; it ſeems not to conſiſt with his Wiſdom, to let thoſe who enjoy the Fruits of his Death, walk in a cuſtomary Contempt of his Law. Neither can we think that God would permit that in a Believer, which is againſt the very Eſſence of Grace, though he may permit that which is againſt the Beauty and accidental Perfection of it.

3. *'Tis againſt the Nature of the Covenant.* In the Covenant we are to take God for *our God*, *i. e.* for our chief Good, and laſt End. But a Courſe of Sin is an Adoration of the ſinful Object as the chief Good, and laſt End, becauſe a Man prefers the Creature before God, and loves it ſupremely, contrary to the Will of God. 'Tis eſſential for one in Covenant with God, to have an high valuation of God and his Will. But a Cuſtom of known Sins evidenceth that there is not a worthy and practical Eſteem of God. How can any Condition of the Covenant conſiſt with a conſtant practice of Sin? How can there be *Faith* where the Precept is not believed? How can there be *Love* if the Pleaſure of God be not regarded? How can there be *Fear* if his Authority be wilfully contemned? How can there be a *new Heart* when there is nothing but an old Frame, and a diabolical Nature? 'Tis a renouncing thoſe Conditions upon which a Right to Heaven is founded. For a Worker of Iniquity walks in thoſe Ways which are prohibited upon pain of not entring into that place of Glory, and ſo doth wilfully refuſe the Acceptance of the Conditions on God's part, and the Performance of the Conditions on his own part, which are neceſſary to God's Glory, and his own Intereſt. 'Tis an Invaſion of God's Right whereby he refuſeth God for his God and Lord, and ſets up himſelf as his own Governour, an affecting vertually an equality with God, and independency on him, which in the common Nature of Sin, is vertually the ſame with that of the *Devil*, who ſinned from the Beginning; and therefore a Courſe in Sin, one that is born of God doth not continue in. Perhaps the *Apoſtle* in the *Text* might have ſome ſuch reſpect upon his oppoſing the Believers not committing Sin to the Sin of the *Devil* from the Beginning, *viz.* ſuch a Courſe of Sin whereby a Man declares as the Devil did, that he will be his own Governour,

as indeed in every Courſe of Sin a Man doth practically declare.

4. *'Tis againſt the Nature of our firſt Repentance and Converſion to God.* True Repentance is *a breaking off Iniquity by Righteouſneſs, Dan.* 4. 27. a turning from Sin to Holineſs, from our ſelves to God, from our own Wills to the Will of God; from every thing elſe as the chief Good, and laſt End, to God as both theſe. Now though a particular Act of Sin be againſt the Watchfulneſs which attends Repentance, yet a Courſe of Sin is againſt the Nature of it; * the one is againſt the Livelineſs of Repentance, the other againſt the Life of it. A delightful walking in any known Sin, though never ſo little, is a Defiance to God, and therefore contrary to the Nature of Converſion, and is a vertual Embracing of *all Sin* whatſoever; becauſe he that in his ordinary Walk in Sin hath no reſpect to the Will and Pleaſure of God, though he knows it, and will not be reſtrain'd from his Delight by any ſuch Regard of God, would be reſtrain'd from no other Sin whatſoever, if he did conceive them as pleaſant, advantageous, and ſuitable to him as he doth that which is his Darling. As he that *breaks one point of the Law is guilty of all, James* 2. 10. becauſe he ſhews thereby a Will and Diſpoſition to break all, if the ſame Occaſions were offer'd. So he that commits one known Sin wilfully, much more he that walks in a Courſe of Sin, is guilty of all Sins virtually. For he would boggle at no Temptations upon a reſpect to God, becauſe if a regard to God doth not prevail upon him againſt a Courſe in one kind, it will not detain him from a Courſe in all other kinds of Sin, if he come under the ſame Circumſtances for it. Let me add this too, If he that offends in *one* Point of the Law be guilty of *all, i. e.* as much Delight and Eagerneſs, as he hath in the Breach of that one, it is to be ſuppoſed that he would have in the Breach of all the reſt upon the former Reaſon, can then ſuch a Diſpoſition which is in every Courſe of known Sin, be conſiſtent with the Nature of Repentance and Converſion?

* *Taylor* of Repentance, *p.* 188.

5. *'Tis againſt the Nature of habitual Grace, which is the Principle and Form of our Regeneration.* If he doth not commit Sin becauſe the Seed of God remains in him, then ſuch a Courſe of Sin is againſt the Nature of this Seed; inconſiſtent with the Birth of God; a crooked and perverſe Spirit in Sin is a ſign of a putrify'd Soul, a *Spot* of a different Nature from that of *God's Children*, Deut. 32. 5. *They have corrupted themſelves, their Spot is not the Spot of his Children, they are a perverſe and crooked Generation*; 'tis a Stain peculiar to the Children of the *Devil*, not the Sons of God. A Trade in Sin is an evidence of a Diabolical Nature, 1 *John* 3. 8. *He that commits Sin is of the Devil.* 'Tis not therefore conſiſtent with Grace, which is a Divine Nature. The Reign of Sin is inconſiſtent with the Reign of Grace, though the Rebellion of Sin be not. 'Tis againſt the Nature of Regeneration for Sin to guide our Wills, though it be not againſt the Nature of it for Sin to reſide in our Fleſh. To *walk after the Fleſh, Rom.* 8. 1. is an inſeparable Character of a Natural Man. The *Apoſtle, Rom.* 7. *ult.* had been complaining of the *Law of his Members*, the ſerving Sin with his Fleſh, he comforts himſelf with this, that he obeyed it not; and that they were in Chriſt, whoſe ordinary Walk was as the Spirit led, not as the Fleſh allured *. And indeed *every Tree* brings forth Fruit ſuitable to its Nature. A Vine brings not forth Thorns; and he that hath the Seed of God, is under an impoſſibility of bringing forth the Fruits of Sin with Delight, ſince he hath a Root of Righteouſneſs planted in him.

* *Amyraut. in Joh.* 8. 9.

1. *'Tis againſt the Nature of a renewed Underſtanding.* A Regenerate Man hath a new Light in his Mind, whereby he hath a fairer Proſpect of God, and a fouler of Sin. He was an *Enemy* to God *in his Mind* before, *Col.* 1. 21. He had diſhonourable Opinions and Conceits of God and Goodneſs, and honourable Thoughts of Sin above its merit; he thought ill of the one and well of the other. But now he is *renewed in the Spirit of his Mind, Eph.* 4. 23. and he hath the *Spirit of a ſound Mind*, 2 *Tim.* 1. 7. His Judgment is regulated by the Law of God, he judges of Sin as it is in its Nature a Tranſgreſſion of the Law. Can we imagine, that a Man reſtored to a ſound Mind, and that hath his natural Madneſs and Folly cured, ſhould act after this Cure as much out of his Wits as before. If he hath his conſtant Frenzies and Madneſs as much as before, where is his Cure? Can any Man in the World act always againſt his Judgment? though he may be overpower'd by the Importunity of others, or over-rul'd by a Fit of Paſſion to do ſomething againſt his Judgment; can you expect always to find him in the Road of croſſing the Dictates of his Underſtanding? An unregenerate Man hath a Natural Light in his Mind and Conſcience, and ſo a Judgment of Sin; but he hath not a Judgment of Sin adequate to the Object, he doth not judge of Sin in the whole Latitude of it; he hath not a ſetled Judgment of the contrariety of his beloved Sin to God. He looks not upon it in the extent of it, as, *malum injucundum, inhoneſtum, inutile*; if he looks upon Sin as diſhoneſt, he regards it as profitable; if neither as honeſt nor profitable, yet as pleaſant; ſo that the Natural Light, which is in the Underſtanding when it dictates right, is mated and over-rul'd by ſome other Principle, the Pleaſure or Profit of it, and ſway'd by the inherent Habits of Sin in the Will. The *Devil* that works in them hath ſome Principle to ſtir up, or dim this Natural Light, and caſt a Miſt before the Eye; and ſo they direct their Courſe according to that particular Judgment which is befriended in its Vote by Senſe.

2. *'Tis againſt the Nature of a renewed Will.* Grace is the Law of God in the Heart, and is put in to enable us to walk in the Ways of God; and ſhall it endure ſuch wilful Pollutions in the Creature, when it is the end of its being there to preſerve from them? The *Spirit* is given in *the Heart*, 2 *Cor.* 1. 22. ſent into the Heart, *Gal.* 4. 6. the *Law* put into *the Heart, Heb.* 10. 16. Since therefore there is an Habit of Grace in the *Will*, a Man cannot frequently and eaſily lanch into Sin, becauſe he cannot do it habitually, the Remainders of Sin being mated with a powerful Habit, which watches their Motions to reſiſt them. Doth God put ſuch a Habit there, ſuch a *Seed*, an *abiding Seed* to no purpoſe but to let the Soul be wounded by every Temptation, to be deſerted in every time of need? Grace is an Habit ſuperadded to that Natural and Moral Strength which is in the Will. Man by Nature's ſtrength meerly, or with the aſſiſtance of common Grace, hath power to avoid the Acts of groſs Sins, for he is Maſter of his own Actions, though he is not of the Motions tending to them; the *Devil* cannot force a Man's Will. And when Grace, a greater Strength, comes in, ſhall there be no Effects of this Strength, but the

Reins

Reins be as ſtiff in the Hands of old Luſt, and the Will as much captive to the ſinful Habit in it as before? Grace being a new Nature, it is as abſurd to think that a gracious Man ſhould wallow in a Courſe of Sin, as it is to think that any Creature ſhould conſtantly and willingly do that which is againſt its Nature. A gracious Man *delights in the Law of God*, Pſal. 1. 2. *His delight is in the Law of the Lord, and in his Law doth he meditate Day and Night*; if he delights in it, can he delight to break it? Do Men fling that which they delight in, every Day in the Dirt, and trample upon it, or rather do they not keep it choicely in their Cabinets? If it bealſo the Character of a good Man to *meditate in the Law* of God, he muſt have frequent Exerciſes of Faith, Reflections upon himſelf, Motions to God which cannot conſiſt with a Courſe of Sin. Grace doth eſſentially include a contrariety to Sin, and a Love to God in the Will. 'Tis a Principle of doing Good and eſchewing Evil, and theſe being eſſential Properties of Grace, are eſſential to every Regenerate Man, and in every one. As a Drop of Water, or one Spark of Fire hath the eſſential Properties of a great Maſs of Water, or a great quantity of Fire, ſo every renewed Man hath the ſame love to God, and the ſame hatred of Sin eſſentially, as the moſt eminent Saint, though not in degree, yea, which thoſe in Heaven have, though not in the ſame degree. As a ſpark of Fire will burn, a drop of Water will moiſten, though not in ſo eminent a meaſure. Now, upon the whole, conſider whether is it poſſible to bare Reaſon, that a Regenerate Man ſhould cuſtomarily do thoſe things which are againſt the eſſential Properties of that which is in him, in his Will, and doth denominate him a new Creature?

3. Propoſition. *A regenerate Man cannot have a fixt reſolution to walk in ſuch a way of ſin, were the impediments to it removed.* Though unregenerate Men may actually as to the outward exerciſe abſtain from ſome Sins, yet it is uſually upon low and mean Conditions. If it were not for ſuch or ſuch an obſtacle in the way, I would do ſuch and ſuch an Act. This Temper is not in a good Man, he cannot have a fixed and determinate Reſolution to commit ſuch an Act, if ſuch bars were taken away. Such Reſolutions are common in unregenerate Men, *Jer.* 44. 25. *We will ſurely perform our Vows, which we have vow'd to burn incenſe to the Queen of Heaven*, and Iſa. 56. 12. *We will fill our ſelves with ſtrong drink, and to morrow ſhall be as this day, and much more abundant*; we will have as merry a meeting as we had to day. The ſame Character is aſcribed to ſuch an one, *Pſal.* 36. 4. *He deviſeth miſchief upon his bed. He ſets himſelf in a way that is not good. He abhorreth not Evil.* He models out his ſinful Deſigns with Head and Heart, he ſettles himſelf as an Army ſettles in their Ground when they reſolve to fight, לא מאס *He abhors not evil.* He ſtarts not at ſuch Motions, but by a *Meioſis*, he huggs and careſſeth them with a wonderful delight. *Regenerate* Men fear to ſin, *wicked* Men contrive to ſin. *One* would ſtarve it, the other makes proviſion for it. This Temper cannot be in a Regenerate Man.

1. *'Tis Diabolical.* And ſo falls under that in the *Text*, He cannot commit ſin as the *Devil* doth. 'Tis a ſtain of the *Devil*, who is reſolved in his way of malice to God, and miſchief to Man, but for the ſtrait Chains God holds him in; his Reſolution is fixed, though the Execution reſtrained. *He goes about ſeeking whom he may devour*, 1 Pet. 5. 8. καταπιν *to drink at one draught*: Seeking both for an Opportunity and Permiſſion. Unwearied Searches

manifeſt fixed Reſolutions. His Throat is ready to ſwallow, if he had a morſel for it.

2. *'Tis a ſign of habitual ſin, a ſtate of ſin.* This Temper manifeſts that the Will is habituated in ſin, though the Hand doth not outwardly act it. The inherent power of Sin muſt be great, when a Man is greedy to commit that, to which he hath no outward Allurements, or when thoſe Allurements are ballanced with contrary Conſiderations; when he hath either no outward temptation to it, or the croſs Impediments are as ſtrong, or ſtronger than the Temptation. When Men in the midſt of ſuch bars long for a Temptation, it is ſuch a kind of deſire in one way, as the *Creature* hath in another, for the manifeſtation of the Sons of God, *Rom.* 8. 19. *For the earneſt expectation of the Creature waits for the manifeſtation*, 'tis ἀποκαραδοκία a putting out the Head to ſee if he can find any coming to knock off the Fetters, not of his Sin, but of his forced Morality. In this caſe take *two* Men, *one* commits a great Sin upon a Temptation, even as it were over-power'd by it, and had no Thoughts, no Inclinations before that Temptation appear'd, which began firſt to ſpirit him. *Another* commits a lighter Sin, or would fain commit it upon a weak Temptation, and many bars lying in the way, and his Heart was hankering and thirſting for ſome opportunity to commit it: Which do you think really is the greater Offence in point of Heart and Affection? The firſt appears blacker, but it is an Invaſion; the other is really blacker becauſe it is an Affection, and ſhews Sin to be rooted in the Heart as its proper Soil, wherein Sin delights to grow, and the Soil delights to nouriſh it. The one ſhews Sin to be a Stranger and a Thief, which hath way-laid him, the other evidenceth Sin to be an Inmate and intimate Friend. Such a Man is not oblig'd to his Will for his abſtinence from Sin, but to the outward Hindrances; and the reſolving act of the Will to commit it, were thoſe Impediments remov'd, is as real an act of Sin in the ſight of God, as any outward act can be in the ſight of Man, becauſe God meaſures the greatneſs of Sin by the proportion of the Will allowed to it; therefore many Sins which may be little in our account may be greater in God's account, than the ſeemingly blacker Sins of others, becauſe there may be a greater ingrediency of the Heart and Affection in them than in the other.

3. *'Tis againſt the nature of our Repentance and firſt cloſing with God.* Repentance is a change of the purpoſe of the Heart, not to commit the ſame Iniquity again, nor any other, *Job* 34. 32. *If I have done Iniquity, I will do no more.* 'Tis the property of converting Grace to make the Soul *cleave to the Lord with* full *purpoſe of Heart*, Acts 11. 23. This is eſſential to it, though there may be ſome ſtartings out by Paſſion and Temptation. A Pilot's Intention ſtands right for the Port, though by the violence of the Wind he may be forced another way. It alters not his Purpoſe, though it defer his Performance. This Purpoſe is a perpetual Intent, *Pſal.* 119. 112. *I have inclined my Heart to keep thy Statues alway even to the end.* It was an Heart-purpoſe and Inclination; It regarded all God's Statutes, not for a fit, but perpetually, which he manifeſts by *two* words [*always even to the end*] to ſhew that the perpetuity of it doth difference it from the reſolutions of wicked Men, who may indeed have ſome fits to do good, but not a fixed purpoſe to cleave to the Lord; theſe flaſhy Purpoſes are like the flight of a Bird which ſeems to touch Heaven, and in a moment falls down to the Earth; as *Saul* reſolved not to perſecute *David*, but we ſoon find him again upon his old Game and Purſuit.

ſuit. Where there is true Grace, there is hatred of all Sin, for hatred is πρὸς τὸ γένος. Can a Man be reſolv'd to commit what he *hates?* No. For his inward averſion would ſecure him more againſt it, than all outward Obſtacles. As this inward purpoſe of a good Man is againſt all ſin, ſo more particularly againſt that which doth ſo *eaſily beſet him. David* ſeems in ſeveral places to be naturally inclin'd to *Lying*, but he takes up a particular Reſolution againſt it, *Pſal.* 17. 3. *I am purpoſed that my mouth ſhall not tranſgreſs.* זמתי *I have contrived* to way-lay and intercept the ſin of Lying, when it hath an occaſion to approach me. A good Man hath not only Purpoſes, but he endeavours to faſten and ſtrengthen thoſe Purpoſes by Prayer. So *David*, v. 5. [*hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footſteps ſlip not.* He ſtrengthens *himſelf by ſtirring up a livelineſs* in Duty, and by avoiding occaſions of Sin, *v.* 4. [*I have kept me from the paths of the deſtroyer.* Whereas a wicked Man neither ſteps out of the way of a Temptation, nor ſteps up to God for ſtrength againſt it. Now, if all this be true, that in Converſion the Heart hath a fixed reſolution for God and his ways, and that perpetually againſt all Sin, and particularly againſt the Sin of our natural Inclination, and all this back'd with ſtrong Cries, how can it have a fixed reſolution to commit it, if the way were outwardly fair for it?

4. *'Tis abſolutely againſt the terms of the Covenant.* God requires in that a giving up our ſelves to him, to be his People with our whole Heart and Soul, as he gives himſelf to us with his whole Heart. He will not be a ſharer of the Heart with Sin, much leſs an underling to it. God will not endure a competitor in the Affections. To *ſerve God and Mammon* are inconſiſtent by the infallible *Axiom* of our Saviour, *Luke* 16. 13. Now, as God cannot be true to his Covenant, if he had purpoſes againſt the Articles of it on his part, ſo neither can we be true to our covenanting with him, if we have ſettled purpoſes of Heart againſt the Conditions of it. Therefore the inſtability in the Covenant ariſeth only from the falſeneſs of the Heart, *Pſal.* 78. 37. *Their Heart was not right with him, neither were they ſtedfaſt in his Covenant.* The iniquity of our Heels may compaſs us about, and make us ſtumble in our Walk, yet our fears of being out with God may receive no eſtabliſhment, *Pſal.* 49. 5. *Wherefore ſhould I fear when the Iniquity of my heels ſhall compaſs me about?* Whether he means by iniquity the Sins of his ordinary walk, or the puniſhment of them, is all one. But yet if purpoſes of Iniquity ſettle their reſidence in the Heart, though we never act it by reaſon of Obſtacles, 'tis a ſign we never ſincerely cloſed with God in Covenant, nor God with us. The very *regards of Iniquity in the Heart* put a bar to the regards of God towards us. It hinders all Covenant Acts on God's part, becauſe it is a manifeſt breach of it, *Pſal.* 66. 18. *If I regard Iniquity in my Heart the Lord will not hear me.* ראיתי *If* I have curiouſly and intently looked upon Iniquity with pleaſure in my Heart.

5. *'Tis againſt the nature of Regeneration.* Regeneration is a change of Nature, and conſequently of Reſolutions. A Lyon chained up hath an inclination to ravage, but a Lyon chang'd into the nature of a Lamb loſes his Inclinations with that change of his Nature; ſo that it is as impoſſible a Regenerate Man can have the fixed and determinate Reſolutions that a wicked Man hath, as it is impoſſible that a Lamb ſhould have the ravenous diſpoſition of a Lyon; you know the Scripture makes the change as great. How can any Man reſolve to do a thing againſt that Law, which at the ſame time, he hath an habitual approbation of as *holy, juſt, and good?* Againſt a Law natural to him, *viz.* The Law of the Heart. If a delight in the Law of God be a conſtitutive part of Regeneration, then any ſettled purpoſe to ſin is inconſiſtent with Regeneration, becauſe ſuch a purpoſe, being a teſtimony of an inward delight in that which is contrary to the Law of God, cannot conſiſt with a delight in that which forbids what his Heart is ſet upon.

4. Propoſition. *A Regenerate Man cannot walk in a way doubtful to him without Inquiries, whether it be a way of Sin, or a way of Duty; and without admitting of Reproofs and Admonitions according to his Circumſtances.* This conſiſts of *two Parts.*

1. *He cannot walk in a way doubtful to him without Inquiries, whether it be a way of Sin, or of Duty.* If the nature of Converſion be an *inclination* of the Heart to keep God's Statutes always, even *to the end, Pſal.* 119. 112. the natural reſult then will be an Enquiry, what are the Statutes of God which the Soul is to keep. A natural Man, for fear of being diſturbed in his ſinful Pleaſure refuſeth to underſtand the way of the Lord, and delights to be under the power of a wilful Darkneſs, *Job* 21. 14, 15. *We deſire not the knowledge of thy ways; what is the Almighty that we ſhould ſerve him? and what profit ſhould we have, if we pray to him?* This unwillingneſs to know the ways of God, ariſes from a contempt of the Almighty and his Service. They judged it not profitable to ſerve and worſhip God, and therefore were loath to receive any Inſtruction, for fear any Light ſhould ſpring up in them, by way of Conviction, to diſturb them. Men love Sin, and therefore hate any Knowledge which may deprive them of the ſweetneſs of it, *Prov.* 1. 22. *The Scorners delight in their ſcorning, and Fools hate knowledge.* They delight in Sin, and therefore hate any Knowledge which may check their Delight. And this unwillingneſs to *chooſe the fear of the Lord* is the ground of their hating the knowledge of it, *v.* 30. *for that they hated knowledge, and did not chooſe the fear of the Lord.* They are afraid to be convinced, that the way of their Delight is a way of Sin, they would have no Gall in their Conſcience to imbitter the Honey of their Luſts. This hatred of Knowledge is inconſiſtent with true Converſion, becauſe Converſion is an election or choice of the fear of God, and therefore cannot reſiſt any means tending to promote that which is choſen. 'Tis eſſential to true Grace to enquire into the Mind and Will of God, to underſtand what is pleaſing to him, *Job* 34. 32. *That which I ſee not, teach thou me; if I have done Iniquity, I will do no more.* Inform me in what I know not, and if I underſtand it is Iniquity, which I have walked ignorantly in, I will do it no more. He will not *return to folly* when he ſhall *hear what God the Lord ſhall ſpeak.* 'Tis certainly incompatible to the new Nature to act in a contrariety to God. Grace is always attended with an univerſal Deſire to know his Will, and pleaſure him in performing it; hence will follow an Enquiry, what Behaviour and what Acts are moſt agreeable to him, *John* 14. 21. *He that hath my Commandments, and keeps them, he it is that loves me.* Ἐκεῖνός ἐστι. The *Antitheſis* is; He that hath no mind to have my Commandments, becauſe he would not keep them, hath no love to me. *He it is* [*Emphatically*] excluſively, that is the Man, and none elſe that loves me. Now if a Man be afraid of making Inquiry into the lawfulneſs of a courſe he is wedded to, for fear his beloved Object ſhould appear to be a Sin, 'tis a ſign he abſtains from what he knows certainly to be a Sin out of a ſervile Fear, not out of a generous, divine Love, a

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Principle as essential to the new Nature, as fear is to an enlightned Carnalist.

2. *A Regenerate Man cannot despise Admonitions and Reproofs, which would inform him, and withdraw him from a sinful course.* If he be in the way of Life that keeps Instruction, then he that refuseth Reproof is in the way of Death, *Prov.* 10. 17. *He is in the way of Life that keepeth Instruction, but he that refuseth Reproof erreth.* 'Tis put in a milder Expression, but if you observe the *opposition*, it amounts to the Inference I make. So *Prov.* 15. 9, 10. *The Lord loves them that follow after Righteousness; Correction is grievous unto them that forsake the way, and he that hates Reproof shall dye.* Here is a plain *opposition* made between them that follow after Righteousness, which is the Character of a Regenerate Man, who is therefore the object of God's Love, and that Person that accounts Correction grievous, and hates Reproof, he is not one that follows after Righteousness (to pursue is to embrace it) and therefore not the object of God's Love, but the mark of Death. So that it is impossible a righteous Man should hate Reproof. Nay, the hating of Reproof, whereby a Man might be informed of his Duty, is a sign not of a bare unregeneracy, but of one at the very bottom of it, wallowing in the very Dregs and Mud of it, fartheſt from the Kingdom of Heaven; one that scarce looks like a rational Creature, *Prov.* 12. 1. *Whoso loves Instruction loves Knowledge, but he that hates Reproof is brutish.* Whereas *Solomon*'s wise Man, which is a Regenerate Man, will love the Reprover for the Reproofs sake, and grow wiser by Instruction, *Prov.* 9. 8, 9. *Reprove not a Scorner, lest he hate thee; Rebuke a wise Man, and he will love thee; give Instruction to a wise Man, and he will be yet wiser; teach a just Man, and he will encrease in Learning.* Just Men change their Intentions upon a discovery of the sinfulness of their way. And though it may not at the first assault of an Admonition appear to be a Sin, yet it will check somewhat their Violence in it. But where Sin hath a dominion, every check and discovery of it doth rather enflame than quench it, and the Heart, like a Stream, rises the higher for the Damm. *Judas* had an Admonition from Christ, that informed him of what Wickedness he was about, and the danger of it, *Mark* 14. 21. He pronounceth a Woe against him. Compare this with *John* 13. 27, 30. when he gives him the *Sop*, which was at the same time he informed him of the Danger, *Satan* entered into him, and he went more roundly to work to accomplish it, *he went immediately out.* *Observe* by the way, That the Spirit of God enters into a Man's Heart often upon Admonitions from Friends, and the *Devil* also more powerfully upon the same Occasions than at other times. A good Man cannot habitually hate the Reprover. There is one Example of a good Man dealing hardly with a *Prophet*, for reproving him in the *name of the Lord*, 2 *Chron.* 16. 10. *Then* Asa *was wroth with the Seer, and put him into a Prison-house; for he was in a rage with him, because of this thing.* And partly for the Judgment of War against him. But the *Scripture* gives an allay to it; *For he was in a rage.* He was in a Passion, because of the threatning and the plainness of the Speech, *thou hast done foolishly.* To say such a word to an Inferior would ordinarily, now a days, swell many a Professor to a Fury, much more a Prince. This very *Proposition* will discover, that there are many more Pretenders to a Regenerate State than Possessors of it, so strangely is not only Humane Nature, but the Christian Religion depraved among us.

5. Propos. *A Regenerate Man cannot have a settled, deliberate Love to any one act of Sin, though he may fall into it.* Thus the Devil sins, he loves what he doth. Though a good Man may fall into a Sin, and even such a Sin, which he was much guilty of before his Conversion, and which he hath repented of, yet never into a love of it, or the allowance of any one act of it. For by Regeneration the Soul becomes like God in Disposition, and therefore cannot love any thing which he hates, whose Hatred and Love being always just, are unerring Rules to the Love and Hatred of every one of his Children. He can never account a Sin his Ornament, but his Fetter, never his Delight, but his Grief. I add this *Proposition*, because there may be a love of an act of Sin, where there is not a constant course in it: As a Man that hath committed a Murther out of Revenge, may love afterwards the very thoughts of that Revenge, though he never murther any more: And a Man that hath committed an act of Adultery, may review it with pleasure, though he never commit an Act again. But a good Man cannot. *David* is supposed to be inclined to the way of Lying and Dissembling; though he might falter sometimes, and look that way, and perhaps fall into it, yet never into a love of it; therefore *observe*, *Psal.* 119. 163. *I hate and abhor Lying; but thy Law do I love.* A single Hatred would not serve the turn; but, *I hate and abhor.* I have not the least Affection to this of any, though I have the greatest natural inclination to it. What was the reason? *Thy Law do I love.* There was another Affection planted in his Soul, which could not consist with a love to, or allowance either of the *habit*, or any one *act* of Lying. A good Man hath yielded his Soul up to the government of Christ, his Affections are fully engaged; he cannot see an equal amiableness in any other Object, for he cannot lose his Eyes again; his enlightned Mind cannot be wholly blinded and deceived by *Satan*; he walks not by the inveiglements of Sense, but by the unerring Rule of Faith; so that though by some Mists before his Eyes, he may for a while be deluded, yet as he cannot have a settled false Judgment, so he cannot have a settled Affection to any one act of Sin. 'Tis *one* thing for a City to surrender it self to the Enemy out of Affection, and *another* thing to be forced by them: Under a Force they may retain their Loyalty to their lawful Prince. There may be some passionate approbations of an act of Sin. *Jonah* was an Advocate for his own Passion against God, and made a very peremptory Apology for it, *Jonah* 4. 9. *I do well to be angry, even to the death.* Yet if we may judge by his former Temper, we cannot think he did afterwards defend it out of Judgment, as he did then out of Passion; for when the Lot fell upon him, *Jon.* 2. 9, 12. he made no defence for his Sin, he very calmly wishes them to cast him into the Sea. Where there is a passionate Approbation, it cannot be constant in a good Man; for when he returns to himself, his abhorrences of the Sin, and of himself for it, are greater, as if by the greatness of his Grief he would endeavour to make some recompence for the folly of his Passion.

Observe by the way; *A good Man may commit a Sin with much eagerness, and yet have a less affection to it in the very act, than another*, who acts that Sin more calmly; because it may arise, not from any particular inclination he hath in his temper to that Sin, but from the general violence of his natural Temper, which is common to him in that Action. This seems to be the case of *Jonah*, both in this, and the former act. But if a Man be more violent in that act of Sin, than he is in other things by his natural Temper, there is ground both for himself and others to think, that sin hath got a great mastery over his Affections.

Peter

Peter ſeems to be a Man of great Affections, and of a forward natural Temper; he was very haſty to have Tabernacles built in the Mountain for his *Maſter*, *Moſes*, and *Elias*, and have reſided there. He haſtily rebukes his Maſter; he flung himſelf out of a Ship to meet our Saviour walking upon the Water, and after his Reſurrection he leapt into the Sea to get to him: So that *Peter*'s denying his Maſter was not ſuch an evidence of Diſaffection to him, or Love to the ſinful Act he was then ſurprized by, as it would have been in *John*, or any other Diſciple of a more ſedate Temper. But this only by the way, as a *Rule* both to judge your ſelves by, and to moderate your Cenſures of others. And conſider, That ſuch Acts of Sin are not frequent. The Violence of a Man's Temper, if godly, cannot carry him out into a Courſe of Sin, or a love to any one Act. As a wicked Man may hit upon a good Duty, and perform it, but not out of a ſetled love to God, or habitual Obedience to his Law; ſo a good Man may by ſurprize do an evil Work, not out of Obedience to the Law of Sin, or any love to the Sin it ſelf. What Conſiderations may move a wicked Man to a good Duty, may in ſome reſpect move a good Man to a ſinful Act; yet it is not to be called a Duty in the one, no more than it is to be called a Sin in the other of the ſame Hue, of the ſame Hue I ſay, with that in a natural Man.

6 Propoſition; *A Regenerate Man cannot commit any Sin with a full Conſent and bent of Will.* A Man may conſent to that which he doth not love. Hereby I diſtinguiſh it from the former Propoſition. I mean not, that he cannot commit any Sin wilfully as Sin, for ſo I believe no Man doth; it being againſt the Nature of the Creature to do *Evil*, as *Evil formaliter*, but under ſome other Notion of it. Some *Conſent* of the Will I do acknowledge, becauſe the Will as well as the other Faculties, is but in part regenerate; as there is not a triumphant Light in the Underſtanding, ſo neither is the Grace of the Will at preſent triumphant, but militant; yet it may be rather called the Will of Sin, than a Man's own Will. Sometimes a good Man is by ſome ſudden Motion hurry'd on to ſin, before he can conſult Law and Reaſon, before he hath his Wits well at liberty, before he can compare the Temptation or Sin with the Prohibition of it by the Divine Law. But generally there is a Reſiſtance in him, as well as a Provocation in Sin; for the *two* contrary Principles exert themſelves in ſome meaſure. Grace reſiſts, and Sin provokes: Whereas another that hath no Grace, ſins with a *full Conſent*, becauſe he hath no ſpiritual reſiſting Principle in him; for he is Fleſh, and not Spirit, and whatſoever is born of the Fleſh is Fleſh, and wholly Fleſh. There is a Reſiſting indeed in a natural Man, but it is a Reſiſtance of natural Light, not of Grace, a Reſiſtance not of the *Will*, but of the *Conſcience*; The Will is bent to ſin, but natural Conſcience puts Rubs in the way. Neither is this Reſiſtance in ſpiritual Sins, (which is the greateſt Character I know, whereby to diſtinguiſh a Reſiſtance of natural Conſcience, from a Reſiſtance by a Principle of Grace) which natural Conſcience doth not ſo much trouble it ſelf about, as not having Light without a ſpiritual Illumination to diſcern them; but only in groſs Sins, ſuch as are condemn'd by common Reaſon; ſo that if he hath any Reſiſtance, it is not in the Will of the Man, but the Will of his Intereſt, Will of his Credit, or the Will of his Conſcience; not in the rational Will complying with, and delighting in the Will of God.

A Regenerate Man cannot commit any Sin with

1. *An habitual Conſent*; Becauſe he hath a Principle of Grace within him which oppoſes that Tide of Nature which did forcibly carry him down before. This oppoſite Principle doth remain, tho' the preſent Oppoſition may not be diſcern'd by reaſon of the prevalency of the Temptation: As in a Room warm'd by a Fire in Winter, there is a Principle in the Air doth reſiſt that Heat, and reduce it after the Fire is out to its former rawneſs and coldneſs. A renewed Man being paſſed into another Nature, it cannot be ſuppoſed he can do any thing with an habitual bent of Will againſt his Nature. Grace hath put a ſtop to that. *Paul* diſtinguiſheth himſelf from Sin in the Acts of it; *'Tis not I*, or my Will, *but Sin*, *Rom.* 7. 20. *Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but Sin that dwells in me.* Κατεργάζομαι ſignifies to perfect and compleat a Work, to work induſtriouſly and politely. Had I my Will, I ſhould not do thus. There is a Divorce made between the Will and Sin, ſo that Sin acts upon a ſingle ſcore, now, *'Tis no more I*; a Divorce is made between my Will and Sin. The Law of Sin is therefore called a Law *in* the Members, not of the Members; a Law found working there, *v.* 21. *I find a Law in my Members*; I did not enact it, I placed it not there, I conſent not to its being there; but there I find it, and know not how to be rid of it, but it ſhall never have my Will. But the Law of Grace is called a Law *of* the Mind, not *in* the Mind; a Law which is ſetled there by the Conſent of the Soul, and to whoſe ſovereignty and guidance it yields it ſelf. The Law of Sin is in the Members; the Vigour of it is ſeen in the inferiour Faculties of the Soul, not in the higher, the Mind and Will; 'tis a Law impoſed upon me, not embraced by me; a Law of Diſturbance, not of Obedience; a Law that troubles me, doth not delight me, *v.* 21, 22. It reſides as an Enemy warring, but hath no intimacy with me as a Friend, *v.* 23. yet it is an Enemy driven to the Out-Works, to the Members: So that where all this is, you cannot ſuppoſe an habitual Conſent to ſin, when the Will is formed into another Nature. As the Will of the Wicked is poſſeſſed by Habits of Sin under the Reſtraints from it, ſo the Will of the Godly is poſſeſſed by Habits of Grace, even under the Rape of a prevailing Temptation.

2. *Nor an actual Conſent both antecedent and conſequent.* The Intereſt of Sin may ſeem to be actually higher and ſtronger in the Soul than the Intereſt of God, though this latter is habitually ſtronger than the Intereſt of Sin. Though there may be an antecedent Delight in the Motion, a preſent Delight in the Action, yet there is not a permanent conſequent Delight after it; yet the two firſt are rare. 'Tis ſeldom that a renewed Soul and Sin do ſo friendly conſpire together without any ſpiritual Reluctancy. Suppoſe he may have by the ſuſpenſion of Grace, a whole actual Conſent of Will to one particular Sin, upon ſome ſtrong Provocation, yet he gives not up himſelf to the Will or Way of that Sin. He is only under a temporary, not a perpetual Power of it. As a Man in a Fight may by a Fall be under the Power of his Enemy, yet in the ſtruggle get up again, and reduce him to the ſame Neceſſity. Though there be not an expreſs diſſent at the Motion, nor in the Action, yet there is always after; for it is as much againſt the Terms of the Covenant to have a perpetual Delight in any Sin committed, as to commit it often, becauſe this Delight in it is an Approbation of it, and every Act

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of Delight is a new Act of Approbation, and consequently a Recommission of it, and a making a Man's self a perpetual Accessary to that first Act.

1. *Sometimes he hath an antecedent Dissent.* A renewed Man is troubled and displeased at the first Motion to a Sin; he is sometimes troubled that any Sin should so much as ask him the question to have Entertainment in him: 'Tis so many times with a Natural Man, much more with a Regenerate Man; yet afterwards that Displiciency abating, the Sin creeps upon him by degrees, and ensnares him. *Paul* had an Act of Will against that which he did, before he did it; he did that which was preceded by an Act of his Will nilling it, as there was an Act of his Will, for the doing Good preceding his not doing it, *Rom.* 7. 19. *The good that I would, I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do.* The Act of his Will was present, *v.* 18. *To will is present with me,* I have *that* standing in a readiness to do good; but the executive Power is at a distance, I know not how to have it. *But how to perform that which is good I find not.* He speaks as a Man that was searching for something which he had a great desire to find, and could not meet with it. Many times a good Man is tyred out with the importunity of a Temptation, and is fain to fling down his Weapons, and sink under the Oppression, till he receive a new Recruit of Strength by exciting and assisting Grace.

2. *Sometimes concomitant,* in the very commission of a Sin. *Peter* seems to have had some Resistance in the very Act of denying his Master. The Spirit of God blew up some Sparks of Shame in him at that very time; for after the very *first* Denial, he went out into the Porch, *Mark* 14. 68. By his Retirement he discovers some willingness to have avoided a further Temptation. There is many times an exercise of Displeasure against it, while a Man cannot avoid it, *Rom.* 7. 15. *That which I do, I allow not; that which I hate, that I do.* I hate it even while I do it, and my Hatred is excited against it, in the very Act; he means it of Sins of Infirmity. The Seed of God in the Heart cannot consent to Sin, but will many times in the very acting of it be shewing its *displeasure,* weakly or strongly against it. As a Needle touched with a *Loadstone,* if it be disturbed in its standing to the North-Pole, will shake and tremble while the Impediment is upon it *. Some Demurrers were made in *Peter*'s Heart, but Fear over-rul'd the Plea; and it is probable his Heart was not wholly asleep even in the very Act; else it is not likely he should have been so suddenly rouzed. There is a Voice in him. Grace speaks for God, but it is over-rul'd and oppress by a Temptation; there are some Pull-backs, some spiritual Whispers even when it presses hard. *Why art thou cast down my Soul? Psal.* 43. 5. There is the carnal part stirring in distrust: *Hope thou in God;* there is a spiritual part rising in Faith. A neat Person may by stumbling be bemir'd in a dirty Hole, but while he stumbles, there is a natural *Impetus,* which endeavours to keep him upright; and if he doth fall, he struggles till he be delivered. But when a Swine falls into a Puddle, he lies grunting with Pleasure, and grumbles at any that will drag him out. Which leads me to a Third thing.

* *Smith* on the Creed.

3. But *there is always a consequent Dissent after the Fall.* He hath many Rebukes in his Conscience; whereas a natural Man's Sin is brought up and nurtur'd with him, *Eccles.* 5. 1. *They consider not that they do evil;* they lay it not to Heart, especially if it break not out in some foul and notorious manner. A renewed Man is displeased at the very first Motion that clamber'd up into his Heart to entice him to his sin; not only the Fruit, but the Root that bears it is odious to him, *Psal.* 51. 5. *Behold I was shapen in Iniquity.* By the same reason that he directs his hatred to the Sin of his nature, by the same reason he will do it to the first Motion that immediately brought forth that bitter Fruit; which a natural Man doth not. 'Tis the Character of a wicked Man to *rejoyce* that he hath done evil, *Prov.* 2. 14. which I think is never found in a renewed Man; for this is indeed to be under the Power of *Satan,* and like their Father the *Devil.* But he condemns what he hath committed; and the greater his Delight in it, the greater will his Abhorrency be of it, and the more earnest his Cry to be rid of his Burden. When he comes to see what Contrariety there was in his Act to the Law of God, it is impossible but his Heart should smite him. It cannot be, but that *Delight in the Law of God,* which is a constitutive part of a Regenerate Man, *Rom.* 7. 22. must revive, when the Weights which did suspend it are removed, and according to the Degrees of his revived Delight, there will be suitable Degrees of Displeasure with what was contrary to the Object of it; for since a Delight in the Law of God is essential to a renewed Nature, that Delight must needs produce an Aversion from every thing contrary to that Law, otherwise it is not a Delight: If there be not such Workings after a Review of Sin, I dare pronounce that such a Man is not regenerate. But how long he may lie in a Sin, without acting Consideration about it, I cannot determine. He must needs have Torment in his Soul, and a high Disaffection to his Sin, and himself for it, because upon a Review he cannot but see how unlike to God it hath made him; how much it hath defiled his Soul, and impaired the Divine Image. No Disease can be more grievous to the Body than a Sin fallen into is to the new Nature; it grieves and pains the new Creature, which is restless till it be rid of the Disease; the new Nature is a tender thing. Though he be assured of its Pardon, he is in anxiety till he finds it *purged, Psal.* 51. 7. *Purge me with Hyssop, and I shall be clean. David* had been assured of the pardon of his Sin by *Nathan*; that would not quiet him, as long as the Filth remained; he would not only have the Guilt removed, but the Stain washed off; as a Man fallen in the Dirt is desirous not only to be raised up, but to be washed clean from any Remainders of the Mire. A good Man hath a Disquietness in his Heart, and is as much troubled at his Sin, as at a stinking Wound, or a loathsome Disease, *Psal.* 38. 5, 6, 7, 8. and his *sorrow is continually before him, v.* 17. He is more displeased with that Sin, than he is pleased at present with all the Grace he hath. *David*'s *Sin was ever before him, Psal.* 51. 3. *Peter* brought forth no other Fruit immediately after the Review of his Sin, but Sorrow, and exercised more Grief for that than he did Joy at the present, for the not failing of his Faith; as a Man is more troubled with a Pain of the Tooth, or a Fit of the Gout, than pleased with all the Health in his Vital Parts, which is far greater than his Pain. Here then is a difference; *Regenerate* Men have *Pain* in their Sins, Natural Men *Pleasure*; the one is ashamed of his Sin, the other at best but ashamed of his Discredit; he condemns himself for it with so much severity, rips his Heart open before God, that if a wicked Man should hear him praying in his Closet after some Sin, he would think he did belye himself, or else that he were the vilest Villain in the World. He will study no Excuses, and present no Pleas to God for his Sin. If he hath

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not Strength to conquer it, he hath a Voice to cry againſt it: Prayers are doubled; one Meſſenger goes to Heaven upon the heels of another, and ſo Moderation, which was in his Requeſts before, is turn'd to an unſatisfied Importunity. So that you ſee, there is *not a plenary conſent of Will*, but the diſſent is habitual and actual, if not antecedent or concomitant, yet always conſequent.

What then doth the Regenerate Man's Sin ariſe from? It ariſeth

1. Either *from a ſtrong Paſſion, which many times bears down the bars both of Grace and Reaſon.* That is not wholly voluntary which is done by the prevalency of Paſſion, which ſuſpends the determination of the Underſtanding, and conſequently the regular and free motion of the Will. Such was the accuſation of God in his *Prophet*, which *David* was guilty of, *Pſal.* 116. 11. *I ſaid in my haſte, all Men are Lyars. I ſaid*, 'tis true, *all Men are Lyars*, even the Prophet too, but it was in *my haſte*. And in his haſte he accuſeth God of the breach of his Promiſes, *Pſal.* 31. 22. *I ſaid in my haſte, I am cut off from before thy Eyes.* God hath either forgot his Promiſe, or changed his Reſolutions, for not one of them will be made good unto me. It was a Paſſion in *Moſes* which made him guilty of that act of *unbelief*, that coſt him his excluſion from the Land of Promiſe, *Num.* 20. 8, 10, 11, 12. God commands him to uſe his Tongue, not his Rod on the Rock; but the Paſſion the good Man was in by the provocation of the People, tranſported him beyond his Bounds. *Peter*'s Heart was not ſo full of Courage as of Loyalty, his Zeal was put out of countenance by his Fear. A ſtrong fit of Paſſion may make a Man, as good and meek as *Moſes*, fling away both the Tables of the Law, which otherwiſe would be as dear to him as the Apple of his Eye.

2. *From inconſiderateneſs.* There cannot be a full conſent of Will, where a deliberate Judgment doth not precede. Many a Man, through an inconſiderate indulging his Appetite, eats that Meat which foments his Humors into ſome dangerous Diſeaſe. Sin creeps upon a good Man when the livelineſs and activity of his Spirit in former Duties is in a ſlumber; but another hath as great Inclinations to ſin, when his Underſtanding is in its ſtrength. *Peter* had the Grace of Faith, but he fell into his Sin for want of acting it; upon his Repentance, it is ſaid, *Luke* 22. 6. *And* Peter *remembred the words of the Lord.* He had forgot Chriſt's *words*, and that made him forget himſelf and his Maſter in that act of Sin. If our Saviour had caſt his Eye upon *Peter*, and excited his ſlumbering Grace before the Maid had ſpoken to him, he might have prevented *Peter*'s Fall as well as afterwards recovered him. If God had ſent *Nathan* with a Meſſage to *David*, when his Corruption began firſt to put on its Arms, to have ſhewed him the vileneſs of his Intentions, and excited him to a ſtout Reſiſtance, he might have prevented the loſs of his Innocency, as well as reſtor'd him after it had lain in the Duſt ſo long. *David* might have kept his ſtanding, and diſmiſt thoſe Inclinations, as he did his inconſiderate deſign of murdering *Nabal* and his Family upon *Abigail*'s Admonition, for which he bleſſeth God, 1 *Sam.* 25, 32, 33. In ſhort, The *motion* of a regenerate Man to Sin is violent, like a Stone upward, the motion of an unrenewed Man is natural, like a Stone downwards. The Godly are violently purſued, but the wicked ſottiſhly infatuated by a Temptation. * And certainly when the ſtrength of the Paſſion is abated, and the free exerciſe of Reaſon recovered, there will be the exerciſe of Grace again; for it is not conceivable, that the habit of Grace and Repentance ſhould be without the actual exerciſe of it, when the Impediments are removed, and an occaſion preſented; ſo that he that doth not recover himſelf to his former exerciſe, never had this true Seed of God infuſed into him.

*Greenham.

7. Propoſition. *Though a Regenerate Man may fall, and Sin have a temporary dominion, yet he recovers out of this State, and for the moſt part returns to his former Holineſs, and an increaſe of it, though not always to his former Comforts.* There are none whoſe Sins are recorded in Scripture, but there are ſome evidences of their repentance for it, or the acting the contrary Grace. *David*'s Sin was groſs, and his Repentance remarkable; he was more tender afterwards in point of Blood, 2 *Sam.* 23. 16, 17. when he deſired Water out of the Well of *Bethlehem*, and it was brought him by three valiant Men with the jeopardy of their Lives; he would not drink it, becauſe it was the Blood of the Men that ventured their Lives to ſatisfie his Curioſity. *Peter*'s Repentance is eminent, his Affection is hot, for the truth of which he could appeal to his Maſter's Omniſciency, *John* 21. 17. *Lord thou knoweſt all things, thou knoweſt that I love thee.* His Courage is illuſtrious in aſſerting his Maſter's Honour in the face of the greateſt Dangers, in which exerciſe you find him the Foreman of that Jury of the Twelve Apoſtles before every Aſſembly, *Acts* 2. 3, 4, 5, &c. Though *Abraham* had diſcovered a diſtruſt of God in *Pharaoh*'s and *Abimelech*'s Courts, yet his Faith afterward in his readineſs to Sacrifice *Iſaac*, was as glorious as his Unbelief had been baſe, which gave him the Title of the Father of the Faithful. *Noah* who was drunk, and thereby expoſed to the deriſion of his Son, could not ſo well have curſt him, had he not abhorred the Sin as well as the Reproach. And *Lot*, whoſe righteous Soul was vexed with the filthineſs of others, could not have a leſs Vexation at his own when he came to know of it. Thoſe that affirm, that mortal Sins expel Grace, yet doubt whether they expel the Gifts of the Spirit, one end whereof ſay they, is to render the Soul pliable and flexible to the motions of the Spirit. * If they do not expel the Gifts, I know not why they ſhould expel the Grace which is under the manutenency of the Spirit of God in a particular manner. The *Spirit luſts againſt the Fleſh*, as well as *the Fleſh againſt the Spirit*, and the luſting of the Spirit will prevail as well as the luſting of the Fleſh, and more, *Gal.* 5. 17. All natural things that are removed out of their proper place, are reſtleſs till they are reduc'd to their right Station. A good Man is as Water, that though it be turned into a Maſs of Ice, wholly cold in the ways of God, yet ſtill there is a Principle in him (as there is in Ice) to return to his former Form, Figure, and Activity, upon the warm eruptions of the Spirit of God. There is a powerful Voice behind him that brings him back, *when he turns* either *to the right hand or to the left* from the ways of God, *Iſa.* 30. 21. By virtue of this Seed within him, and the Spirit of God exciting it, that word which comes home to the Soul after a Sin, becomes efficaciouſly melting, and raiſes up ſprings of penitential Motions, which could not ariſe ſo ſuddenly were the ſpiritual Life wholly departed. For a Man that hath no habit of Grace in him, cannot ſo ſuddenly concur with God's Propoſals, and exerciſe a Repentance. In ſuch an one we ſee firſt a ſtupefaction of Mind, and an unaptneſs to Faith, no motions of a true Repentance, though ſome preparation to it. But with a regenerate Man it is otherwiſe. *David* being admoniſh'd by *Nathan* was ſtruck to the Heart, and *Peter* preſently upon our Saviour's look melted in-

* *Suarez*: de Gratia: lib. 11. c. 3. num 10. p. 415.

into Tears. Their Grace, like Tinder, took fire preſently upon thoſe ſmall but powerful Occaſions; though it did not act at the time of their Sin, yet it had an aptneſs to act upon the removal of the Impediments. Though *Jonah* ſeems to caſt off all regard of God and his Command, yet upon the firſt occaſion in the *Whales Belly* he brings forth excellent fruits of Faith in a Moment, *Jonah* 2. Grace in an inſtant upon the firſt motion of the Spirit will riſe up, and take its place from whence it ſeems to be depoſed. As a natural Man under ſome ſting of Conſcience, and flaſh of a lightning Conviction, may be reſtrained from Sin, yet his natural Inclination to it remains, though ſuſpended at the preſent, and may be carried the quite contrary way, as the Stream of a River by the force of the Tide is turned againſt its natural Current, yet ſlides down its Channel with its wonted Calmneſs upon the removal of the force; ſo a good Man under the violence of ſome Luſt hath not his new Nature changed, though at preſent it is reſtrain'd by an extrinſick Force; ſo that as the one upon the taking off his Conviction, returns to his Sin, ſo the other upon the removal of his Fetters, returns to his Holineſs with a greater Spirit and Delight. A wicked Man may ſometimes do a good Action, but he continues not in it. As a *Planet* is ſometimes retrograde, but ſoon returns to its direct courſe. When their Conſcience pinches them, they awake out of their Trance. So a good Man may ſin through Infirmity, but he will revoke it by Repentance. The Seed of God remains in him as the Sap in the Root of a Tree that recovers the Leaves the next return of the Sun at the Spring. He may ſink by Nature, and riſe again by Grace; but the *Devil*, who ſinned at the beginning, fell and never roſe more.

Uſe of Examination.

If you find your ſelves in theſe caſes, in a courſe of known Sin, Reſolution to commit it, were it not for ſuch bars; unwillingneſs to know God's Pleaſure and Injunction, deſpiſing Admonitions and Reproofs, a ſettled love to it, a full conſent of Will without any antecedent, concomitant or conſequent diſſent, tumbling in it without riſing by Repentance, a circle of ſinning and repenting, without abhorrence of Sin; you may conclude your ſelves in an *unregenerate* State, you ſin like the *Devil*, who ſinned from the beginning.

A DISCOURSE OF THE Pardon of Sin.

Pſalm 32. 1, 2.

Bleſſed is he whoſe Tranſgreſſion is forgiven, whoſe Sin is covered. Bleſſed is the Man unto whom the Lord imputes not Iniquity.

THis *Pſalm*, as *Grotius* thinks, was made to be ſung upon the Annual Day of the Jewiſh Expiation, when a general confeſſion of their Sins was made. 'Tis one of *David*'s penitential Pſalms, ſuppoſed to be compoſed by him after the Murder of *Uriah*, and the pronouncing of his Pardon by *Nathan*, *v.* 5. and rather a *Pſalm of Thankſgiving*. 'Tis called *Maſchil*, a Pſalm of Underſtanding. *Maſchil* is tranſlated *eruditio*, *intelligentia*, and notes ſome excellent Doctrine in the *Pſalm*, not known by the light of Nature. *Bleſſed* אשרי *Bleſſednesſes. Ex omni parte beatus. Three* words there are to diſcover the nature of Sin; and *three* words to diſcover the nature of Pardon.

פשע *Tranſgreſſion.*] Prevarication. Some underſtand by it Sins of Omiſſion and Commiſſion.

חטאה *Sin.*] Some underſtand thoſe inward Inclinations, Luſts, and Motions, whereby the Soul ſwerves from the Law of God, and which are the immediate cauſes of external Sins.

עון *Iniquity.*] Notes original Sin, the root of all. *Three* words that note Pardon.

נשוי *Levatus, forgiven.*] Eas'd, נשא, ſignifies to *take away*, to *bear*, to *carry away*. *Two* words in *Scripture* are chiefly uſed to denote *remiſſion*, כפר, to *expiate*, נשא, to *bear*, or carry away; the one ſignifies the manner whereby it is done, *viz. atonement*; the other the *effect* of this Expiation, *carrying away*; one notes the *meritorious Cauſe*, the other the *conſequent*.

כסוי *Covered.*] Alluding to the covering of the *Ægyptians* in the Red Sea. *Menochius* thinks it alludes to the manner of writing among the *Hebrews*, which he thinks to be the ſame with that of the *Romans*; as writing with a Pencil upon Wax ſpread upon Tables, which when they would blot out, they made the Wax plain, and drawing it over the Writing, covered the former Letters. And ſo it is equivalent with that expreſſion of *blotting out ſin*, as in the other alluſion it is with *caſting* Sin *into the depths of the Sea.*

חשוב *Impute.* Not charging upon account. As Sin is a defection from the Law, ſo it is *forgiven*; as it is offenſive to God's Holineſs, ſo it is *covered*; as it is a Debt involving Man in a debt of Puniſhment, ſo it is not *imputed*; They all note the certainty, and extent, and perfection of Pardon. The *three* words expreſſing Sin here, being the ſame that are uſed by God in the declaration of his Name, *Exod.* 34. 7. Here are to be conſidered,

1. *The Nature of Pardon.*
2. *The Author of it, God.*
3. *The Extent of it, Tranſgreſſion, Sin, Iniquity.*
4. *The Manner of it, implied, by Faith in Chriſt.*

The *Apoſtle* quoting this place, *Rom.* 4. 7. to prove Juſtification by Faith: As Sin is not imputed, ſo ſomething is imputed inſtead of it. Covering implies ſomething wherewith a thing is covered, as well as the act whereby it is covered.

5. *The Effect of it, Bleſſedneſs.*

I ſhall not divide them into diſtinct Propoſitions, but take the words in order as they lie.

I. *The Nature of Pardon.*

1. *Conſider the words,* and what *notes* they will afford to us.

(1.) *Covering,* as it alludes to the manner of writing, and ſo is the ſame with blotting out, *Iſa.* 43. 25. *I, even I am he that blots out thy Tranſgreſſion*; whereby is implied, that Sin is a Debt, and Pardon is the remitting of it. It *notes,*

[1.] *The nullity of the Debt.* A croſſed Book will not ſtand good in Law, becauſe the croſſing of the Book implies the Satisfaction of the Debt. A Debt may be read in our manner of writing in a croſſed Book, but it cannot be pleaded. God may after Pardon read our Sins in the Book of his Omniſcience, but not charge them upon us at the bar of his Juſtice.

[2.] *God's willingneſs to Pardon.* Blots, not razeth. He engraves them not upon Marble, he writes them not with a Pen of Iron, or point of a Diamond; writing upon Wax is eaſily made plain.

[3.] *The extent of it.* Blotting ſerves for a great Debt as well as a ſmall, a Thouſand Pound may as well, and as ſoon be daſht out by a blot as a Thouſand Pence.

[4.] *The quickneſs of it upon Repentance.* It takes more time to write a Debt in a Book than to croſs it out; one blow would obliterate a great deal of writing upon Wax. Sins that have been contracting many Years, when God pardons, he blots out in a moment.

(2.) Covering, *as it alludes to the drowning the Egyptians* is expreſt by *caſting into the depths of the Sea,* Micah 7. 19. *Thou wilt caſt all their Sins into the depths of the Sea.*

This notes alſo,

[1.] *God's willingneſs to pardon. Caſts* them, not *lays* them gently aſide, but flings them away with violence, as things that he cannot endure the ſight of, and is reſolved never to take notice of them more.

[2.] *God's reality in Pardon.* He will caſt their Sins as far as the Arm of his Omnipotency can reach; If there be any place further than the depths of the Sea, thither they ſhall be thrown out of the ſight of his Juſtice.

[3.] *The extent.* [*All*] their Sins. The Sea covered *Egyptian* Princes, as well as the People. The mighty Lord, as well as the common Soldier, ſank like Lead in thoſe mighty Waters.

[4.] *The Duration of it.* The Sea vomits up nothing that it takes into its lower Bowels, things caſt into the depths of the Ocean never appear more. Rivers may be turned, and drain'd, but who can lave out the Ocean?

(3.) *Not imputing.* Not putting upon account, not charging the Debt in a legal Proceſs. To this is equivalent, the expreſſion of *not remembring,* Iſa. 43. 25. *I will not remember their Sins.* An Act of Oblivion is paſt upon Sin. This *notes,*

[1.] *That God will not exact the Debt of thee.* God doth not abſolutely forget Sin, for what he knows never ſlips out of his Knowledge. So that his *not remembring* is rather an act of his Will, than a defect in his Underſtanding. As when an Act of Oblivion is paſſed, the Fact committed is not *Phyſically* forgotten, but *legally,* becauſe the fear of Puniſhment is removed. God puts them out of the memory of his Wrath, though not out of the memory of his Knowledge. He doth remember them *paternally* to chaſtize thee for them, though not *judicially* to condemn thee.

[2.] *Not upbraid thee.* Not with a ſcornful upbraiding mention them to caſt thee off, but with a merciful renewing the remembrance of them upon thy Conſcience, to excite thy Repentance, and keep thee within the due bounds of Humility and Reverence.

More particularly, the nature of Pardon may be explained in theſe Propoſitions. We muſt not think that theſe Expreſſions, as they denote Pardon, do intimate in this Act the taking away of the *being* of Sin, *nature* of Sin, or *demerit* of Sin.

1. *The being and inherency of Sin is not taken away.* Though ſin be not imputed to us, yet it is inherent in us. The Being remains, though the Power be dethroned. By Pardon God takes away Sin, not as it is a pollution of the Soul, but as it is an inducement to Wrath. Though Remiſſion, and Sanctification are concomitants, yet they are diſtinct Acts, and wrought in a diſtinct manner.

2. *The nature of Sin is not taken away.* Juſtification is a relative change of the Perſon, not of the Sin; for though God will not by an act of his Juſtice puniſh the Perſon pardoned, yet by his Holineſs he cannot but hate the Sin, becauſe though it be pardoned, it is ſtill contrary to God, and enmity againſt him. 'Tis not a change of the native malice of the Sin, but a non-imputation of it to the Offender. Though the Perſon ſinning be free from any Indictment, yet Sin is not freed from its *malitia,* and oppoſition to God. For though the Law doth not condemn a juſtified Perſon, becauſe he is tranſlated into another ſtate, yet it condemns the acts of Sin, though the guilt of thoſe Acts doth not redound upon the Perſon to bring the Wrath of God upon him. Though *David* had the ſins of Murther and Adultery pardon'd, yet this Pardon did not make *David* a righteous Perſon in thoſe Acts, for it was Murther and Adultery ſtill, and the change was not in his Sin, but in his Soul and State.

3. *The Demerit of Sin is not taken away.* As Pardon doth not alter Sins Nature, ſo neither doth it alter Sins demerit, for to merit Damnation belongs to the nature of it; ſo that we may look upon our ſelves as deſerving Hell, though the Sin whereby we deſerve it, be remitted. Pardon frees us from actual Condemnation, but not, as conſidered in our own Perſons, from the deſert of Condemnation. As when a King pardons a Thief, he doth not make the Theft to become formally no Theft, or to be meritoriouſly no capital Crime. Upon thoſe *two* grounds of the nature and demerit of Sin, a juſtified Perſon is to bewail it; and I queſtion not but the conſideration of this doth add to the triumph and *Hallelujahs* of the glorified Souls, whoſe chief work being to praiſe God for Redemption, they cannot but think of the nature and demerit of that from which they were redeemed, *Rev.* 5. 13.

4. *The*

4. *The guilt of Sin, or obligation to Punishment is taken away by Pardon.* Sin committed doth presently, by vertue of the Law transgressed bind over the Sinner to Death: But Pardon makes void this Obligation; so that God no longer accounts us Persons obnoxious to him. *Peccatum remitti non aliud est quam non imputari ad pœnam**. 'Tis a revoking the Sentence of the Law against the Sinner; and God renouncing upon the account of the Satisfaction made by Christ to his Justice, any right to punish a Believer, doth actually discharge him upon his Believing, from that sentence of the Law under which he lay in the state of Unbelief; and also as he parts with this right to punish, so he confers a right upon a Believer humbly to challenge it, upon the account of the Satisfaction wrought by his Surety. God hath not only in his own Mind and Resolution parted with this right of Punishing, but also given an express declaration of his Will, 2 *Cor.* 5. 19. *God was in Christ reconciling the World unto himself*, i. e. openly renouncing, upon Christ's Account, the right to Punish, whence follows the non-imputation of Sin. *Not imputing their trespasses unto them.* The Justice of God will not suffer that that Sin which is pardoned, should be punished; for can that be Justice in a Prince to pardon a Thief, and yet to bring him to the Gallows for that Fact? Though the Malefactor doth justly deserve it, yet after a Pardon and the Word passed, it is not justly inflicted. God indeed doth punish for that Sin which is pardoned. Though *Nathan*, by God's Commission, had declared *David*'s Sin pardoned, yet the *Sword* was to stick in the Bowels of his Family, 2 *Sam.* 12. 10, 15. *The Sword shall never depart from thy House*, [*the Lord hath put away thy Sin, thou shalt not dye.*] But

* Durand. lib. 4. dist. 1. q. 7. *For Sin to be pardoned, is nothing else but not to be imputed in order to punishment.*

(1.) *'Tis not a Punishment in order to Satisfaction.* Because Christ's Satisfaction had no flaw in it, and stood in need of nothing to eek it out: But 'tis for the vindication of the Honour of God's Holiness, that he might not be thought an approver of Sin; and this was the reason of *David*'s Punishment in the death of his Child by *Bathsheba*. 2 *Sam.* 12. 14. [*Because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the Enemies of the Lord to Blaspheme.*]

(2.) *'Tis not so much penal as medicinal.* A *Judge* commands a Hand to be cut off, that is for Punishment; a *Physician* and a *Father* order the same, but for the Patient's Cure, and the preservation of the Body. And though God after Pardon acts not towards his People in the nature of a Judge, yet he never lays aside the Authority and Affection of a Father. We are delivered from a Judge's Wrath, but not from a Father's Anger. In that remarkable dumbness inflicted upon *Zachary* for his *unbelief*, *Luke* 1. 18. 20. there was a confirmation of his Faith, as well as the chastisement of his Incredulity. The Angel upon his unbelieving desire of a Sign, gives him a Testimony of the truth of his Errand, but such an one that should make him feel in some measure the smart of his unbelief.

(3.) *If it be penal, 'tis not the eternal punishment due to Sin.* 'Tis but temporary and not embittered by Wrath, which is the gall of Punishment.

This *taking off* the obligation to Punishment is the true nature of Pardon. Which will be evident from, 2 *Sam.* 19. 19. *Let not my Lord impute Iniquity unto me. Shimei* desires *David not to impute* Iniquity, and *not* to *remember* it. It was not in *David*'s Power absolutely to forget it, and *Shimei*'s confessing the Fact with those circumstances in *verse* 20. was enough to recall it to *David*'s Memory, if he had forgot it; but he desires *David* not to bring him to satisfy the penalty of the Law for reviling his Sovereign.

II. *The Author of Pardon, God* For Pardon is the Sovereign Prerogative of God, whereby he doth acquit a believing Sinner from all obligation to Satisfactory Punishment, upon the account of the Satisfaction and Righteousness of Christ apprehended by Faith.

1. *'Tis God's Act.* Remission is the Creditor's, not the Debtor's Act; though the Debtor be obliged in Justice to pay the Debt, yet there is no obligation upon the Creditor to demand the Debt, because it is at his liberty to renounce or maintain his Right to it; and God hath as much Power as Man to relax his Right, provided it be with a *Salvo* to his own Honour, and the holiness of his Nature, which he cannot deny for the Sinners safety, as the Apostle tells us, *God cannot deny himself.* Yet properly, say some, though Sin be a Debt, God is not to be considered in Pardon as a Creditor, because Sin is not a pecuniary Debt, but a Criminal, and so God is to be considered as a Governor, Law-giver, Guardian, and Executor of his Laws, and so may dispence with the Severities of them. If an inferior Person tear an Indictment, it may be brought again into Court; but if the chief Magistrate order the casting it out, who can plead it? 'Tis *God's Act*, and *if God justifies who can condemn?* Rom. 8. 33. *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's Elect? It is God that justifies, who shall condemn?* That *God* absolves thee that hath power to condemn thee, that God who enacted the Law whereby thou art sentenced, proclaims the Gospel whereby thou art reconcil'd. 'Tis an offended God who is a forgiving God; that God whose Name thou hast prophaned, whose Patience thou hast abused, whose Laws thou hast violated, whose Mercy thou hast slighted, whose Justice thou hast dared, and whose Glory thou hast stained.

2. 'Tis not only his Act but *his Prerogative, and he only can do it.* God is the Party wronged. *Nemo potest remittere de jure alieno.* This Prerogative he glories in as peculiar to himself, the thoughts of this Honour are so sweet to him, that he repeats it twice, as a Title he will not share with another, *Isa.* 43. 25. [*I, even I am he that blots out thy Transgressions.*] Pardoning Offenders is one of a Princes Royalties. And this is reckoned among his *Regalia*, as a choice Flower and Jewel in his Crown, *Exod.* 34. 7. [*forgiving Iniquity, Transgressions, and Sins.* A Prince punisheth by his Ministers, but pardons by Himself. And indeed, God is never so glorious as in acts of Mercy: Justice makes him terrible, but Mercy renders him amiable. When *Moses* desired to see God in his Royalty, and best Perfections, he displays himself in his Goodness, *Exod.* 33. 18. *Shew me thy glory*, v. 19. *I will make all my Goodness pass before thee. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious.* And though the Apostles had a power of Remission, and Binding, that was only ministerial and declarative, like that prophetical Power which *Jeremy* had to root up Nations, and destroy, *Jer.* 1. 10. *i. e.* to declare God's Will in such and such Judgments, as he should send him to pronounce. Men cannot pardon an infinite Wrong done to an infinite Justice. Forgiveness belongs to God, as,

(1.) *Proprietor.* He hath a greater Right to us than we have to our selves.

(2.) *Sovereign.* He is Lord over us, as we are his Creatures.

(3.) *Governour of us*, as we are parts of the World.

(4.) *'Tis an act of his Mercy:* Not our Merit. Though there be a conditional connexion between Pardon, and Repentance, and Faith, yet there is no meritorious connexion ariseth from the Nature

of thoſe Graces, but Remiſſion flows from the gracious Indulgence of the Promiſe.

'Tis the very tenderneſs of Mercy, the meltings of inward Bowels, *Luke* 1. 78. *To give knowledge of Salvation, and Remiſſion of their Sins through the tender Mercies of our God.* σπλαγχνα ἐλέους, an inexhauſtible Mercy, *Pſal.* 86. 5. *Thou Lord art ready to forgive, and art plenteous in Mercy.* A *multitude of tender Mercies, Pſal.* 51. 1. What *Arithmetick* can count all the Bubblings up of Mercy in the Breaſt of God, and all the Glances, and all the Doles of his pardoning Grace towards his Creatures? And he keeps this Mercy by him as in a Treaſury to this purpoſe, *Exod.* 34. 7. *keeping Mercy for Thouſands, forgiving Iniquity,* &c. And is ſtill as full as ever, as the Sun which hath influenc'd ſo many Animals and Vegetables, and expell'd ſo much Darkneſs and Cold, is ſtill as a ſtrong Man, able to run the ſame Race, and perform by its Light and Heat the ſame Operations. When *Mercy* ſhews it ſelf in State with all its Train, it is but to uſher in pardoning Grace, *Exod.* 34. 6, 7. not a Letter, not an Attribute that makes up the compoſition of that *Name* but is a Friend and Votary of Mercy. And that latter Clauſe a learned Man explains of God's *Clemency, He will by no means clear the Guilty, viſiting the Iniquity of the Fathers,* &c. which he renders thus; *He will not utterly cut off and deſtroy, but when he doth viſit the Sins of the Fathers upon the Children, it ſhall be but to the third or fourth Generation, not for ever.* This Name of God is urged by *Moſes, Numb.* 14. 17. *Now I beſeech thee, let the Power of my Lord be great; the Lord is Long-ſuffering, and of great Mercy, forgiving Iniquity and Tranſgreſſion, and by no means clearing the Guilty, viſiting the Iniquity,* &c. *Pardon, I beſeech thee, the Iniquity of this People, according to the greatneſs of thy Mercy.* Where *Moſes* repeats this Clauſe more particularly than he doth the other parts of his Name; which ſurely he would not have done, and pleaded it as a Motive to God to pardon *Iſrael,* if he had not underſtood it of God's *Clemency*; for otherwiſe he had dwelt more upon the Argument of Juſtice than upon that of Mercy, which had not been proper to edge his preſent Petition with. Nay it is ſuch pure Mercy, the genuine birth of Mercy, that it partakes of its very Name, as Children bear the Name of their Father, *Heb.* 8. 12. *I will be merciful to their Iniquity,* which in the Prophet, *Jer.* 31. 34. whence the Apoſtle quotes it, is, *I will forgive their Iniquity.*

That it is ſo, will appear, becauſe,

(1.) *No Attribute could be the firſt Motive of Pardon but this.* His Juſtice would loudly cry for Vengeance, and flame out againſt ungrateful Sinners. His Holineſs would make him abhor not only the Embraces, but the very ſight of ſuch filthy Creatures as we are. His Power would attend to receive and execute the Commands of his Juſtice and Holineſs, did not Compaſſion ſtep in to qualifie.

(2.) *Unconſtrained Mercy.* Men pardon many times, becauſe they are too weak to puniſh. But God wants not power to inflict Judgments, neither doth Man want Weakneſs to ſink under it, *Rom.* 5. 6. *When we were without Strength, Chriſt dy'd for us.* God wanted not ſufficient reaſon to juſtifie a ſevere Proceeding both in the *quality* of Sin, every Sin being a Contrariety to the Law, Sovereignty, Work, Glory, yea the very Being of God; now for God to pardon that which would pull him out of his Throne, hath blemiſhed the Creation, robs him of his Honour, muſt be an Act of the richeſt and pureſt Mercy: And in the *quantity,* multitudes of Sins of this curſed qualit as numerous as Motes in the Sun-beams. 'Tis impoſſible for the nimbleſt Angel to write down the Extravagancies of Men committed in the ſpace of *twenty four Hours,* if he could know all the Operations of their Souls as well as their outward Actions; all thoſe God doth ſee, *ſimul & ſemel,* and yet is ready to pardon in the midſt of numberleſs Provocations.

(3.) *Reſolved and deſigned Mercy.* 'Tis not thro' inadverteney and inſenſibleneſs of the aggravating Circumſtances of them. God muſt needs know the Nature and Circumſtances of all thoſe Sins he himſelf laid upon Chriſt. Yea God hath an actuated Knowledge of all when he is about to pardon, *Iſa.* 43. 22. God reckons up their Sins of omiſſions: They had been *weary of him,* and had *not brought* to him their ſmall Cattle; had preferred their Lambs and Kids before his Service, wearied him with their Iniquities, endeavoured to tire him out of the Government of the World. What could one have expected after this black Scroul, but Fire-balls of Wrath? Yet *he blots them out, v.* 25. though all thoſe Sins were freſh in his Memory. Nay, the *Name* we have profaned becomes our Solicitor, *Ezek.* 36. 22. *For my Holy Names ſake which you have profaned.*

(4.) *Delightful and pleaſant Mercy.* He delights in pardoning Mercy, as a Father delights in his Children. He is therefore called *the Father of Mercy. Micah* 7. 18. *he pardons Iniquity, and retains not his Anger for ever, becauſe he delights in Mercy.* Never did we take ſo much pleaſure in ſinning, as God doth in forgiving. Never did any Penitent take ſo much pleaſure in receiving, as God doth in giving a Pardon: He ſo much delights in it, that he counts it his Wealth; *Riches of Grace, Riches of Mercy,* glorious Riches of Mercy; no Attribute elſe is called his Riches. He ſighs when he muſt draw his Sword, *Hoſ.* 11. 8. *How ſhall I give thee up, O Ephraim!* But when he blots out Iniquity, then it is, *I, even I am he that blots out your Tranſgreſſions for my Names ſake.* His delight in this is equal to the delight he hath in his Name. This is pure Mercy, to change the Tribunal of Juſtice into a Throne of Grace; to beſtow Pardons, where he might inflict Puniſhments; and to put on the Deportment of a Father inſtead of that of a Judge.

4. *The Act of his Juſtice.* Thoſe Attributes which ſeem contrary, are joyn'd together to produce Forgiveneſs: Yet God is not to be conſidered in pardon only as *Judex,* but *paternus Judex*; there is a Compoſition of *Judge* and *Father* in this Act; Free Grace on God's part, but Juſtice upon the account of Chriſt. That God will accept of a Satisfaction is Mercy; that he will not forgive without a Satisfaction is Juſtice: Mercy forgives it in us, though Juſtice did puniſh it in Chriſt. Chriſt by his Death paid the Debt, and God by the Reſurrection of Chriſt diſcharg'd the Debt; and therefore the Juſtice of God is engaged to beſtow Pardon upon a Believer. God *ſet forth* Chriſt *as a Propitiation, that he might be juſt, and* therefore *a juſtifier of him that believes, Rom.* 3. 26. Either the Debt is paid, or not; if not, then Chriſt's Death is in vain; if it be, then God's Juſtice is ſo equitable, as not to demand a *ſecond* Payment. Therefore another *Apoſtle* joyns *faithful* and *righteous*; it might have been faithful and merciful, faithful and loving; but faithful and righteous, or juſt, takes in the Attribute, which is moſt terrible to Man, 1 *John* 1. 9. *He is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins,* δικαιος. *Iſai* joyns both together, *a juſt God, and a Saviour, Iſa.* 45. 21. So that here

is

is unſpeakable Comfort. That which engaged God formerly to puniſh Man, engageth him now to pardon a Believer. That which moved him to puniſh Chriſt, doth excite him to forgive thee.

5. *The Act of his Power.* 'Tis a ſign of a noble and generous Mind to paſs over Offences and Injuries. Sick and indigent Perſons are the moſt peeviſh and impatient, and leaſt able to concoct an Injury. And when we kindle into a Flame upon the leaſt Sparks of a Wrong, the *Apoſtle* tells us, we are *overcome of Evil*, *Rom.* 12. 21. *Be not overcome of Evil:* We become Captives to our angry Paſſions; ſpeedy Revenge in us being an Act of Weakneſs, the contrary muſt be an Act of Power over our ſelves. God's not executing the fierceneſs of his Anger is laid upon his being a *God, and not Man*, *Hoſ.* 11. 9. God's infinite Power gives a Riſe to Pardon, *Micah* 7. 18. *Who is a God like to thee, that pardons Iniquity?* *Junius* and *Tremellius* render it, Who is a *ſtrong God?* and the Hebrew אל will bear it. *Let the Power of my Lord be great*, ſaith *Moſes*, *Numb.* 14. 17. The Word *Jigdal* is written with a great *Jod*, to ſhew, ſay the *Jews*, that it is more than an ordinary *power* to command ones ſelf when injur'd. Therefore when God proclaims his pardoning Name, he uſhers it in with Names of Power; *The Lord, the Lord God*, *Exod.* 34. 6. 'Tis a greater Work to forgive, than to prevent the commiſſion of Sin; as it is a greater Work to raiſe a dead Man, than to cure a ſick Man; one is a Work of Art, the other belongs only to Omnipotency.

III. *The manner of it.* How it is carry'd on.

1. *On God's part by Chriſt.*

(1.) *By his Death.* He is the *Scape-Goat*, upon whom our Sins are laid, *Iſa.* 53. 6. Our Sins are made Chriſt's, and Chriſt's Righteouſneſs is made ours: He is ſaid to be *made Sin for us*, and we are ſaid to be *made the Righteouſneſs of God in him*, 2 *Cor.* 5. 21. a bleſſed exchange for us; he bore that Wrath, indured thoſe Torments, ſuffered thoſe Strokes of Juſtice which were due to us. The Pardon of Sin doth coſt us Confeſſions and Tears, but it coſt Chriſt Blood, and *unknown Pains*; as the *Greek* Liturgy, Δι' ἀγνώστων πόνων, have Mercy on us.

[1.] *Laid upon him by God.* God appropriates this Work to himſelf, *Zach.* 3. 9. *I will engrave the engraving thereof*, ſpeaking of the Stone, which is the ſame with his Servant the Branch. As a Stone is cut with a Chizzel, which makes deep Furrows in it; ſo did God deal with Chriſt, and that in order to the taking away of Sin. *I will remove the Iniquity of that Land in one Day*, *viz.* the Day of Chriſt's Suffering. By that Offering of himſelf, he ſhall perfectly ſatisfie me. Therefore it is called the *Will of God*, in order to the taking away Sin, *Heb.* 10. 9, 10. compared with *v.* 11, 12. *I come to do thy Will, by which Will we are ſanctified*; which Will was *to take away Sin*. For *v.* 11. that was the end of his Sacrifice, the Legal Sacrifices not being able to do it. God did not only conſent to it, or give a bare Grant, but it was a propenſe and affectionate Motion of his Heart, *Iſa.* 53. 10. *It pleaſed the Lord to bruiſe him.* Hence did the Angels ſing at his Birth, *Glory to God in the higheſt, Peace on Earth, and Good Will towards Men.* The Peace he was to procure was the Fruit of God's Good Will towards us.

[2.] *Voluntarily undertaken by Chriſt*, Heb. 10. 5, 7. *Lo I come, I delight to do thy Will, O my God.* Willingneſs is the Entrance of the Work; Willingneſs to take a Body, and Willingneſs to lay down that Body. He had as it were a Fever of Affection, a Combuſtion in his Bowels till it was finiſhed. In his greateſt Agonies he did not repent of his Undertaking, or deſire to give it over: He cry'd indeed to his Father, that this Cup might paſs from him, but he preſently ſubmits: If there be no other way to ſave Sinners, I will paſs on through Death and Hell to do it. When he was *afflicted and oppreſſed*, he murmur'd not at it, *Iſa.* 53. 7. *He opened not his Mouth, he opened not his Mouth*; it is twice repeated, to ſhew his Willingneſs. And God was highly pleaſed with him for this very Reaſon, becauſe he did *pour out his Soul*, and *bore the Sins of many, and made Interceſſion for the Tranſgreſſors.* All which Expreſſions denote his Earneſtneſs and Readineſs in it.

(2.) *By his Reſurrection.* His Death is the Payment, his Reſurrection the Diſcharge, *Rom.* 4. *ult. Who was delivered for our Offences, and roſe again for our Juſtification.* Not that we are formally juſtified by the Reſurrection of Chriſt, but that thereby God declar'd, that whoſoever believes in him ſhould be juſtified upon that believing. For if Chriſt had not riſen, there had been no certainty of the payment of the Debt. In his Death he pays the Sum, as he is our Surety; and in his Reſurrection he hath his *Quietus eſt* out of God's Exchequer. God will not have this Payment from Chriſt, which he hath acknowledged himſelf publickly to be ſatisfy'd with, and from Believers too. For upon his Reſurrection he ſent him to *bleſs* Men, *Acts* 3. *ult. God having raiſed up his Son Jeſus, ſent him to bleſs you.* How? *In turning away every one of you from his Iniquity:* It being a great Encouragement to turn Men from Sin, when God had thus declared them pardonable by the Reſurrection of his Son.

2. *On our parts by Faith.* Faith is as neceſſary in an *inſtrumental* way, as Chriſt in a *meritorious* way, *Acts* 26. 18. *That they may receive Forgiveneſs of Sins by Faith that is in me.* Chriſt purchaſeth a Pardon, but Faith only puts us into poſſeſſion of a Pardon; yet it cannot from its own Worth challenge Forgiveneſs at the Hands of God, but upon the account of Chriſt, who hath merited Forgiveneſs. Though the King grants a Pardon to a condemned Malefactor, yet he may be executed unleſs he pleads it the next Aſſizes, though he hath it lying by him: So, unleſs we ſue it out, and accept of it by Faith, all Chriſt's Purchaſe will not advantage us. Faith looks not barely upon the Sufferings of Chriſt, but upon his End and Deſign in it: It looks not upon his Paſſion as a Story, but as a Teſtament; and you ſeldom find the Death of Chriſt mentioned in the New Teſtament, without expreſſing the End of it. This Forgiveneſs by Chriſt's Death as the meritorious Cauſe, ſhews,

(1.) *God's willingneſs to pardon.* If God did delight in the Death of Chriſt, it was not ſurely ſimply in his Death; for, could a Father delight to tear out the Bowels of his Son? The Afflictions of his People go to his Heart, much more would the Sufferings of his Darling. God had more Delight in Forgiveneſs, than Grief at his Sons Sufferings; for he never repented of it, though our Saviour beſought him with Tears. And that God who was never Deaf to any that called upon him, nor ever will be, would not hear his only Son in the Requeſt, to take the Cup from him, or abate any thing of the weight of his Sufferings, becauſe it was neceſſary for the Pardon of Sin,

Sin, *neceſſitate decreti*, if not *naturæ*. God repented of making the World, but never of forgiving Sin; So that the Pardon of Sin is more pleaſing to him than the Sufferings of his Son were grievous; otherwiſe whatſoever the Father would have done by Inſtruments, yet ſurely he himſelf would not have been the Executioner of him. But in this Affair there were not only Inſtruments, *Judas* to betray him, the *Jews* to accuſe him, the *Diſciples* to forſake him, *Pilate* to condemn him, the *Soldiers* to mock and crucifie him, and *Thieves* to revile him, but God himſelf, *Iſa.* 53. 10. *Yet it pleaſed the Lord to bruiſe him; he hath put him to grief; Thou ſhalt make his Soul an Offering for Sin.* His own Father that lov'd him, (as *Abraham* in the Type) puts as it were the Knife to the Throat of his only Son; which ſurely God would not have done, had not Pardon of Sin been infinitely pleaſing to him. And how great a pleaſure muſt that be, that ſwallow'd up all Grief at his Sons Sufferings? Yea, he ſeemed to love our Salvation more than he loved the Life of his Son; ſince the End is always more amiable than the Means, and the Means only lovely as they reſpect the End.

(2.) *The certainty of Forgiveneſs.* God muſt deny Chriſt's Payment before he can deny thy Pardon. God will not deny what his Son hath earned ſo dearly; and what he earned was for us, and not for himſelf. Did God pardon many before Chriſt died, and will he not pardon believing Souls ſince Chriſt died? Some were certainly ſaved before the coming of Chriſt: Upon what account? Not for their own Righteouſneſs; that is but a Ragg, and could not merit infinite Grace. Not by the Law; that thundered nothing but Death, and condemned Millions; but never breathed a Pardon to one Perſon. Or was it by their vehement Supplications? Thoſe could not make an infinite Righteouſneſs mutable: Juſtice muſt be preferred before the Cries of Malefactors; and if thoſe could have done it, God would not have been at the expence of his Son's Blood. Therefore it muſt be upon this account, *Rom.* 3. 25. *For the Remiſſion of Sins that are paſt.* Did God pardon upon truſt, and will he not much more upon Payment? Did he forgive when there was only a Promiſe of Payment, and ſome Thouſands of Years to run out before it was to be made? and will he not much more forgive, ſince he hath all the Debt paid into his Hands? Would God remit Sin when Chriſt had nothing under his Hand to ſhew for it? And now that he hath a publick Teſtimony, and Acquittance, will he not much more do it? Seeing his *purging our Sins*, or expiating them by his Death, was the ground of his Exaltation to the honour of ſitting at the Right Hand of God in our Natures, *Heb.* 1. 3. *When he had by himſelf purged our Sins, ſat down at the Right-hand of the Majeſty on high*; it is a certain Evidence of the grant of Pardon upon the account of this Sacrifice to thoſe that ſeek it in God's Methods, ſince God hath ſhewn himſelf ſo pleaſed with it: For it is clear, that becauſe Chriſt *loved Righteouſneſs and hated Iniquity, i. e.* kept up the Honour of God's Juſtice and Holineſs, by the offering himſelf to Death, that God hath given him a Portion above all his Fellows.

(3.) *The extent of it.* Both to *original* and actual Sin, *John* 1. 29. *Behold the Lamb of God, that takes away the Sin of the World.* Sin of the World, the Sin of Humane Nature, that firſt Sin of *Adam*. Of this Mind is *Auſtin*, and others, that original Sin is not imputed to any to condemnation ſince the Death of Chriſt. But howſoever this be, it is certain it is taken away from Believers, as to its imputation. Chriſt was *made Sin for us*; 2 *Cor.* 5. 21. to bear all Sin. It had been an imperfect Payment to have paid the Intereſt, and let the Principal remain; or to have paid the Principal, and let the Intereſt remain. *There is no Condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus, Rom.* 8. 1. and therefore no damning Matter or Guilt left in arrear. It had been Folly elſe for the Apoſtle to have publiſhed a defying Challenge to the whole Creation, to have brought an Indictment againſt a juſtified Perſon, (*Rom.* 8. 33. *Who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's Elect?*) if the leaſt Crime remained unremitted for the Juſtice of God, the Severity of the Law, the Acuteneſs of Conſcience, or the Malice of the Devil to draw up into a Charge. Since the end of his coming was *to deſtroy the Works of the Devil*, whereby he had acquired a Power over Man, he leaves not therefore any one Sin of a Believer unſatisfy'd for, which may continue, and eſtabliſh the Devil's Right over him. If the Redemption only of the *Jews*, with the Excluſion of the *Gentiles* in the firſt Compact ſeemed to diſpleaſe him, to ſhed his Blood for ſmall Sins only, would have been as little to his Content. It had been too low a Work for ſo great a Saviour to have undergone thoſe unknown Sufferings for Debts of a ſmaller value, and to ſhed that ineſtimable Blood for the payment of Farthings, and leave Talents unſatisfy'd. Certainly, God ſent not his Son, but with an intention his Blood ſhould be improved to the higheſt uſes for thoſe that perform the Covenant-conditions, and that Father who would have us honour his Son as we honour himſelf, will ſurely honour his Son's Satisfaction in the extenſive Effects of it, as he would honour his own Mercy, ſince they are both ſo ſtraitly linkt together. And it is as much for the Glory of Chriſt's Satisfaction, as for the honour of his Father's Mercy, to paſs by the greateſt Tranſgreſſions.

(4.) *The continuance of it.* Thou art pardoned, and yet thou ſinneſt; but Chriſt hath paid and never runs more upon the Score. Thou art pardoned and doſt daily forfeit, and needeſt a daily Renewal; but Chriſt hath purchaſed, and never ſins away his Purchaſe. God expected a Price ſuitable to the Debt he foreſaw Men would owe him, for he knew how much the Summ would amount unto. When he gave Chriſt, he intended him for the juſtification of *many Offences, Rom.* 5. 16. *The free Gift is of many Offences unto Juſtification*, ſpeaking of the Gift of God, *v.* 15. And therefore ſince God cannot be miſtaken in the greatneſs of the Summ, becauſe of his infinite Knowledge, it had been a greater Act of Wiſdom not to provide any Remedy at all, than not to do it thoroughly. If the continuance of that imperfect Remiſſion of *Adam* and the Patriarchs was drawn out for above Three thouſand Years and more, and the enjoyment of Happineſs made good to them meerly upon Chriſt's undertaking, ſurely it will be much more upon his actual performing, *Rom.* 3. 25. There was then a πάρεσις, now an ἄφεσις, they had a continuance of freedom from Puniſhment by his Mediatorſhip, and Sponſion, much more ſhall Believers have a continuance of Pardon by his actual Sacrifice, upon which the validity of all the former Mediatory Acts did depend; Since now there is no more remembrance of Sin by the continuance of legal Sacrifices, his being ſo abſolutely compleat. Therefore God hath erected a ſtanding Office of Advocacy for Chriſt,

1 *John* 2. 1. in Heaven, for the repreſenting of his Wounds and Satisfaction, and beſpeaking a continuance of Grace to us. He is ſaid to be the *Lamb that taketh away the Sins of the World*, *John* 1. 29. not ὁ ἄρας *hath taken*, or ὁ ἀρῶν will take, but ὁ αἴρων which notes *actum perpetuum*, the conſtant Effect of his Death. And ſince as I ſaid before, Chriſt hath an higher Portion than others, becauſe he loved Righteouſneſs, in this Portion he hath a Joy and Gladneſs; but his Joy would certainly be ſullied, if Pardon ſhould not be continued to thoſe for whom he purchaſed it.

(5.) *The worth of it.* That muſt be of incomparable value that was purchaſed at ſo great a Price as the Blood of God, *Acts* 20. 28. (So it is called by reaſon of the Union of the Divine Nature with the Humane, conſtituting one Perſon.) 'Tis Blood, which all the Gold and Silver, and the Stones and Duſt of the Earth turned into Pearls, could not equal. God underſtood the worth of it, who in Juſtice would require no more of his Son at leaſt than the thing was worth, not a Drop of Blood more than the value of it. Neither ſurely would Chriſt, who could not be miſtaken in the juſt Price, have parted with more than was neceſſary for the purchaſe of it. It would have beggar'd the whole Creation to have paid a Price for it. The Prayers and Services of a gracious Soul, though God delights in them, could not be a ſufficient Recompence. And the bare Mercy of God, without the Concurrence of his provokt Juſtice, could not grant it, though his Bowels naturally are troubled at the Afflictions of his Creatures.

IV. *Extenſiveneſs, fulneſs, or perfectneſs of Pardon.* 1. In the *Act*; *forgiving, covering, not imputing.* 2. In the *Object*; *Iniquities, Tranſgreſſions, and Sins.*

1. *Perfect in reſpect of State.* God retains no Hatred againſt a pardoned Perſon. He never imputes Sin formally, becauſe he no more remembers it, though *virtually* he may, to aggravate the Offence a Believer hath fallen into after his Juſtification. So *Job poſſeſſed the Sins of his Youth.* And Chriſt tacitly put *Peter* in remembrance of his Denial of him. The Grant is compleat here, though all the Fruits of Remiſſion are not enjoyed till the Day of Judgment, and therefore in Scripture, Sin is ſaid *then* to be forgiven. 'Tis a queſtion whether Believers Sins will be mentioned at the Day of Judgment. Some think they will, becauſe all Men are to give an account. Methinks there is ſome evidence to the contrary. Our Saviour never mentioned the unworthy Carriage of his Diſciples to him in his Sufferings, and after his Reſurrection, ſeems to have removed from him all remembrance of it. 'Tis not to be expected, that a loving Husband will lay open the Faults of his tender Spouſe upon the Day of the publick Solemnization of the Nuptials. But if it be otherwiſe, 'tis not to upbraid them, but to enhance their Admirations of his Grace. He will diſcover their Graces as well as their Sin, and unſtop the Bottles of their Tears, as well as open the Book of their Tranſgreſſions. Our Saviour, upon *Mary*'s anointing him, applauds her Affection, but mentions not her former Iniquity.

It muſt needs be perfect.

[1.] *All God's Actions are ſuitable to his Nature.* What God doth, he doth as a God. And is he perfect in his other Works, and not in his Mercy, which is the choiceſt Flower in his Crown? God ſees blacker Circumſtances in our Sins, than an inraged Conſcience, or a malicious Devil can repreſent: But God pardons not according to our Apprehenſions, which though great in a tempeſtuous Conſcience, yet are not ſo high as God's knowledge of it.

[2.] *The Cauſe of Pardon is perfect.* Both the Mercy of God, and the Merits of Chriſt are immutably perfect. 'Tis for his own Glory, his own Mercies ſake, that he pardons. He will not dimm the Luſtre of his own Crown, by leaving the effect of his Glory imperfect, or ſatisfying the Importunities of his Mercy by halves. The Saints in Heaven have not a more perfect Righteouſneſs, whereby they continue their ſtanding, than thoſe on Earth have; for, though inherent Righteouſneſs here is ſtained, yet imputed, upon which Pardon is founded, is altogether ſpotleſs. A Righteouſneſs that being infinite in reſpect of the Perſon, hath a ſufficiency for Devils, had it a congruity; but it hath both for us, becauſe manifeſted in our Natures.

(2.) *In reſpect of the Objects.* Sinful Nature, ſinful Habits, ſinful Diſpoſitions, pardon'd at once, though never ſo heinous;

[1.] *For Quality.* There was no limitation as to the deepneſs of the Wounds cauſed by the Fiery Serpents in the Wilderneſs; the Precept of *looking upon them*, extended to the Cure of all, let the Sting reach never ſo deep, the Wound be never ſo wide, or ſharp, and his ſight be never ſo weak, if he could but caſt his Eye upon the *Brazen one.* The Commiſſion Chriſt gave to his Diſciples, was to preach *the Goſpel to every Creature*, *Mark* 16. 15. every Humane Creature; the worſt as well as the beſt; though you meet with monſtrous Sinners in the likeneſs of Beaſts, and Devils, except none from ſuing out a Pardon in the Court of Mercy. The Almightineſs of his Mercy doth as much tranſcend our higheſt Iniquities, as it doth our ſhalloweſt Apprehenſions. Our Sins, as well as our Subſtance, are but as the Duſt of the Ballance, as eaſily to be blown away by his Grace, as the other puft into Nothing by his Power. No Sin is excepted in the Goſpel, but that againſt the Holy Ghoſt, becauſe it doth not ſtand with the Honour of God to pardon them who wilfully ſcorn the Means, and account the Redeemer no better than an Impoſtor. No Man can expect in reaſon he ſhould be ſaved by Mercy, who by a wilful Malice againſt the Son of God, tramples upon the free Offers of Grace, and provokes Mercy it ſelf to put on the Deportment of Juſtice, and call in revenging Wrath to its aſſiſtance, for the vindication of its deſpiſed Honour. The infinite Grace of God diſſolves the greateſt Miſts, as well as the ſmalleſt Exhalations, and melts the thick Clouds of Sin as well as the little Icicles.

[2.] *The Quantity.* Hath God ever put a reſtraint upon his Grace, and Promiſe, that we ſhall find Mercy if we ſin but to ſuch a number, and no more? 'Tis not agreeable to the Greatneſs and Majeſty of God's Mercy, to remit one part of the Debt, and to exact the other. It conſiſts not with the motive of Pardon, which is his own Love, to be both a Friend and an Enemy at the ſame time, in pardoning ſome, and charging others; and thus his Grace would rather be a Mockery, and Deriſion of Men. Neither doth it conſiſt with the end of Pardon, which is Salvation; for to give an half Pardon, is to give no Salvation; ſince if the leaſt Guilt remains unremitted, it gives Juſtice an unanſwerable Plea againſt us. What profit would

would it be to have ſome forgiven, and be damned for the Remainder? Had any one Sin, for which Chriſt was to have made a compenſation, remain'd unſatisfied, the Redeemer could not have riſen; ſo if the ſmalleſt Sin remains unblotted, it will hinder our riſing from the power of eternal death, and make the pardon of all the reſt as a nullity in Law. But it is the Glory of God to paſs by all, *Prov.* 19. 31. *It is his glory to paſs over a Tranſgreſſion.* 'Tis the glory of a Man to paſs by an Offence. 'Tis a diſcovery of an inward Principle or Property, which is an Honour for a Man to be known the Maſter of. If it be his Glory to paſs by a ſingle and ſmall Injury, then to paſs by the more heinous and numerous Offences is a more tranſcendent Honour, becauſe it evidenceth this property to be in him, in a more triumphant Strength and Power. So that it is a clearer evidence of the illuſtrious vigor of Mercy in God, to paſs by mountainous, and heaped up Tranſgreſſions, than to forgive only ſome few Iniquities of a leſſer Guilt, *Jer.* 33. 8. *I will cleanſe them from all their Iniquities, whereby they have ſinned againſt me, and I will pardon all their Iniquities whereby they have ſinned againſt me, and whereby they have tranſgreſt againſt me.* Therefore when God tells the *Jews*, that he would give them a general diſcharge in the fulleſt Terms imaginable, to remove all Jealouſie from Men, either becauſe of the number or the aggravations of their Sins, he knew not how to leave expreſſing the delight he had in it, and the honour which accrued to him by it, *It ſhall be to me a name of joy, a praiſe and honour before all the Nations of the Earth.* He would get himſelf an honourable Name by the large riches of his Clemency. Mercy is as infinite as any other Attribute, as infinite as God himſelf: And as his Power can create incomprehenſible multitudes of Worlds, and his Juſtice kindle unconceivable Hells; ſo can his Mercy remit innumerable Sins.

3. *Perfect in reſpect of Duration.* Becauſe the Hand-writing of Ordinances is taken away, *Col.* 2. 14, 15. *Blotting out the Hand-writing of Ordinances that was againſt us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his Croſs*; which was the Ceremonial Law, wherein they did by their continual preſenting Sacrifices, and impoſition of Hands upon them, ſign a Bill or Bond againſt themſelves, whereby a *Conſcience of Sin* was retain'd, *Heb.* 10. 2, 3. and a *Remembrance of Sin* renewed, they could not ſettle the *Conſcience* in any firm Peace, *Heb.* 9. 9. they were compelled to do that every Day, whereby they did confeſs that Sin did remain, and want an expiation. Hence is the Law called *a miniſtration of Condemnation*, 2 *Cor.* 3. 9. becauſe it puts them in mind of Condemnation, and compelled the People to do that which teſtified, that the Curſe was yet to be aboliſhed, by virtue of a better Sacrifice. This Hand-writing which was ſo contrary to us, was taken away, nailed to his Croſs, torn in pieces, wholly cancelled, no more to be put in ſuit: Whence in oppoſition to this continual remembrance of Sin, under the legal adminiſtration, we read under the New Teſtament, of *God's remembring Sin no more*, *Heb.* 10. 3, 17. Chriſt hath ſo compounded the buſineſs with Divine Juſtice, that we have the Sins remitted, never returning upon us, and the renewal alſo of remiſſions upon daily Sins, if we truly repent. For tho' there be a blacker Tincture in Sins after Converſion, as being more deeply ſtain'd with Ingratitude, yet the Covenant of God ſtands firm, and he will *not take away his kindneſs*, *Iſa.* 54. 9, 10. And there is a greater affection in God to his Children, than to his Enemies; for theſe he loves before their Converſion, with a love of Benevolence, but thoſe with a love of Complacency. Will not God be as ready to continue his Grace to thoſe that are penitent, as to offer it to offending Rebels? Will he refuſe it to his Friends, when he intreats his Enemies? Not that any ſhould think, that becauſe of this duration, they have liberty to ſin, and upon ſome trivial Repentance, are reſtored to God's Favour. No, where Chriſt is made Righteouſneſs, he is made Sanctification. His Spirit and Merit go together. A new Nature, and a New State, are Concomitants; and he that ſins upon preſumption of the grand Sacrifice, never had any ſhare in it.

V. The *Effect of Pardon.* That is *Bleſſedneſs.*

(1.) *The greateſt evil is taken away, Sin, and the dreadful conſequents of it.* Other Evils are Temporal, but thoſe know no period in a doleful Eternity. There is more evil in Sin, than good in all the Creatures. Sin ſtrip'd the fallen Angels of their Excellency, and diſpoſſeſſed them of the Seat of Bleſſedneſs. It fights againſt God, it diſparages all his Attributes, it deforms and deſtroys the Creature, *Rom.* 7. 13. Other Evils may have ſome mixture of Good to make them tolerable, but Sin being *exceeding ſinful*, without the mixture of any Good, engenders nothing but Deſtruction, and endleſs Damnation. Into what Miſeries, Afflictions, Sorrows, hath that one Sin of *Adam* hurl'd all his Poſterity? What Schreechings, Wounds, Pangs, Horrors, doth it make in troubled Conſciences? How did it deface the Beauty of the Son of God, that created and upheld the World, with ſorrow in his Agonies, and the ſtroak of Death on the Croſs? How many Thouſand, Millions of poor Creatures have been damned for Sin, and are never like to ceaſe roaring under an inevitable Juſtice? Ask the Damned, and their Groans, Yellings, Howlings, will read thee a dreadful Lecture of Sins ſinfulneſs, and the puniſhment of it. And is it not then an ineſtimable Bleſſedneſs to be delivered from that, which hath wrought ſuch deplorable Executions in the World?

2. *The greateſt Bleſſings are conferred.* Pardon is God's Family-Bleſſing, and the peculiar Mercy of his choiceſt Darlings: He hands out other things to wicked Men, but he deals out this only to his Children.

[1.] *The Favour of God.* Sin makes thee *Satan's* Drudge, but Pardon makes thee God's Favourite. We may be ſick to death, with *Lazarus*, and be God's Friends; ſold to ſlavery, with *Joſeph*, and yet be dear to him; thrown into a Lion's Den, with *Daniel*, and be greatly beloved; poor with *Lazarus*, who had only Dogs for Chirurgions to dreſs his Sores, and yet have a Title to *Abraham's* Boſom. But we can never be beloved, if we are unpardoned; no ſhare in his Friendſhip, his Love, his Inheritance, without a Pardon. All created Evils cannot make us loathſome in a juſtified State; nor all created Goods make us lovely under Guilt. Sin is the only Object of God's Hatred; while this remains, his Holineſs cannot but hate us; when this is removed, his Righteouſneſs cannot but love us; Remiſſion and Favour are inſeparable, and can never be diſ-joined. 'Tis by this he makes us as a Diadem upon his Head, a Bracelet on his Arm; it is by this he writes us upon the Palms of his Hands, makes us his peculiar Treaſure, even as the Apple of his Eye, which Nature hath ſo carefully fenced.

[2.] *Acceſs to God.* A Prince may diſcard a Favourite for ſome Guilt, and though he may reſtore him to his Liberty in the Common-wealth, yet he may not admit him to the favour of his wonted

Pri-

Privacies. But a pardoned Man hath an acceſs to God, to a ſtanding and perpetually ſettled Grace, *Rom.* 5. 1, 2. *Being juſtified by Faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom alſo we have acceſs.* Guilt frights us, and makes us loath the very ſight of God: Pardon encourageth us to come near to him: Guilt reſpects him as a Judge, Pardon as a Friend. Who can confidently, or hopefully, call upon an angry and condemning God? But who cannot but hopefully call upon a forgiving God? Sin is the Partition-wall between God and us, and Pardon is the demoliſhing of it. Forgiveneſs is never beſtowed, but the Scepter is held out to invite us to come into God's Preſence. And what can be more deſirable than to have not only the favour of, but a free acceſs at any time to the Lord of Heaven and Earth, and at length an everlaſting Being with him?

[3.] *Peace of Conſcience.* There muſt needs be fair Weather when Heaven ſmiles upon us. All other things breed diſquietneſs. Sin was a Thorn in *David's* Crown; his Throne and Scepter were but miſerable Comforters, while his Guilt overwhelmed him. The glory of the World is no ſovereign Plaiſter for a wounded Spirit: Other Enjoyments may pleaſe the Senſe, but this only can gratifie the Soul. God's Thunder made *Moſes* tremble, *Heb.* 12. 21. But the probability of a gracious Pardon would make a damned Soul ſmile in the midſt of tormenting Flames. How often hath the ſenſe of it raiſed the Hearts of Martyrs, and made the Sufferers ſing, while the Spectators wept? Though this, I muſt confeſs, is not always an inſeparable Concomitant. There is much difference between a Pardon, and the comfort of it; that may paſs the Seal of the King, without the knowledge of the Malefactor. Pardon indeed always gives the *jus ad rem*, a right to peace of Conſcience, but not always *jus in re*, the poſſeſſion of it. There may be an actual ſeparation between Pardon and actual Peace, but not between Pardon, and the ground of Peace.

[4.] *It ſweetens all Mercies.* Other Mercies are a Ring, but Pardon is the Diamond in it. A juſtified Perſon may ſay, I have temporal Mercies, and a Pardon too, I live in repute in the World, and God's Favour too; Riches increaſe, and my Peace with God doth not diminiſh. I have Health with a Pardon, Friends with a Pardon, as *Job* 29. 3, 6, 7. among all other Bleſſings this he counts the chiefeſt, that *God's Candle ſhin'd upon his Head.* A Priſoner for ſome Capital Crime, may have all outward Accommodations, for Lodging, Diet, Attendance, without a real Happineſs, when he expects to be called to his Tryal before a ſevere Judge, from whom there is no Appeal, and that will certainly both paſs, and cauſe to be executed a Sentence of Death upon him. So though a Man wallows in all outward Contents, he cannot write himſelf Bleſſed, while the Wrath of God hangs over his Head, and he knows not how ſoon he may be ſummon'd before God's Tribunal, and hear that terrible Voice, *Go thou curſed.* What comfort can a Man take in Houſes, Land, Health, when he conſiders he owes more than all his Eſtate is worth? So, what comfort can a Man have in any thing in this World, when he may hourly expect an Arreſt from God, and a demand of all his Debts, and he hath not ſo much as one Farthing of his own, or any Intereſt in a ſufficient Surety? We may have Honour and a Curſe, Wealth and a Curſe, Children and a Curſe, Health and long Life and a Curſe, Learning and a Curſe, but we can never have Pardon and a Curſe. Our outward Things may be Gifts, but not Bleſſings, without a Pardon.

[5.] *It ſweetens all Afflictions.* A Frown with a Pardon is better than a thouſand Smiles without it. Sin is the Sting of Croſſes, and Remiſſion is a taking the Sting out of them. A ſight of Heaven will mitigate a Croſs on Earth. The Stones about *Stephen's* Ears did ſcarce afflict him, when he ſaw his Saviour open Heaven to entertain him. To ſee Death ſtaring us in the Face, and an Angry and Offended God above, ready to charge all our Guilt, is a doleful Spectacle. *Look upon my Affliction and my Pain, and forgive all my Sins,* ſaith the *Pſalmiſt, Pſal.* 25. 18. Sin doth embitter and adds weight to an Affliction, but the removal of Sin doth both lighten it and ſweeten it.

Uſe 1. *An unpardoned Man is a miſerable Man.* Such a ſtate lays you open to all the Miſeries on Earth, and all the Torments in Hell. The pooreſt Beggar with a Pardon is higher than the greateſt Prince without it. How can we enjoy a quiet Hour, if our Debt be not remitted, ſince we owe more than we are able to pay? You may dye with a forfeited Reputation, and yet be happy; but what happineſs, if you die with unpardoned Guilt?

(1.) *There muſt either be Pardon or Puniſhment.* The Law doth oblige either to Obedience or Suffering: The Commands of it muſt be obſerved, or the Penalty endured. God will not relax the Puniſhment without a valuable Conſideration. If it be not executed, the Creature may accuſe God of want of Wiſdom in enacting it, or defect of Power in maintaining it. Therefore there muſt be an exact obſervance of the Law, which no Creature after the firſt deviation is able to do; or an undergoing the penalty of it, which no Sinner is able to bear. There muſt therefore be a remiſſion of this Puniſhment for the good of the Creature, and the ſatisfaction of the Law by a Surety, for the Honour of God's Juſtice. If we have not therefore an Intereſt in the Surety, the Purchaſer of Remiſſion, we muſt lye under the ſeverity of the Law in our Perſons.

(2.) *You can call nothing an act of God's Love towards you, while you remain unpardoned.* What is there you do enjoy, which may not conſiſt with his Hatred, as well as his Love? Have we Knowledge? So have Devils. Have we Riches? So had *Nabal* and *Cain.* Have we Honour? So had *Pharaoh* and *Herod.* Have we Sermons? So had *Judas,* the beſt that ever were preach'd. Nothing, nothing but a Pardon is properly a Bleſſing. How can that Man take pleaſure in any thing he hath, when all the Threatnings in the Book of God are as [illegible] many Arrows directed againſt him?

(3.) *All the time thou liveſt unpardoned thy Debts [illegible] the higher.* Every new Sin is an adding a Figure to the former Summ, and every Figure, after the three firſt, adds a Thouſand. Every act of Sin adds not only the Guilt proper to that ſingle act upon it, but draws a new univerſal Guilt from all the reſt committed before, becauſe the perſiſting in any one Sin is a renewed approbation of all the former Acts of Rebellion committed againſt God.

(4.) *'Tis that God who would have pardon'd thee if thou wouldſt have accepted of it, who will condemn if thou doſt utterly refuſe it.* 'Tis that God thou haſt Provoked, Offended, and Diſhonoured. That Power which would have been manifeſted in forgiving thee, will be glorified in condemning thee. That Juſtice which would have ſigned thy Abſolution if thou hadſt accepted of its Terms,

will ſign the Writ of Execution upon thy refuſal of them. Nay, the Mercy that would have ſav'd thee, will have no Compaſſion on thee. The Law condemns thee, becauſe thou haſt tranſgreſſed it, and Mercy will reject thee, becauſe thou haſt deſpiſed it. The Goſpel, wherein Pardon was proclaimed, will acquit others, but condemn thee. God would be falſe to his own word, if after thy ſlighting ſo many Promiſes of Grace, and Threatnings of Wrath, thou ſhould'ſt be ſpar'd.

2. Uſe. Of *Comfort.*

Pardon of Sin may make thee hope for all other Bleſſings. Hath God done the hardeſt, and will he ſtick at the eaſieſt? Hath he overthrown Mountains, and ſhall Mole-hills ſtop him? 'Tis an eaſier thing to waft thee to Heaven, than it was at firſt to remit thy Guilt, *Rom.* 5. 10. *For if when we were Enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled we ſhall be ſaved by his Life.* To this the Death and Reſurrection of the Son of God was neceſſary, and there was to be Compoſition and Agreement made between Mercy and Juſtice: But ſince this is compleated, the Redeemer ſaves thee by his Life; ſince he hath dyed for thy Remiſſion, there is no need of his dying for thy further Salvation. Seeing he hath made manifeſtation of his pardoning Grace unto thee, he will not ceaſe till he hath brought thee into a perfect State. For to what purpoſe ſhould the Creditor forgive the ſmaller part of the Debt, and caſt the Debtor into Priſon for an unpayable Summ?

(1.) *If once pardoned, thou wilt be always pardoned.* For the firſt Pardon Chriſt paid his Blood, for the continuance he doth but plead his Blood, and we cannot be without a Pardon till Chriſt be without a Plea. He merited the continuance, as well as the firſt Remiſſion. Will our Saviour be more backward to intercede for Pardon, than he was to bleed and pray for it on Earth? Would not our deareſt Saviour let Sin go unremitted, when he was to conteſt with the Father's Wrath, and will he let it go unpardoned, when he is only to ſollicite his Father's Mercy? Thou ſhalt not want the daily renewals of it, ſince he is only to preſent his Blood in the moſt holy place, ſeeing an ignominious and painful Death did not ſcare him from the purchaſe of it upon the Croſs. As God's Heart is more ready to give than we are to ask Forgiveneſs, ſo is Chriſt's Heart more ready to plead for the continuance of it, than we are daily to beg it; for he loves his People more than they can love him, or love themſelves. Our praying is according to Self-love, but Chriſt's Interceſſion is according to his own infinite Love with a more intenſe fervency.

(2.) *Thou art above the reach of all Accuſations.* Shall the Law condemn thee? *No.* Thou art *not under the Law, but under Grace.* And if Grace hath forgiven thee, the Law cannot ſentence thee. Shall Conſcience? *No.* Conſcience is but the *Eccho* of the Law within us; That muſt ſpeak what God ſpeaks. God's Spirit, and a Believer's Spirit are joint Witneſſes, *Rom.* 8. 16. *For the Spirit it ſelf bears witneſs with our Spirits, that we are the Children of God.* Conſcience is ſprinkled by the Blood of Chriſt, which quite changeth the tenour of its Commiſſion. Will God condemn thee? *No.* That were to loſe the glory of all his pardoning Mercy hitherto conferred upon thee; that were to fling away the vaſt Revenue Grace hath all this while been gathering for him: Yea, it were to deny his own Covenant and Promiſe. Shall Chriſt condemn thee? *No.* That were to diſcard all his Offices, to undo his Death, and bely his Merits; did he ſweat and bleed, pray and dye for thee, and will he now condemn thee? Hath he been pleading for thee in Heaven all this time, and will he now at the upſhot caſt thee off? Shall we imagine the Severity of a Judge more pleaſing to him than the charity of an Advocate, ſince his primary Intention in coming was to ſave the World, not to condemn it? *No.* It would not be for his Honour to pay the Price, and to loſe the Purchaſe.

(3.) *There will be a ſolemn juſtification of thee at the laſt day.* Thou art here pardoned in Law, and then thou ſhalt be juſtified by a final Sentence; there is a ſecret Grant here, but a publick manifeſtation of it hereafter. Thy Pardon was paſt by the Spirit of God in thy own Conſcience, it will then be paſt by the Son of God in thy own hearing. That Saviour that did merit it upon his Croſs, will pronounce it upon his Throne: The Book ſhall be laid out of ſight, there ſhall be no more writing in the Book of God's Omniſcience to charge thee, or of thy Conſcience to affright thee: His Fatherly Anger ſhall for ever ceaſe; and as all diſpoſition to Sin, ſo all paternal Correction for it ſhall be for ever aboliſh'd, and Forgiveneſs be fully compleat in all the glorious effects of it.

(4.) *Faith doth intereſt us in all this, though it be weak.* The grant of a Pardon doth not depend upon the ſtrength of Faith, though the ſenſe of a Pardon doth. A weak Faith, as a Palſie Perſon, may not ſo well read a Pardon, though it may receive it. As a ſtrong Faith gives more Glory to God, ſo it receives more Comfort from him. Chriſt made no difference in his Prayer, *John* 17. between the feebleſt and ſtouteſt Believer. His Lambs, as well as Sheep, were to be fed by his *Apoſtle* with Goſpel-comforts; and even thoſe Lambs, *Iſa.* 40. 11. he himſelf carries in his Boſom. Strong Faith doth not intitle us to it, becauſe it is ſtrong; or a feeble Faith debar us from it, becauſe it is weak; but it is for the ſake of a mighty Saviour that we are pardoned. 'Tis the ſame Chriſt that juſtifies thee, as well as *Abraham* the Father of the Faithful. 'Tis the ſame Righteouſneſs whereby thou art juſtified as well as *Paul*, and the moſt beloved Diſciple.

3 Uſe *Of Examination.*

Conſider whether your Sins are pardoned. Will you examine whether your *Eſtates* are ſure, and will you not examine whether your *Souls* are ſure?

Here I ſhall 1. *Remove falſe Signs*, whereon Men reſt and think themſelves pardoned.

(1.) *The littleneſs of Sin is no ground of Pardon.* Oh may ſome ſay, my Sins are little, ſome Tricks of Youth, ſome petty Oaths, or the like. The Scripture ſaith, that Drunkards, Fornicators, Extortioners, and Covetous, ſhall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; not great Drunkards only, but thoſe that are drunk but now and then, as well as thoſe that are Drunkards every Day.

[1.] *Doſt thou know the malignity of the leaſt Sin?* No Sin can be called abſolutely (though it may comparatively) little. Is it a little God who is offended by Sin? Is it a little Wrath which is poured down on Sin? Is it a little Chriſt that hath dy'd for Sin? Is it a little Soul that is deſtroy'd by Sin? and is it a little Hell that is prepared for Sin? Is not the leaſt Sin *Deicidium*, as much

as

as in a Man lieth, a deſtroying of God? Did not Chriſt ſhed his Blood for the leaſt as well as for the greateſt? Is not Hell kindled by the Breath of the Lord for the leaſt as well as the greateſt Sins? Is that little which is God's Burden, Chriſt's Wound, the Spirit's Grief, the Penitent's Sorrow, and the Devil's Hell? Every drop of Poiſon is Poiſon, every Drop of Hell is Hell, every part of Sin is Sin, and hath the deſtroying and condemning Nature of Sin. Can Angels expiate the leaſt Sin, or can a Thouſand Worlds be a ſufficient Recompence for the Injury that is done to God by the leaſt Sin?

[2.] *The leſs thy Sin, the leſs thy Excuſe for thy ſelf.* 'Tis the Aggravation of their Injuſtice, that they *ſold the Righteous for a pair of Shoes, Amos* 2. 6. Doſt thou undervalue God ſo as to ſell a Righteous and Eternal God cheap, for a little Sin? Is a little Sin dearer to thee, than the Favour of the great God? Is a little Sin dearer to thee than an eternal Hell is grievous? To endanger thy Soul for a Trifle, to loſe God for a Bubble, is a confounding Aggravation of it, as it was of *Judas* his Sin, that he would ſell his Saviour for a little Silver, for ſo ſmall a Summ. Sin is not little in reſpect of the formality of it, but in reſpect of the Matter, in reſpect of the Temptation; and this Littleneſs is an Aggravation of Sin.

[3.] *Doſt thou know how God hath puniſhed the leaſt Sin?* A Drop of Sin may bring a Deluge of Miſery. An *Atom* of Sin is ſtrong enough to overturn a World. It was but an Apple that poiſoned *Adam*, and his whole Poſterity. Leſs Sins are puniſht in Hell, than are pardoned here. God caſts off *Saul* for leſs Sins than he pardoned *David* for. How many Ships have been deſtroyed upon ſmall Sands as well as great Rocks?

(2.) *Fewneſs of Sins is no Argument of Pardon.* Conceive, if thou canſt, the amiableneſs and luſtre of the Angels, how far beyond the Glory of the Sun it was; yet one Sin diveſted them of all their Glory. It was but one Sin kindled Hell for the fallen Angels, every Sin muſt receive *a juſt Recompence of Reward, Heb.* 2. 2. Shall one ſingle Sin intitle thee to Hell? What will Millions of Sins then intitle thee to? One Sin is too much againſt God. Had thy Iniquities been never ſo few, Chriſt muſt have died to anſwer the Pleas of his Father's Juſtice againſt thee. [Every Sin is Rebellion againſt God as a Sovereign, Undutifulneſs to God as a Father*] Contempt of God as a Governour, and preferring the Devil before God; the Devil that would deſtroy and damn thee, before God that made thee, and preſerves thee; a preferring the Devil's Temptations before God's Promiſes.

* *Burges.*

(3.) *The Commonneſs of Sin is no Argument of Pardon.* Many Angels combin'd in the firſt Conſpiracy againſt God; but as they were Companions in Sin, ſo are they Companions in Torments. The commonneſs of *Sodom*'s Sin made the louder Cry, and haſtened the ſeverer Judgment: Not one Inhabitant eſcaped but only Righteous *Lot*, and his Family: Common Sins will have common Plagues. It doth rather aggravate thy Sin, than plead for Pardon, when thou wilt rather follow Men's Example to offend God, than conform to God's Law to pleaſe him. Sin was common in the Old World, for *all Fleſh had corrupted their ways, Gen.* 6. 12. and all were ſwept away by the deſtroying Deluge. To walk according to the courſe of the World, is ſo far from being a Foundation of Pardon, that it is made a Character of a Child of the Devil: To walk according to the Courſe of the World, is to walk according to the Pattern of the Devil, and to be in the number of the Children of Wrath, *Eph.* 2. 2. *Wherein in times paſt you walked according to the courſe of this World, according to the Prince of the Power of the Air.*

(4.) *Forbearance of Puniſhment is no Argument of Pardon,* Eccleſ. 8. 11. *Becauſe Sentence againſt an evil Work is not executed ſpeedily, therefore the Heart of the Sons of Men is fully ſet in them to do evil.* Forbearance is made uſe of by Men, to make them ſin more deſperately, more headily. *Fully ſet*, all Checks ſilenced and ſtopt. Forbearance is no Acquittance; it argues not God's forgiving the Debt; the Debt is due, though it be not preſently ſued for; and the longer the Debt remains unpaid, the greater Summ will the Intereſt amount unto; becauſe, the longer God doth forbear Puniſhment, the longer time thou haſt for Repentance; the Account for that time will run high.

That God doth not puniſh, is an Argument of his Patience, not of his pardoning Mercy. God laughs at Sinners: He ſees their Day is coming though they may be jocund, and confident of a Pardon. God's Forbearance may be in Juſtice; he may be brewing the Cup, and mixing that which thou art to drink. Priſoners may be reprieved one Aſſize, and executed the next: Reprieval of Execution is no Allowance of the Crime, or change of the Sentence.

(5.) *Proſperity is no ſign of Pardon.* Oh! I am not only born with, and forborn, but I have a great Addition of outward Contentments ſince my Sin.

That which you make an Argument of Pardon, may be an Argument of Condemnation.

Aſaph was much troubled at the Proſperity of the Wicked; but at laſt ſaith, *Pride compaſſeth them as a Chain, and Violence covers them as a Garment, Pſal.* 73. 6. That Kindneſs which ſhould have made them melt, made them preſume. That which ſhould broach thy Repentance enflames thy Pride: Thy Goods may increaſe thy Sins.

(6.) *Forgetfulneſs of thy Sin, and Commiſſion long ago, is no ſign of Pardon, and therefore having no Checks for them is no ſign of Pardon.* God doth not forget though thou doſt, no Sin ſlips from the Memory of his Knowledge, though now he doth caſt many Sins away from the Memory of his Juſtice. In regard of God's Eternity the firſt Sins are accounted as committed this Moment, for in that there is no ſucceſſion of time, and the Sins thou haſt committed twenty Years ago, are as freſh as if thou hadſt acted them all ſince thy coming into the Congregation. *Joſeph's Brethren, Gen.* 37. 24. laboured to wipe out the Thoughts of their late Cruelty by their eating and drinking, when the Cries and Tears of their Brother were freſh in their Memory, and might have dampt their Jollity. His Affliction troubled them not, his Relation to them, his Youth, and their Father's Love to him could not make them relent; but *twenty two Years* after, Conſcience began to fly in their Faces, when awakened by a powerful Affliction, *Gen.* 42. 21. Is not thy Conſcience oftentimes a Remembrancer to thee of thy old forgotten Sins, and doth it not turn over the old Records thou hadſt quite forgot?

7. *Hopes of God's Mercy are no grounds of thy being pardoned.* God's Mercy is not barely enough, for then Chriſt needed not have dy'd for Sin. Nor Chriſt's Death enough, without the condition of that Covenant whereby God will make over the Intereſt and Merits of his Death to thee. God's Mercy muſt be conſidered but in God's own way. God is merciful, but his Mercy muſt not aboliſh his Truth. Doth not a Judge's Mercy conſiſt with condemning a Malefactor? God hath been merciful to thee, and thou wouldſt not accept of it; thou wouldſt not hear Mercy ſpeak in a Day of Grace; why then ſhould not Juſtice ſpeak in a Day of Vengeance? Thou wouldeſt not hear a God of Mercy when he cry'd to thee, how then ſhould Mercy hear thee when thou comeſt to beg?

2. *Some falſe grounds, why thoſe that are pardoned think themſelves not pardoned.*

(1.) *Great Afflictions are not ſigns of an unpardoned State.* *Moſes* had ſinned by unbelief, *Aaron* by making a Golden Calf, God pardoned their Sin, but took *Vengeance on their Inventions*, Pſal. 99. 8. *Thou waſt a God that forgaveſt them, though thou tookeſt Vengeance.* *Nathan* in his Meſſage to *David* brings at once both Pardon and Puniſhment. The Sin is removed, but the Sword muſt ſtill ſtick in the Bowels of his Family, 2 *Sam.* 12, 13, 14. *The Lord hath put away thy Sin, thou ſhalt not die. Howbeit, becauſe by this Deed thou haſt given great occaſion to the Enemies of the Lord to blaſpheme, the Child alſo that is born unto thee ſhall ſurely die.* God may afflict temporally when he reſolves not to puniſh eternally. What! becauſe he will not condemn thee as a Judge, will he not chaſtize thee as a Father? We may well bear a Scourge in one Hand when we have a Pardon ſealed in the other. God pardons thy Sin, but there is need of Affliction to ſubdue that ſtout ſtubborn Heart of thine, *Pſal.* 89. 32, 33. God doth viſit with Rods, when he is reſolved not utterly to take away his Loving-kindneſs from a People.

(2.) *Terrors of Conſcience are no ſign of an unpardoned State.* We find a pardoned *David* having broken Bones and a rackt Conſcience after *Nathan* had pronounced his Pardon, when there was no Remorſe before, *Pſal.* 51. He had the Grant of a Pardon, but the Comfort of a Pardon was wanting. God may ſcorch thy Soul when he gives a Pardon; not that Juſtice is thereby ſatisfied, but Sin more embitter'd to thee. By a Pardon thou doſt reliſh his Mercy, and by the Torments thou mayeſt have in thy Soul, thou wilt underſtand his Juſtice. He ſhews thee what he freely gives, but he would have thee know what thou haſt fully deſerved; he gives thee Pardon, but Gall and Wormwood with it, that thou mayeſt know what the Purchaſe of it did coſt thy Saviour. The Phyſick which heals, cauſeth Pain. That Phyſick which doth not make thee ſick, is not like to bring thee Health. God pardons thee, that thou mayeſt be ſaved; he terrifies thee withal, that thou mayeſt not be induced by Temptations to ſin.

(3.) *Senſe of Sin is no argument of an unpardoned State.* A Pardon may be granted, when the poor condemned Man expects to be haled out to Execution. *Mary* ſtands weeping behind her Saviour, when Chriſt was declaring her Pardon to *Simon*, That much was forgiven her, and afterwards Chriſt turns to her, and chears her with the News of it, *Luke* 7. 44, 45, 46, 47. He pronounceth her Pardon, *v.* 48. and the Comfort of it, *v.* 50. *Thy Faith hath ſaved thee, go in peace.* The Heavens may drop, when now and then the Sun may ſteal a Beam thorow the Clouds. There may be a Pardon, where there are not always the ſenſible Effects of a Pardon. We find, after the ſtilling of a Storm, the Ragings and Rollings of the Sea. A Penitent's Wound may ake afreſh, when a Saviour's Blood drops in Mercy.

(4.) *The Remainders of Sin are not a ſign of an unpardoned State.* Though a Diſeaſe be matter'd by Phyſick, there may be ſome Grudgings of it in a Perſon. Though Sin be pardoned, yet the Dregs of Sin will be remaining, and ſometimes ſtirring. Chriſt hath enliven'd us, not by wholly deſtroying, but pardoning Sin. Pardon takes away the Guilt of Sin; Grace takes away the Power of Sin; but neither Pardon, nor infuſion of Grace, takes away the Nature, and all Motions of Sin; for in purging out an Humour, ſome Dregs ſtill remain behind, *Col.* 2. 13. *And you hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all Treſpaſſes.*

3. *What are the true ſigns of a pardoned Man?*

1. *Sincerity in our Walk.* A Spirit without guile is made the Character of a pardoned Man in the *Text*: There may be Failings in the Life, yet no Guile in the Heart; ſuch a Man is a pardoned Man: A Heart that hath no Mixtures, no Pretences or Excuſes for Sin, no private Reſerves from God: A Heart, that as the Needle in a Compaſs, ſtands right for the Intereſt and Glory of God, and anſwers to the Profeſſion, as an *Eccho* to the Voice: A Heart that would thruſt out any Sin that harbour'd there, would not have an Atom of any Filth odious to the Eye of God lurk there. Where this ſincerity is, a willingneſs and readineſs to obey God, (which is the condition of the Covenant) the ſubſtance of the Covenant is kept, though ſome particular Articles of it may be broken. *Grace*, the pardoning Grace of God, is with them that love Chriſt in ſincerity, *Eph.* 6. *ult. Grace be with all them that love Chriſt Jeſus in ſincerity.* Not a Man excluded that is ſincere; though he hath not ſo ſparkling a Flame as another, yet if he be ſincere, the Crown of pardoning Grace, and that of conſummating Grace ſhall be ſet upon his Head.

(2.) *Mourning for Sin.* A tender Heart is a ſign of a pardon'd State, when Sin diſcontents thee becauſe it diſpleaſeth God. What ſhowers of Tears did *Mary Magdalen* weep after a Pardon? Love to God, like a gentle Fire, ſets the Soul a melting. Tears that come from Love are never without pardoning Mercy. God's Bowels do firſt ſtir our Mournings. 'Tis impoſſible a gracious Heart can read a Pardon with dry Eyes; 'tis the leaſt it thinks it can do, as it were, like *Mary Magdalen*, to waſh Chriſt's Feet with its Tears, when it hath been waſhed its ſelf with Chriſt's Blood. The Soul cannot enough hate that, which God hath been merciful in the pardon of. Forgiveneſs is like the Warmth of the Spring, it draws out the Sap of the Tree, the Tears of the Soul, which elſe would ſcarcely ſtir. If God hath given thee Repentance, it is ſure enough that he hath given thee a Pardon; for if he did not mean to give thee that, he would never have given thee the other.

(3.) *Fearfulneſs of Sin.* Whoſoever knows the Bitterneſs of Sin, and the Benefit of a Pardon, can never confidently ruſh into it. A pardoned Man will never go about to forfeit that which he hath newly received. Forgiveneſs from

from God doth produce Fear in the Creature, *Pſalm* 130. 4. *But there is Forgiveneſs with thee, that thou mayeſt be feared.* 'Tis a ſign we have repented and got Pardon, if we find after that Exerciſe of Repentance and Prayer, our hatred of Sin encreaſeth, eſpecially of that Sin we were guilty of before.

(4.) *Sanctification.* God never pardons but he ſubdues Sin, *Micah* 7. 19. *He will ſubdue our Iniquity, and thou wilt caſt all their Sins into the depths of the Sea.* Both are put together. In the Lord's Prayer, deſires to be rid of all Evil, and not to be led into any Temptation follow immediately upon the Deſire of Pardon. A juſtified Perſon and a ſanctified Nature are inſeparable, *Rom.* 8. 1. *There is no Condemnation to them that are in Chriſt* [there is Pardon;] But how ſhall I know that I am pardoned? If you *walk not after the Fleſh, but after the Spirit.* We never ſincerely deſire Pardon, but we deſire purging, and God never gives the one, but he beſtows the other. If thou haſt an Intereſt in a pardoning Chriſt, thou wilt have the Effects of a ſanctifying Spirit. Where God's Grace forgives all Sin, he will give us Grace to forſake all Sin. 'Tis his Covenant to turn away Ungodlineſs, when he takes away the Puniſhment of Sin; *Rom.* 11. 26, 27. the *Deliverer ſhall turn away Ungodlineſs from Jacob.* The Applications of God's Grace to us are attended with the Infuſions of God's Grace into us. When *he puts his Law into the Heart, he remembers ſin no more,* Jer. 31. 33, 34.

(5.) *Forgiving others.* In the Lord's Prayer we pray, *forgive us our Treſpaſſes as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us.* Our Saviour comments upon this Petition, to ſhew that Pardon cannot be without this condition, in *Mat.* 18. from *v.* 23. to the 35. Chriſt makes it at leaſt a *cauſa ſine quâ non* of Pardon, *Luke* 11. 4. *and forgive us our ſins, for we alſo forgive every one that is indebted to us.*

(6.) *Affectionate Love to God and Chriſt.* When we deſire to glorifie him by his Grace, as well as be glorified by it. 'Tis the Injury done to God by our Sins which doth moſt affect that Heart upon which the Spirit of God is *poured, Zach.* 12. 10. *They ſhall mourn over him,* or be in bitterneſs for him. The Soul is more concerned for Chriſt than for it ſelf. When there is too much of Self in our Deſires for it, God delays the Manifeſtation of it to the Heart, that we may come up to purer Strains. Chriſt, certainly ſhed his Blood for their Remiſſion who are willing to ſhed theirs for his Glory. Elſe Chriſt, whoſe Glory it is to outſtrip the hotteſt Affection of his Creature, would be behind-hand with him in Love. That Soul that would ſpend its All upon Chriſt, he will not ſuffer to ſtand long ſobbing before him, *Luke* 7. 47.

4. Uſe *of Exhortation.*

I. *To thoſe who are careleſs of it.* Oh! by all means ſeek it. Will it at laſt comfort thee, to think of thy Mirth and Pleaſures, how honourable, how rich, or how well ſtor'd with Friends thou haſt been? What ſhould take up thy Heart, buſie thy Thoughts, or employ thy Endeavours, but this that concerns thy Eternal State? Wilt thou ſin away the time of God's Patience, and thine own Happineſs? Is it not a time which God hath allotted thee, to get a Pardon in? What would *Cain, Judas, Pilot, Herod,* and all the black Regiment give for the very hopes of it? Oh, prize that here, which thou wilt hereafter eſteem infinitely valuable, and call thy ſelf Fool and Madman a Thouſand times, for neglecting the Opportunity of getting. The *Anger of a King is as the roaring of a Lion;* what then are the Frowns of an infinite juſt God? Why is thy Strength and Affection ſpent about other things? Would a forlorn Malefactor leading to Execution liſten chearfully to any thing but the News of his Prince's Clemency? Seek it

1. *Earneſtly.* Pardon is an ineſtimable Bleſſing, and muſt not be ſought with faint and tired Affections.

2. *Preſently.* Is it not full time ſeriouſly to ſet about it? Thou haſt loſt too many Days already, and wilt thou be ſo ſenſeleſs as to let another ſlip? How knoweſt thou but if thou doſt refuſe it this Day, thou may'ſt be uncapable of it to morrow? There is but a Step, a few Minutes between thee and Death, and Delays in great Emergencies are dangerous.

3. *Univerſally.* Content not your ſelves with ſeeking a Pardon for griſly, ſtaring Sins, which fright the Conſcience with every Look; but ſeek the Pardon of your inward ſecret ſpiritual Sins; while you beg moſt for the pardon of thoſe, ſanctifying Grace will come in as well as juſtifying; the more you pray againſt the Guilt of them, the more you will hate the Filth of them.

II. *To thoſe that ſeek a Pardon, and yet are in doubt of it.* Secure Sinners that underſtand not the Evil of Sin, think it is an eaſie thing, and that Forgiveneſs will be granted of courſe. But thoſe that groan under the Burden of their Iniquity, imagine it more difficult than indeed it is. Preſumption wrongs God in his Juſtice, and every Degree of Deſpair or Doubting, in his Mercy.

1. *God is willing to pardon. Ephraim* doth but deſire that God would turn him, and God preſently cries out, *Is Ephraim my dear Son? is he a pleaſant Child?* Jer. 31. 18, 20. *I have ſurely heard Ephraim bemoaning himſelf thus.* A penitent *Ephraim* is inſtantly a pleaſant Child. *Ephraim* ſtrikes upon his Thigh with Confeſſion, and God ſpeaks to his Heart with Affection. God doth as it were take the Words out of *Ephraim*'s Mouth, as though he watched for the firſt Look of *Ephraim* towards him, or the firſt Breath of a Supplication. God is more willing to pardon Sin than we are to ſin; Becauſe we ſin with reluctancy, natural Conſcience checking us, but God hath no Check when he goes to pardon. He *waits to be gracious,* Iſa. 30. 18. *Therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you.* He hath waited all the time of your ſinning, to have an opportunity to ſhew Grace to you; and now you give it him by repenting, will he loſe the fruit of his waiting? 'Tis the End of Chriſt's Exaltation, whether it be meant of his being lifted up on the Croſs, or his Exaltation in Heaven; 'tis true of both, that his End is to have Mercy upon you.

[2.] *God will pardon the greateſt Sins.* His infinite Compaſſion cannot exhauſt it ſelf by a frequent Remiſſion. Mercy holds proportion to Juſtice; as his Juſtice puniſheth little Sins as well as great, ſo doth Mercy paſs by great Sins as well as little. Your higheſt Sins are the Sins of Men, but the Mercy offered is the Mercy of a God.

The Debt you owe is a vaſt Debt, but Chriſt's Satisfaction is of a greater value; and a King's Revenue

Revenue may well pay a Beggar's Debts, though ſhe owe many Thouſands, the firſt Day of Marriage. Multiplied Sins, upon Repentance, ſhall meet with multiplied Pardons, *Iſa.* 55. 7. הַלְסְלִיחַ יַרְבֶּה *abundantly Pardon.* We cannot vie our Sins with God's Mercy. The Grace of God and Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, which are neceſſary for the remiſſion of one Sin, are infinite; and no more is requiſite for the Pardon of the greateſt, yea, of the Sins of the whole World, if they were upon thy ſingle ſcore. The Grace conferred upon *Paul*, was more than would ſuit his Neceſſity, 1 *Tim.* 1. 14. ὑπερεπλεόνασε, *Superabound, and the Grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant*, enough to have pardoned a whole World as well as *Paul*; like the Sun, that emits as much heat in his Beams upon one Puddle, as is enough, not only to exhale the moiſture of that, but of a hundred more. Suppoſe thou art the greateſt Sinner that ever was yet extant in the World; do not think that God, who hath ſnatch'd ſo many Firebrands of Hell out of the Devil's Hands, will neglect ſuch an opportunity to make his Grace illuſtrious upon thy humble Soul. If God hath given thee Repentance, it is a certain evidence he will follow it with a Pardon, though thy Sins be of a deeper Scarlet than ever yet was ſeen upon the Earth; for if he did not mean to beſtow this, he would never have beſtowed upon thee the neceſſary condition of it. Is there not a Sinner can equal thee? Then ſurely God is wiſer than to loſe the higheſt opportunity he yet had to evidence his ſuperlative Grace. And therefore,

[1.] *Continue thy Humiliations.* There muſt be a conformity between Chriſt and thee; he was humbled when he purchaſed Remiſſion, and you muſt be humbled when you receive it. God will not part with that very cheap, that coſt his Son ſo dear: Though thou art not at the expence of the Blood of thy Soul, thou muſt be at the expence of the Blood of thy Sins. When a Man comes to be deeply affected with his Sin, then God ſends a Meſſage of Peace, *Iſa.* 6. 6, 7. *Then flew one of the Seraphims and laid a live Coal upon his Mouth, and ſaid, thine Iniquity is taken away, and thy Sin purged.* When *v.* 5. he had cryed out, *Woe is me, for I am undone, becauſe I am a Man of unclean Lips.* The way to have a Debt forgiven is to acknowledge it, *Pſal.* 32. 5. *I ſaid I will confeſs my Tranſgreſſions unto the Lord, and thou forgaveſt the Iniquity of my Sin.* God ſtood as ready to forgive *David*'s Unrighteouſneſs, as he was ready to confeſs it. Mercy will not ſave a Man, without making him ſenſible of, and humbled for his Iniquity. Put thy Buſineſs therefore into Chriſt's Hands, and ſubmit to what terms he will impoſe upon thee.

[2.] *In thy Supplication plead his Glory.* You find this the conſtant Argument the People of God, in the Scripture, uſe for the prevailing with God for Forgiveneſs. That Argument is moſt comfortably pleaded, which God loves moſt, and whereunto he orders all his Actions. No ſtronger Motive can be uſed to him to grant it, than that whereby he excites himſelf to beſtow it. When thou beggeſt other things, thou may'ſt diſhonour God; but God cannot be a loſer of his Glory in granting this. Lord if thou turneſt me into Hell, where is the Glory of thy Mercy upon thy Creature? Nay, where is the glory of thy Juſtice, my eternal Torments not being able to compenſate the Injury done to thee by Sin, ſo much as the Suffering of thy only Son, whoſe Death I deſire to ſhare in, and whoſe Terms I am willing to ſubmit to?

III. *Exhortation to thoſe that are pardoned.*

1. *Admire this Grace of God.* To pardon one Sin is a greater thing than to create a World; to pardon one Sin is greater than to damn a World. God can create a World without the death of a Creature; he can damn a World without the death of the Creator, but in pardoning there muſt be the death of the Creator, the Son of God.

2. *Serve God much.* Is the guilt of Sin, the Cord that bound thee, taken off? It is fit that when thou art ſo unfettered, thou ſhould'ſt run the ways of God's Commandments. A ſenſe of pardon of Sin makes the Soul willing and ready to run upon God's Errands, and to obey his Commands, *Iſa.* 6. 8. *I heard the voice of the Lord ſaying, Whom ſhall I ſend? Then ſaid I, Here am I: Then*, when he had received aſſurance that his Iniquity was taken away, *v.* 7. God's Pardon ſet thee upon a new Stock, and therefore he expects thou ſhould'ſt be full of new cluſters.

3. *Be more fearful of Sin.* Diſpute with thy ſelf, Hath God pardoned the guilt of Sin that it ſhall not damn me? And ſhall I wallow in the Mire of Sin to pollute my ſelf? Oh, thy Sins after Pardon have a blacker circumſtance than the ſins of Devils, or the ſins of wicked Men, for theirs are not againſt pardoning Mercy, not againſt ſpecial Love. Oh! thaw thy Heart every Morning with a Meditation on Pardon, and Sin will not ſo eaſily freeze it in the Day time. When thou art tempted to ſin, conſider what Thoughts thou hadſt when thou wert ſuing for Pardon, how earneſt thou wert for it, what Promiſes and Vows thou didſt make, and conſider the Love God ſhewed thee in pardoning. Do not blur thy Pardon, ſo eaſily wound thy Conſcience, or weaken thy Faith.

4. *Be content with what God gives thee.* If he gives thee Heaven, will he deny thee Earth? He that beſtows upon thee the pardon of Sin, would ſurely pour into thy Boſom the Gold of both the *Indies*, were it neceſſary for thee. But thou haſt got a greater Happineſs; for it is not ſaid, Bleſſed is he that wallows in Wealth, Honour, a confluence of worldly Proſperity, but *Bleſſed is he whoſe Sin is forgiven, and whoſe Iniquity is covered.*

F I N I S.

THE INDEX

To the First *VOLUME.*

A.

Acceſs to God follows upon *Pardon.* Pag. 642.

Men are unwilling to have any *Acquaintance* with God. 60

Vide *Communion.*

Actions, a greater proof of Principles then words. 30

All are known by God. 174

All under Gods *Providence.* 510, 511, 512

Many can be aſcribed to nothing elſe. 513, 514, 515

Activity required in Spiritual Worſhip. 89

Adam, the greatneſs of his Fall. 380, 453

Vide *Man* and *Fall of Man.*

Whoſe Sin greater his or *Eve's.* 617

Additions in matters of Religion an Invaſion of God's Soveraignty. 454, 455

Vide *Worſhip* and *Ceremonies.*

Admiration ought to be exercis'd in Spiritual worſhip. 91

Affections human in what ſenſe aſcribed to God. 138, 139

Should accompany our Thoughts of God. 557.

Of God to his Church. 548

Vide *Church.*

Afflictions made ſubſervient to Gods deſign. 513

Of good Men impeach not Providence. *a* 518 *ad* 521

Make them not miſerable but better. 519, 520

Better than the Wickeds Proſperity. 520

Stoutneſs under them a reflection on Providence. 725

Thoughts of Providence a Cordial under them. 529

Sweetned by Pardon. 643

Sharp *Afflictions* make *Atheiſts* fear there is a God. 26, 27

Make us Impatient.

Vide *Impatience.*

We ſhould be patient under them.

Vide *Patience.*

Many call on God only under them. 57

Fill us with diſtractions in the Worſhip of God. 102

The preſence of God a comfort in them. 162

And his knowledge. 196

The Wiſdom of God apparent in them. 229, 230, 231

The Wiſdom of God a Comfort in them. 250

And his Power. 301, 302

And his Soveraignty. 463

Do not impeach his Goodneſs. 369

The goodneſs of God ſeen in them. 398, 399

His goodneſs a comfort in them. 413

Acts of God's Soveraignty. The conſideration of which would make us entertain them as we ought. 428, 433

Many neglect the ſerving of God till old *Age.* 40

Air, how uſeful a Creature. 14

Almighty, how often God is call'd ſo in Scripture. 260

How often in *Job.* 271

Good *Angels* what benefit they have by Chriſt. 224, 377, 378

Not Inſtruments in the Creation of Man. 273

Evil and not Redeemed. 377

Not Governours of the World. 412, 413

Subject to God. 432

Not qualified to govern the World. 504

Good and bad the object of God's Providence. 509

Good how employed for the Churches good. 537, 538

Subjected to Chriſt for this end. 538

Pray for the Church. 549

How affected with Mans Sins. 608

Apoſtacy a folly 587

Men *Apoſtatize* from God when his will croſſes theirs. 49

In times of Perſecution. 56

By reaſon of Practical *Atheiſm.* 63, 64

Apoſtles, the firſt Preachers of the Goſpel, mean and worthleſs Men. 288, 289

Spirited by Divine Power for ſpreading of it. 289, 290

The Wiſdom of God ſeen in uſing ſuch Inſtruments. 243, 244

Applauding our Selves.

Vide *Pride.*

Atheiſm opens a Door to all manner of Wickedneſs. 1

Some ſpice of it in all men. 2

The greateſt folly. *a* 2 *ad* 24

Common in our days. 2, 25

Strikes at the foundation of all Religion. 2

We ſhould eſtabliſh our ſelves againſt it. *Ibid.*
'Tis againſt the light of Natural Reaſon. 3
Againſt the univerſal conſent of all Nations. 4
But few, if any, profeſt it in former Ages, 5, 25
Would root up the foundations of all Government. 24
Introduce all evil into the World. 25
Pernicious to the Atheiſt himſelf. *Ibid.*
The cauſe of Publick Judgments. *Ibid.*
Mens Luſts the cauſe of it. 27
Promoted by the Devil moſt ſince the deſtruction of Idolatry. *Ibid.*
Uncomfortable. 28
Directions againſt it. 28, 29
All ſin founded in a ſecret Atheiſm. 31
Practical *Atheiſm* natural to Man. 29
Natural ſince the Fall. 30
To all Men. *Ibid.*
Prov'd by Arguments, *a* 34 *ad* 61
We ought to be humbled for it, both in our ſelves and others. 64
How great a ſin it is. *a* 64 *ad* 66
Miſery will attend it. 66
We ſhould watch againſt it. *Ibid.*
Directions againſt it. 66, 67
Atheiſt can never prove there is no God. 26
All the Creatures fight againſt him. *Ibid.*
In Afflictions, ſuſpects and fears there is one. 26, 27
How much pains he takes to blot out the notion of a God. 27
Suppoſe that it were an even lay that there were no God, yet he is very imprudent. *Ibid.*
Uſes not means to imform himſelf. *Ibid*
Atoms, the World not made by a caſual concourſe of them. 13
Attributes of God bear a comfortable reſpect to Believers. 208
Faith to be acted on them. 622
Authority, how diſtinguiſht from Power. 424

B.

BAd Perſons and Things order'd for the Churches good. 539, 540
The *Beſt* we have ought to be given to God. 95
Bleſſing, not to ſeek it of God reflects on Providence. 525
Spiritual, God only the Author of. 421
Temporal, God uſes a Soveraignty in beſtowing them. 444
Vide *Riches.*
Boaſting reflects on Providence. 528
Body, of Man, how curiouſly wrought. 19, 218
Every human one hath different features. 20
God hath none.
Vide *Spirit.*
We muſt Worſhip God with our Bodies. 85, 86
Yet not with our *Bodies* only.
Vide *Soul* and *Worſhip.*
We muſt not conceive of God under a *Bodily* ſhape. 76
Bodily Members aſcribed to him.
Vide *Members.*
Brain, how curious a Workmanſhip. 19

C.

THe *Iſraelites* worſhipped the true God under the Golden *Calf.* 75
God fits and inclines Men to ſeveral *Callings.* 222, 395
Appoints every Mans *Calling.* 448
Caſual things order'd by Providence. 513
There is a firſt *Cauſe* of all things. 13
Which doth neceſſarily exiſt and is Infinitely perfect. *Ibid.*
We muſt not *Cenſure* God in his Counſels, Actions or Revelations. 118, 248, 249
Or his Ways. 255, 256.
Cenſuring God in dark Providences to be avoided. 558
The hearts of others is an injury to God's Omniſcience. 198
Men is a *Contempt* of God's Soveraignty. 458
Ceremonial Law aboliſhed to promote Spiritual Worſhip. 83
Called Fleſh. *Ibid.*
Not a fit means to bring the heart into a Spiritual frame. 83, 84
Rather hindred then further'd Spiritual-Worſhip. 84
God never teſtified himſelf well pleaſed with it, nor intended it ſhould always laſt. 84, 85
The abrogating of it doth not argue any *Change* in God. 140, 141
The Holineſs of God appears in it. 317
Men are prone to bring *Ceremonies* of their own into God's Worſhip. 49
Vide *Worſhip*, and *Additions.*
Chance, the World not made nor govern'd by it. 16
Changes, ſudden ones cauſed by God on Mens Spirits. 514
Charity, Men have bad ends in it. 58
We ſhould exerciſe it. 418
The conſideration of God's Soveraignty would promote it. 465
We ſhould be chearful in God's Worſhip. 92
Children of God, the meaneſt taken notice of by him. 543
One of them more valued than all the World by him. 548
Sould be eſteemed by the World. 551
Thoughts of God's Providence a comfort to them in their Meanneſs. 552
Chriſt the great object of God's Providence. 509
All Providences for the glorifying his grace in him. 544
Intercedes for his Church. 549
His Godhead proved from his Eternity, 117, 118
From his Omnipreſence. 159, 160
From his Immutability. 141, 142
From his knowledge of God, all Creatures, the Hearts of Men, and his Preſcience of their Inclinations. 192, 193, 194
From his Omnipotence, manifeſt in Creation, Preſervation and Reſurrection. 293 *ad* 296
From his Holineſs. 343
From his Wiſdom. 244
Is God-Man. 285
Spiritual Worſhip offer'd to God through him. 95
The imperfectneſs of our Services ſhould make us prize his Mediation. 103
The onely fit Perſon in the Trinity to aſſume our Nature. 234, 235
Fitted to be our Mediator and Saviour by his two Natures. 235, 236, 237
Should be imitated in his Holineſs, and often view'd by us to that end. 349
The greateſt Gift. *a* 379 *ad* 381
Appointed by the Father to be the Redeemer. 450, 451

The *Christian* Religion, its Excellency. 64
Of Divine Extraction 342
Most opposed in the World 39
V. *Gospel.*
Church, God's Eternity a comfort to her in all her distress and threatnings of her Enemies, 119
Under God's special Providence. 166
His infinite knowledge a comfort in all the subtle contrivances of Men against her. 200
Troublers of her Peace by corrupt Doctrines, no better than Devils. 207
God's Wisdom a Comfort to her in her greatest dangers. 250
Hath shewn his Power in her Deliverances in all Ages. 110, 282
And in the destruction of her Enemies. 282, 283
Ought to take comfort in his Power, in her lowest Estate. 303
Should not fear her Enemies.
V. *Fear.*
His goodness a comfort in Dangers. 414
How great is God's love to her. 462, 493
His Soveraignty a Comfort to her. 463, 464
He will comfort her in her Tears, and destroy her Enemies. 473, 474
God exercises Patience towards her. 488
For her sake to the Wicked also. 488, 489
Why her Enemies are not Immediately destroyed. 492
God hath given her his choicest things. 544
He will always have one. 550
Shall be protected in greatest exigences. *ibid.*
Shall be victorious over all. 551
A folly to contend against her. 552
God's affection to her to be imitated. 563
Shall continue to the end of the World. 571
Secured before her Enemies destroyed. 606
A particular one may be destroyed. 573
V. *Gospel* removed.
Holyness necessary in it. 571
Its stability. *ibid.*
When one is destroyed, God will have another. 574
Shall have a numerous Progeny. *ibid.*
Hath been establisht against all oppositions. *a* 574 *ad* 576
Shall be for the future, and why. *a* 577 *ad* 587
A Gospel one hath greater grounds of confidence then the Jewish. 585
Her Establishment by God a Comfort, and wherein. *ibid.*
Her future Glory certain. 587
To be Prayed for and Loved. 584, 587
Her Establishment to be Prayed for, and endeavoured. 588
Sometimes in desperate straits. 589
Opposing her most fatal. 590
What times God takes to deliver her. 590, 591
Why he delivers her in those times. 592, 593, 594
And how. 594, 595
Very dear to God. 596
V. Enemies of the *Church.*
Chearfulness in God's Service a duty. 600
V. *Delight.*
Commands of God.
Vide *Laws.*
The Holiness of God to be relied on for *Comfort.* 343
God gives great *Comforts* in or after Temptations. 399
Creatures cannot *Comfort* us if God be angry. 461
Christ careful to give his People in distress. 615
Commonness of Sin no argument of its pardon. 645
Communion with God, Man naturally hath no desire of. 61
The advantage of *Communion* with him. 66
Can only be in our Spirits, 78
We should desire it. 124
Cannot be between God and Sinners. 341
Holyness only fits us for it. 350
Conceptions of God false, the ground of a denyal of Providence. 523
We cannot have adequate ones of God. 76
We ought to labour after as high ones as we can. *ibid.*
They must not be of him in a Corporeal shape. 76, 77
There will be in them a similitude of some corporeal thing in our fancy. 77
We ought to refine and spiritualize them. 77, 78
Right *Conceptions* of him a great help to Spiritual Worship. 108
Debasing ones a sin. 557, *s.*
Vide *Imaginations.*
Concourse of God to sin, what? 515
God concurs to all the Actions of his *Creatures.* 329
His concurring to sinful actions no blemish to his Holiness. *a* 329 *ad* 331
Various *Conditions* of Men a fruit of Divine Wisdom. 222
Conditions of the *Covenant.*
Vide *Covenant*, Faith, and Repentance.
Confession of sin, Men may have bad ends in it. 58
Partial ones a practical denyal of God's Omniscience. 199
Conscience proves a Deity. *a* 21 *ad* 23
Fears and stings of it in all Men upon the Commission of sin. 21, 22
Though never so secret. *ibid.*
Cannot be totally taken off. 22
Comforts a Man in well doing. *ibid.*
Necessary for the good or the World. *ibid.*
Terrified ones wish there were no God. 33
Men naturally displeas'd with it when it contradicts the desires of self. 44
Obey carnal self against the light of it. 52
Accusations of it evidence God's knowledge of all things. 191
God, and he only, can speak peace to it when troubled. 293, 433
His Laws only reach it. 435, 436, 437
Terrors of it no argument of an unpardon'd state. 646
Its Gripes set Men on the denyal of Providence. 524
Constancy in that which is good we should labour after, and why. 146, 147
Consent not full in a renew'd Man when he sins, 632, 633, 634
Consideration, want of it one cause of a renewed Man's sin. 634
Nothing but an infinite good can content the Soul. 23
Vide *Satisfaction* and *Soul.*
Content the duty of a pardon'd Man. 648
Contingents, all foreknown by God.
Vide *Knowledge* of *God.*
Contradictions cannot be made true by God, *a* 266 *ad* 268
Yet this doth not overthrow God's Omnipotence, *ibid.*
'Tis an abuse of God's Power to endeavour

vour to justifie them by it. 300
Contrary qualities link'd together in the Creatures. 13, 214
Contrivance of Sin how hainous. *s* 558
Conversion, carnal self-love, a great hindrance to it. 51
There may be a *Conversion* from sin which is not good. 56
Men are Enemies to it. 61
The necessity of it. 62
The difficulty of it. *Ibid.*
God only can be the Author of it. 63, 397
The Wisdom of God appears in it, in the Subjects, Seasons and manner of it. 228, 229
And his Power. 291, 292
And his Holiness. 321
And his Goodness. 396, 397
And his Soveraignty. 439 *ad* 441
He could *Convert* all. 439
Not bound to *Convert* any. 439, 440
The various means and occasions of it. 449
The frame of our minds in it at first to be often reflected on. *s* 564
Genuine *Convictions* would be promoted by right and strong apprehensions of God's Holiness. 345
Corruptions. the Knowledge of God a comfort under fears of them lurking in the heart. 203
The Power of God a comfort when they are strong and stirring. 302
n God's People shall be subdued. 462
The Remainders of them God orders for their good. *a* 225 *ad* 227
Reliques of them no argument of an unpardoned state. 646
Vide *Perfection*, sence of *Sin*.
The *Covenant* of God with his People Eternal 119 and unchangeable. 144
God in *Covenant* an eternal good to his People. 119, 120
The *Conditions* of the *Covenant* of Grace evidence the Wisdom of God. 240
Suited to Mans lapsed state and God's glory. *Ibid.*
Opposite to that which was the *Cause* of the fall. *Ibid.*
Suited to the *Common* Sentements and *Customs* of the World, and *Consciences* of Men. 240, 241
Only likely to attain the end. *Ibid.*
Evidence God's Holiness. 320, 321
The Wisdom of God made over to Believers in it. 250
And Power. 301
And Holiness. 344
A Promise of Life implyed in the *Covenant* of Works. 374
Why not expresst. 374, 375
The Goodness of God manifest in making a *Covenant* of Grace after Man had broken the first. 382
In the Nature and Tenor of it. 383, 384
In the *Choice* gift of himself made over in it. 384
In its *Confirmation*. *Ibid.*
Its *Conditions* easy, reasonable, necessary. 384 *ad* 386
It promises a more excellent Reward than the life in Paradise. 390, 391
Covetuousness, Vide *Riches* and *World*.
Counsels of Men infatuated by God. 514
Creation, the Wisdom of God appears in it. *a* 216 *ad* 219
And should be meditated upon, 219
Motives to it. 257, 258
His Power. *a* 271 *ad* 275
His Holiness. 315, 316
His Goodness. *a* 369 *ad* 375
Goodness the end and motives of it. 362
Ascribed to Christ. 294 *ad* 296
The foundation of God's Dominion. 426
The raising a Church God's great end in it. 577
Creatures evidence the Beeing of God. 3, 9 *ad* 18
In their Production. 9 *ad* 13
In their Harmony. 13 *ad* 17
In pursuing their several ends. 17, 18
In their Preservation. 18
Were not, nor cannot be from Eternity 10, 11, 117
None of them can make themselves. 11, 12
Or the World. 12
Subservient to one another. 14, 16
Regular, uniform and constant in it. 15, 16
Are various, 16, 216, 217
Have several Natures. 17
All fight against the Atheist. 26
God ought to be studied in them. 28
All manifest something of God's Perfection. *Ibid.*
Setting them up as our End.
Vide *End*.
Must not be worshipped.
Vide *Idolatry*.
Used by Man to a contrary end than God appointed. 55
All are changeable. 135, 139
Therefore an Immutable God to be prefer'd before them. 146
Are nothing to God. 161
Are all known by God. 173
Shall be restored to their primitive end. 126, 127, 391
Their beautiful order and situation. 217
Are fitted for their several ends. 218
None of them can be Omnipresent. 154
Or Omnipotent. 263
Or infinitely perfect. 266
God could have made more than he hath. 264 *ad* 266
Made them all more perfect then they are. 266
Yet all are made in the best manner, *ibid.*
The Power that is in them demonstrates a greater to be in God. 269
Order'd by God as he pleases. 283
The meanest of them can destroy us by God's order. 305, 461
Making different Ranks of them doth not impeach God's Goodness. 364, 365
Cursed for the sin of Man. 371, 391
What benefit they have by the Redemption of Man. 391
Cannot comfort us if God be angry. 461
All subject to God. *a.* 431 *ad* 434
All obey God. 465
Spiritual Inferences to be drawn from them. 566
The meanest objects of Providence. 509, 510
All at God's command. 590
Curiosities in enquiries about God's Counsels and Actions. a great folly. 118
Sinful. *s.* 557
'Tis an injuring God's knowledge. 197
'Tis a contempt of Divine Wisdom. 249
Should not be employed about what God hath not revealed. 256
The consideration of God's Soveraignty would check it. 466
Curses turned by God into Blessings to his Church. 541

D.

Day, how necessary. 218
Death of Christ, its value from his Divine Nature. 236
Vindicated the honour of the Law, both as to Precept and Penalty. 237
Overturn'd the Devils Empire. 238
He suffer'd to rescue us by it. 379
By the command of the Father. 451
Debauch'd persons wish there were no God. 33
Decrees of God no succession in them. 114
Unchangeable. 245, 296
Vide *Immutability.*
Defilement, God not capable of it from any corporeal thing. 78, 159
Delayes of the Churches deliverance, the Reason of them. 592
In checking sin dangerous. 568
Delight, holy Duties should be perform'd with it, 91, 92
All delight in worship doth not prove it to be Spiritual. 92
We should examine our selves after Worship what delght we had in it. 101
In sin heinous. *s.* 558
Several sorts of it. 600
In Prayer wherein it consists. 601
In it a good Man, whence. 602, 603
Without it no gracious answer. 603
They miserable that have none in it. *Ibid.*
Signs of it. *ibid.*
How to know whether it be of the right kind. 604
Urged. *Ibid.*
Directions to obtain it. 605
Deliverances chiefly to be ascrib'd to God. 166, 167
The Wisdom of God seen in them. 230
Desires of Man naturally after an infinite good. 23
Which evidences the Being of a God. *ibid.*
Men naturally have no desire of Remembrance of God, converse with him, through return to him, or Imitation of him. 60, 61
Devil, Man naturally under his Dominion. 42
God's restraining him how great a Mercy. Vide *Restraint.*
Shall be totally subdued by God. 207
Out-witted by God. 238, 239
His first sin what it was. 432
Vide *Angel.*
Under Providence. 509
Over-rul'd to promote the good of the Church. 539
Direction, Men neglect to ask it of God. Vide *Trusting* in our *selves.*
Should seek it of him. 246
Not to do it how sinfull. 248
Should not presume to give it to him. 249
Not seeking it of God reflects on Providence. 525
Disappointments make many cast off their Obedience to God. 41
God *Disappoints* the devices of Men. 447, 448
Dispensations of God with his own Law. 436
Distance of God naturally affected by Men. 60
How great it is. 339, 340
Distractions in the service of God how natural. 40, 41, 101
Will be so while we have natural Corruptions within. 101, 102
While we are in the Devils Precinct. 102
Most frequent in time of Affliction. *Ibid.*
May be improved to make us more spiritual. 102, 103
When we are humbled for them in Worship. 102
And for the baseness of our Natures the cause of them. *Ibid.*
Makes us prize *Duties* of Worship the more. *Ibid.*
Fill us with Admirations of the graciousness of God. 103
Prize the Mediation of Christ. *Ibid.*
They should not discourage us if we resist them. *Ibid.*
And if we narrowly watch against them. *Ibid.*
Should be speedily cast out. 109
Thoughts of God's presence a remedy against them. 165
Distresses. Vide *Afflictions.*
Distrust of God a contempt of God's Wisdom. 250
And of his Power. 299
And of his Goodness. 403
Too great fear of Man arises from it. 299, 300
Vide *Trusting* in *God* and in our *selves.*
Distrust of God when there are no visible means reflects on Providence. 526
Divinity of Christ. Vide *Christ.*
Of the *Holy Ghost.* Vide *Holy Ghost.*
Divisions turn'd to the Churches good. 541
Doctrines that are self-pleasing desired by Men. 51
Vide *Truths.*
Dominion of God distinguisht from Power. 424
All his other Attributes fit him for it, *ibid.*
Acknowledged by all. *ibid.*
Inseparable from the notion of God. *Ibid.*
We cannot suppose God a Creator without it. *ibid.*
Cannot be renounced by God himself. 425
Nor communicated to any Creature. *Ibid.*
Its foundation. *a* 425 *ad* 427
It is Independent. 427, 428
Absolute. 428, 429
Yet not tyrannical. 429
Managed with Wisdom, Righteousness and Goodness. *a* 429 *ad* 431
'Tis Eternal. 434
'Tis manifested as he is a Law-giver. 434 *ad* 437
As a Proprietor *a* 437 *ad* 445
As a Governour. *a* 445, *ad* 449
As a Redeemer. *a* 449 *ad* 451
The contempt of it, how great. 451
All sin a contempt of it. 452
The first thing the Devil aimed against. *ibid.*
And *Adam.* 453
Invaded by the Usurpations of Men. *Ibid.*
Wherein it is contemned as he is a Law-giver. 453 *ad* 455
As a Proprietor. 455, 456
As a Governour. *a* 456 *ad* 458
It is terrible to the Wicked. 460, 461
Comfortable to the Righteous, 462 *ad* 464
Should be often meditated upon by us. 464
The advantages of so doing. *a* 464 *ad* 466
It should teach us Humility. 466
Calls for our Praise and Thanks. 466, 467
Should make us promote his Honour. 467, 468
Calls for Fear, Prayer and Obedience. 468
Affords Motives to Obedience. 469
Shews us the manner of it. 470, 471
Shews us the true nature of it, 472
Doubtful way a renewed Man can't walk in, without Inquiries and bearing reproof. 630, 631
Duties of Religion performed often meerly for self-Interest. *a* 56 *ad* 58
Men unweildly to them. 57
Perform them onely in Affliction. *ibid.*

Vide *Service* of *God* and *Worship*.
Dulneſs in God's Service ſinful. 600
Dwelling in Heaven and in the Ark, how to be underſtood of God. 157

E.

Ear of Man, how curious an organ. 19
Earth, how uſeful. 14
The Wiſdom of God ſeen in it. 217
Eathly things, Vide *World*.
Ejaculations, how uſeful. 108
Good motions ſhould be backt with them. 570
Elect, God knows all their perſons. 201
Election evidenc'd by Holyneſs. 351
The Soveraignty of God appears in it. 437, 438
Not grounded on Merit in the Creature. 438
Nor on foreſight of Faith and Good Works. 438, 439
Elements, though contrary, yet link'd together. 13
End, all Creatures conſpire to one common one. *a* 15 *ad* 17
Purſue their ſeveral *Ends*, though they know them not. 17
Men have corrupt *Ends* in Religious Duties. 48, 56 *ad* 58
For *Evil Ends*. 36
Deſire the knowledge of God's Law for By-*Ends*. *ibid.*
Man naturally would make himſelf his 50 *ad* 52
How ſinful this is. 52, 53
Would make any thing his *End*, rather than God. 53, 54
A Creature, or a Luſt. 54
How ſinful this is. *ibid.*
Would make himſelf the *End* of all Creatures. 55
How ſinful this is. *ibid.*
Would make himſelf the *End* of God. *a* 54 *ad* 58
How ſinful this is. *ibid.*
Cannot make God his *End* till Converted. 62
Spiritual ones required in Spiritual Worſhip. 94
Many have other *Ends* in it. *Ibid.*
God orders the hearts of all Men to his own. 281, 282
God hath one, and Man another in ſin 331
We ſhould make God our *End*. 351
God makes himſelf his own *End*, how to be underſtood. 362
His being the *End* of all things is one foundation of his Dominion. 426, 427
Not uſing God's gifts for the *End* for which he gave them, how great a ſin. 456
Ends of God higher then Mens 511
Several in the ſame action, and remote. 512
Attain'd by contrary means. 515
God hath ſome in all his actions 535
His great one, what. *ibid.*
We ſhould be kind to our worſt *Enemies*. 418
Enemies of the Church. Vide *Church*.
The Church preſerved in the midſt of them. 575
Of the Church, their folly. 584, 590
God's promiſe to his Church a comfort againſt all their deſigns. 586
To the Church, the fierceſt, who. 589
Deſign her Deſtruction. *ibid.*
The nearer her deliverance, the fiercer God's Judgments on them. 591
Deſtroy'd by the ſame means, whereby the Church is preſerved. *ibid.*
In what times God deſtroys them. 590, 591 592
Why in thoſe times 592, 593, 594
How then deſtroyed 594, 595, 596
Enjoyment of God in Heaven always freſh and glorious. 119
We ſhould endeavour after it here. 414
Men *Envy* the Gifts and Proſperities of others. 48
An imitation of the Devil. *ibid.*
A ſenſe of God's Goodneſs would check it. 417
A contempt of God's Dominion. 455
A denyal of Providence. 725
Eſſence of God cannot be ſeen. 71
Is unchangeable. 129, 130
Eternity, a property of God and Chriſt. 111, 117, 118
What it is. 112
In what reſpects God is eternal. *a* 112, *ad* 114
That he is ſo proved. *a* 114 *ad* 117
God's incommunicable property. 10, 117
Dreadful to ſinners. 119
Comfortable to the Righteous. *a* 119 *ad* 121
The thoughts of it ſhould abate our Pride. 121, 122
Take off our Love and confidence from the World. 122, 123
We ſhould provide for an happy Intereſt in it. 123
Often meditate on it. *ibid.*
Renders him worthy of our choiſeſt affections. 124
And our beſt ſervice. *ibid.*
Eve, whoſe ſin greateſt, *Adams* or hers. 617
Events, many can be aſcribed only to Providence, 513, 514, 515
Ungrounded Imaginations about them ſinful. *a.* 557
Exaltation of Chriſt, the Holineſs of God appears in it. 320
His Goodneſs to us as well as to Chriſt. 380
And his Soveraignty. 450
Examination of our ſelves before and after worſhip, and wherein our duty. 99, 100, 101, 109
Experience of God's Goodneſs a preſervative againſt Atheiſm. 28
Gain'd by Affliction. 520
Extremity, then God uſually delivers his Church. 303
Providence a comfort under them. 553
The time God takes for deliverance, and why. *a.* 554, *ad* 557
The time wherein God ſaves his People. 576, 591, 592, 593
Of the Church often very great, 549

F.

Faith, the ſame thing may be the object of it, and of Reaſon too. 3
Muſt be exerciſed in Spiritual Worſhip. 90
The Wiſdom, Holineſs, and Goodneſs of God in preſcribing it as a Condition of the Covenant of Grace. Vide *Covenant*.
Muſt look back as far as the foundation promiſe. 207
Only the obedience flowing from it acceptable to God. 207
Diſtinct but inſeparable from Obedience. *ibid.*

Foreſight of it not the Ground of Election. 438, 439
Supported by ſtudying former Providences. 560
To be acted on Providence. 561, 562
To be exerciſed before and under Temporal evils. 622, 623
Without it no pardon. 639
Tho weak intereſts us in Pardon. 644
Fall of Man, God no way the Author of it. 314, 315, 323
How great it is. 339, 340
Doth not impeach God's goodneſs. 363
'Tis evident 405, 406
Brought a Curſe on the Creatures. Vide *Creatures.*
Into ſin upon it, how 'tis with a renewed Man. 634
Falls of God's Children turned to their good. *a* 225, *ad* 229
Familiarity with God cauſes delight in Prayer. 602
Fancies, by them God can ruin Men. 515
Favour of God follows upon Pardon. 642
Fear, not the cauſe of the Belief of a God. 8
Men that are under a ſlaviſh *Fear* of him wiſh there were no God. 33, 34
Of Man a contempt of God's Power. 299
Should be of God and not of the pride or force of Man. 305
God's ſoveraignty ſhould cauſe it. 468
Of the Churches Enemies diſſwaſions from it. 557
A preſervative from Judgments. 610
Of Sin a ſign of Pardon. 646
The duty of a pardon'd Man. 648
Features different in every Man and how neceſſary it ſhould be ſo. 20, 217
Frevency. Vide *Activity.*
Fewneſs of Sins doth not render a Man ſafe. 645
Fleſh, the legal ſervices ſo called. 83
Fools, Wicked Men are ſo. 1, 244
Folly, Sin is ſo. Vide *Sin.*
Forgetfulneſs of Sin no argument of a Pardon. 645
Of God, Men naturally are prone to it. 60
Of his Mercies a great Sin. Vide *Mercies.*
How attributed to God. 172
Foreknowledge of God in Sin no blemiſh to his Holineſs. 324
Vide *Knowledge* of *God.*
Forgiving others, no Pardon without it. 647
Foundation of the Church make it ſtable. 583
Future things Men deſirous to know them. 197
Known by God. V. *Knowledge* of *God.*

G.

Gabriel, on what Meſſages he was ſent. 291
Generation could not be from Eternity. 19
Gifts, God can beſtow them on Men. 433
His Soveraignty ſeen in giving greater meaſures to one than another. 443
Of all Men for the Churches good. 536
Glory of all they do or have, Men are apt to aſcribe to themſelves. 51
Of God little minded in many ſeemingly good Actions. 45
Men are more concerned for their own Reputation than God's glory. 52
Should be aim'd at in Spiritual Worſhip. 94
God's permiſſion of Sin is in order to it. 328
Should be advanced by us. 467
His exiſtence known by the light of Nature. 3
By the Creatures. 3, 9 *ad* 18
Miracles not wrought to prove it. 3
Own'd by the univerſal conſent of all Nations. 4
Never diſputed of old. *ibid.*
Denyed by very few if any. 5
Conſtantly owned in all changes of the World. *ibid.*
Under anxieties of Conſcience. 6
The Devil not able to root out the Belief of it. *ibid.*
Natural and innate. 6, 7
Not introduced meerly by Tradition. 7
Nor Policy. 7, 8
Nor fear. 8, 9
Witneſſed by the very nature of Man. *a* 18 *ad* 23
And by extraordinary Occurrences. 23, 24
Impoſſible to demonſtrate there is none. 26
Motives to endeavour to be ſetled in the Belief of it. 27, 28
Directions. 28
Men wiſh there were none, and who they are. 32, 33, 34
Two ways of deſcribing him, Negation and Affirmation. 70
Is Active and Communicative. 78
Propriety in him a great Bleſſedneſs. Vide *Covenant.*
Infinitely happy. 296
Glory of every Providence to be given to God. 534 Vide *Inſtruments.*
Of God diſcovered in the Church. 546
The Church the only ſeat of it. 580
To be pleaded in Prayer for Pardon. 648
Good, that which is materially ſo may be done and not formally. 43
Good Actions cannot be perform'd before Converſion. 62
The thoughts of God's preſence a ſpur to them. 164
God only is ſo. 353
Things and Perſons all for the Churches Good. *a* 535 *ad* 539
Goodneſs pure and perfect the Royal Prerogative of God only. 355
Own'd by all Nations. *ibid.*
Inſeperable from the Notion of God. 356
What is meant by it. 357
How diſtinguiſht from Mercy. *ibid.*
Comprehends all his Attributes. 358
Is ſo by his Eſſence. *ibid.*
The Chief. 359
'Tis Communicative. *ibid.*
Neceſſary to him. 360
Voluntary. 361
Communicative, with the greateſt pleaſure. *Ibid.*
The diſplaying of it the Motive and End of all his Works. 362
Arguments to prove it a Property of God. *ibid.*
Vindicated from the Objections made againſt it. *a* 363 *ad* 369
Appears in Creation. *a* 369 *ad* 375
In Redemption. *a* 375 *ad* 391
In his Government. *a* 391 *ad* 400
Frequently contemned and abuſed. 400, 401
The abuſe and contempt of it baſe and diſingenious. *ibid.*
Highly reſented by God 401
How 'tis contemn'd and abuſed. 400 *ad* 405
Men juſtly puniſh'd for it. 406
Fits him for the Government of the World, and engages him actually to govern it.

it. 406, 407
The ground of all Religion. 407
Renders God amiable to himself. 408
Should do so to us and why. a 408 ad 410
Renders him a fit object of Trust, with Motives to it, drawn hence. 410, 411
And worthy to be obey'd and honor'd. 411, 412
Comfortable to the Righteous, and wherein. a 412 ad 414
Should engage us to endeavour after the enjoyment of him, with Motives. 414, 415
Should be often meditated on the the advantages of so doing. 412, 413
We should be thankful for it. 417
And imitate it, and wherein. 418, 419
Gospel further'd by the wicked. 539
Men greater Enemies to, than the Law. 62
Its excellency. 64, 208
Called Spirit. 209
The only means of Establishment. 208
Of an eternal Resolution though of a Temporary Revelation. 209
Mysterious. *ibid.*
The first Preachers of it.
Vide *Apostles.*
Its Antiquity. *ibid.*
The Goodness of God in spreading it among the Gentiles. *ibid.*
Gives no encouragement to Licentiousness. 210
The Wisdom of God in its Propagation. a 247 ad 249
And Power. a 287 ad 290
Vide *Christian Religion.*
Government of the World, God's right to it. 506
Only God qualified for it. 506, 507
No reason why he should not manage it. 507
Actually managed by him, and wherein. 508
His Wisdom and Goodness in it. 530
Put into Christs hands and managed by him for the Churches good. 545
Of the World, God could not manage it without Immutability. 135
And Knowledge. 192
And Wisdom. 215
The Wisdom of God appears in his government of Man as Rational. 219 ad 223
As Sinful. a 222 ad 228
As Restored. 228, 229
The Power of God appears in natural Government. a 275 ad 279
Moral. 281, 282
Gracious and Judicial. 282, 28[illegible]
The Goodness of God in it. a 391 ad 400
God only fit for it. 244, 297, 342, 406, 407
Doth actually manage it. a 412 ad [illegible]14
Is contemned. a 456 ad 458
Vide *Laws.*
Governour, Gods dominion as such. a 445 ad 449
Grace, the Power of God in planting it. 290 ad 292
Vide *Conversion.*
And preserving it. 293
Vide *Perseverance.*
God's withdrawing it no blemish to his Holiness. a 333 ad 335
Shall be perfected in the Upright. 343
God exercises a Soveraignty in bestowing and denying it. a 439 ad 441
Common in bad Men for the Churches good. 536
To be admired. 648
Causes delight in Prayer. 602
Means of Grace. Vide *Means.*
Graces must be acted in Worship. a 90 ad 92
We should examine how we acted them after it. 100
Growth in Grace annexed to true Sanctification. 421
Should be laboured after. 351

H.

Habits spiritual to be acted in spiritual worship. 89, 90
The rooting up Evil ones shew the power of God. 292
Christ's sitting at God's right *Hand* doth not prove the ubiquity of his Humane Nature. 154
Hardness, how God and how Man is the cause of it. 333, 334
Harmony of the Creatures shew the Being and Wisdom of God. a 13 ad 17
Heart of Man, how curiously contriv'd. 19
We should examine our selves how our hearts are prepared for worship. 99
How they are fixed in it, and how they are after it. 100
God orders all Mens to his own ends. 281, 282
Heaven, the enjoyment of God there will be always fresh and glorious. 119
Why called God's Throne. 157
In it great delight. 603
Heavenly Bodies subservient to the good of the World. 14
Histories, advice in reading them. 536
Hosea, when he Prophesied. 481
Holiness, a necessary ingredient in spiritual worship. 93, 94
A glorious Perfection of God. 308
Own'd to be so both by Heathens and Heretieks. *ibid.*
God cannot be conceived without it. 308, 309
It hath an excellency above all his other perfections. 309
Most loftily and frequently sounded forth by Angels. *ibid.*
He swears by it. *ibid.*
'Tis his glory and life. *ibid.*
The glory of all the rest. 309, 310
What it is, and how distinguisht from Righteousness. 310
His essential and necessary Perfection. 310, 311
God only absolutely holy. 311
Causes him to abhor all sin necessarily, intensly, universally and perpetually. 311, 312, 313
Inclines him to love it in others. 313, 344
So great, that he cannot positively will and incourage sin in others, or do it himself. 313, 314, 315
Appears in his Creation. 315, 316
In his Government. 316, *ad* 319
In Redemption. 319, 320
In Justification. 320, 321
In Regeneration. 321
Defended in all his Acts about sin. 321 *ad* 335
How much it is contemned in the World, and wherein. 335 *ad* 339
To hate and scoff at it in others, how great a sin. 338
Necessarily obliges him to punish sin. 340, 341
And exact satisfaction for it. 341, 342

Fits him for the Government of the World 342
Comfortable to Holy Men. 343
Shall be perfected in the Upright. 344
We ſhould get and preſerve right and ſtrong apprehenſions of it, and the advantage of ſo doing. 344 *ad* 347
We ſhould glorifie God for it, and how. 347, 348
And labour after a conformity to it, and wherein. 348, 349, 351
Motives to do ſo. 349 *ad* 351
And Directions. 351
We ſhould labour to grow in it. *ibid.*
Exert it in our approaches to God. *ibid.*
Seek it at his hands. 352
Holy Ghoſt; his Deity proved. 296
Hopes of ſpeeding cauſes delight in Prayer. 602
Strong of mercy no argument of Pardon. 646
Humiliation frequent, its advantages. 566, 648
Promoted by delays of deliverance. 593
Vide *Sorrow.*
Humility, a neceſſary Ingredient in ſpiritual worſhip. 93
We ſhould examine our ſelves about it after worſhip. 100
A preſervative from Judgments. 611
A Conſideration of God's Eternity would promote it. 121, 122
And of his knowledge. 206
And of his Wiſdom. 252
And of his Power. 292
And of his Holineſs. 345
And of his Goodneſs. 404
And of his Soveraignty. 466
Hypocrites, their falſe Pretences a virtual denial of God's Knowledge. 200
It is terrible to them. 204

I.

Idleneſs; 'tis an abuſe of God's Mercies, to make them an occaſion of it. 404
Cauſes bad thoughts. 566, 567
Idolaters, the Churches fierceſt Enemies. 589
Idolatry of the Heathens, proves the belief of a God to be Univerſal. 4
The firſt Object of it was the Heavenly Bodies 9
Springs from unworthy Imaginations of God. 59
Not countenanced by God's Omnipreſence. 158
Springs from a want of due Notion of God's Infinite Power. 299
A contempt of God's Dominion. 456
Jehovah ſignifies God's Eternity. 115
And his Immutability. 133
God call'd ſo but once in the Book of *Job.* 271
Image of God in Man, conſiſts not in external form and figure. 73, 74
Unreaſonable to make any of him. 74, 75, 76
'Tis Idolatry ſo to do. 76
The defacing of it an injury to God's Holineſs. 336, 337
Man at firſt made after it. 370
Imaginatsons, Men naturally have unworthy ones of God. 58
Vain ones the cauſe of Idolatry and Superſtition, and Preſumption. 59, 60
Worſe than Idolatry and Atheiſm. 60
An injury to God's Holineſs. 336
Imitation of God, Man naturally hath no deſire of it. 61
We ſhould ſtrive to imitate his Immutability in that which is good. 146, 147
In Holineſs, wherein, and why, and how. 348 *ad* 351
And in Goodneſs, 418, 419
Immortal. God is ſo. 78
Vide *Eternity of God.*
Immutability a Property of God. 128
'Tis a Perfection. *ibid.*
A glory belonging to all his Attributes. *ibid.*
Neceſſary to him. 129
God is immutable in his Eſſence. 129, 130
In Knowledge. 130, 131
In his Will, though the things willed by him are not. 131, 132, 133
This doth not infringe his liberty. 133
Immutable in regard of place. 133
Prov'd by Arguments. 133 *ad* 136, 245, 296
Incommunicable to any Creature. 135, 136, 322
Objections againſt it anſwered. 136 *ad* 141
Aſcribed to Chriſt. 141
A ground and encouragement to Worſhip him. 141, 142
How contrary to God in it Man is. 142, 143
Terrible to ſinners. 143, 144
Comfortable to the Righteous, and wherein. 144, 145
An Argument for Patience. 146
Should make us prefer God before all creatures. *ibid.*
We ſhould imitate this his Immutability in Goodneſs: Motives to it. 146, 147
Impatience of Men is great when God croſſes them. 47
A contempt of God's Wiſdom. 249
And of his Goodneſs. 402
And of his Dominion. 456, 457
Under Afflictions reflects on Providence. 527, 528
Impenitence, an abuſe of God's Goodneſs. 402, 403
It will clear the Equity of God's Juſtice. 489
An abuſe of Patience. *ibid.*
Imperfections in Holy Duties we ſhould be ſenſible of. 91
Should make us prize Chriſt's Mediation. 103
Impoſſible ſome things are in their own Nature. 267
Some things ſo to the Nature and Being of God, and his Perfections. *ibid.*
Some things ſo becauſe of God's Ordination. 268
Do not infringe the Almightineſs of God's Power. 266 *ad* 268
Imputation of our ſins to Chriſt. 639
The ground of Juſtification. *ibid.*
Incarnation of Chriſt, the Power of God ſeen in it. 284 *ad* 287
Incomprehenſible, God is ſo. 160
Inconſtancy, natural to Man. 142
In the knowledge of the Truth. *ibid.*
In Will and Affections. 142, 143
In Practice. 143
'Tis the Root of much Evil. *ibid.*
Inequality neceſſary to the good government of the World. 518
Not ſo great as Men imagine. 519
Infirmities, the beſt not free from. 626
The Knowledge of God a comfort to his People under them. 203
The Goodneſs of God in bearing with them. 398

His Patience a Comfort under them. 493
Injuries, Men highly concerned for those that are done to themselves, little for those that are done to God. 52
God's Patience under them should make us resent them. 494
Injustice, a contempt of God's Dominion. 455
Innocent Person, whether God may inflict Eternal Torments upon him. 429, 431
Instruments, Men are apt to pay a service to them rather than God. 53
Which is a contempt of Divine Power. 300
And of his Goodness. 405
Deliverances not to be chiefly ascribed to them. 166
God makes use of sinful ones. 223
None in Creation. 273, 274
The Power of God seen in effecting his Purposes by weak ones. 283, 284
To praise them more than God reflects on Providence. 525, 526
This should not be. 534
Interest of God in the World is all in his People. 547
Interpretations, wrong ones of Providence affront it. 528, 529
In his People God overlooks. 548, 549
The rule of them. 523, 560
Inventions of Men. Vide *Addition* and *Worship*.
Job, when he lived. 271
Jonah, how he came to be believed by the *Ninivites*. 224
Joy, a necessary ingredient in Spiritual-worship. 92
Should accompany all our Duties. 471
Judging the hearts of others, a great sin. 198
Their Eternal state a greater. *ibid.*
God's proceedings, presumption. 518
Judgment Day, a necessity of it. 194, 195
Judgments, Extraordinary, prove the Being of God. 23, 24
Men are apt to put bold Interprepations on them. 49
God is just in them. 62
Especially after the abuse of his Goodness and Patience. 406, 493
On God's Enemies matter of Praise. 308
Declare God's Holiness. 318, 319
Which should be observed in them. 347
Not sent without warning. 367, 481, 482
Mercy mixed with them. 368, 369
God sends them on whom he pleases. 448
Delay'd a long time where there is no Repentance. 482
God unwilling to pour them out when he cannot delay them any longer. 482, 483
Pour'd out with regret. 483
By degrees. 483, 484
Moderated. 484
Vide *Punishments*.
Destroying ones order'd for the Churches good. 541
The ground of most of them. 551
God's Providence a comfort in them. 553
All have their commission from God. 606
How to avoid them. 610
How sweetned. 614
We have just fears of them. *ibid.*
Vide *Punishments*.
Justice of God a motive to Worship. 80
Its Plea against Man. 232, 233
Reconcil'd with mercy in Christ. 234
Vindictive natural to God. 340, 341
Requires Satisfaction. 344
Of God glorified by Mens Sins. 517, 518
Seen in destroying the Churches Enemies, 592, 595
In Pardon. 638, 639
Justification cannot be by the best and strongest works of Nature. 63, 195, 196, 338, 339, 342
The Holiness of God appears in that of the Gospel. 320, 321
The expectations of it by the outward observance of the Law, cannot satisfy an exquisitive conscience. 354
Men naturally look for it by Works. 355

K.

Kingdoms are disposed of by God. 445, 446
Those of the World overturned. 574, 575
Kingly Office of Christ secures Believers and the Church. 582, 583
Knowledge in God hath no succession. 114, 118, 187, 188.
Immutable. 130, 131, 190
Arguments to prove it. 160, 191 *ad* 193
The manner of it incomprehensible. 132, 176, 189
God is Infinite in it. 167
Own'd by all. 167, 168
He hath a Knowledge of Vision and Intelligence, Speculative and Practical. 168, 169
Of Apprehension and Approbation. 169
Hath a Knowledge of himself. 169, 170, 171
Of all things possible. 171, 172
Of all things past and present. 172, 173
Of all Creatures their Actions and Thoughts. *a* 173 *ad* 175
Of all Sins and how. 175, 176
Of all future things he alone and how. *a* 176 *ad* 180
Of all future Contingencies. *a* 180 *ad* 184
Doth not necessitate the Will of Man. *a* 184 *ad* 186
'Tis by his Essence. 186, 187
Intuitive. 187, 188
Independent. 188, 189
Distinct. 189
Infallible. 189, 190
Arguments to prove it. 160 & 191, 192
No blemish to his Holiness. *ibid.*
Infinite attributed to Christ. 192, 193, 194
Infers his Providence. 194
And a Day of Judgment. 194, 195
And the Resurrection. 195
Destroys all hopes of Justification by any thing in our selves. 195, 196
Calls for our adoring thoughts of him. 196
And Humility. 196, 197
How injur'd in the World and wherein. *a* 197 *ad* 200
Comfortable to the Righteous and wherein. *a* 200 *ad* 204
Terrible to Sinners. 204, 205
We should have a sense of it on our hearts, and the advantages of it. 205, 206
Knowledge of God's will, Men negligent in using the means to attain it. 34
Enemies to it and have no delight in it. 34, 35
Seek it for by-ends. 36
Admit it with wavering Affections. *ibid.*
Seek it to improve some Lust by it. 36, 37
A sense of Mans, hath a greater Influence on us than that of God. 54, 199
Sins against it should be avoided. 66
Distinct from Wisdom. 206
Of all Creatures is deriv'd from God. 191, 192
Ours how imperfect. 196, 197

Of God extends to all things. 508

L.

Law of God, how oppositite Man naturally is to it.
Vide *Man*.
There is one in the Minds of Men, which is the Rule of *Good* and Evil. 21
A change of them doth not infer a change in *God*. 140, 141
Vindicated both as to the Precept and Penalty, in the death of Christ. 237, 238
Suted to our Natures happiness and Conscience. 219, 220, 221. 372, 373
We should submit to them. 255
The Transgression of them punished by *God*. 318 436, 437
God's enjoyning one, which he knew Man would not observe, no blemish to his Holiness. 323
To charge them with rigidness, how great a sin. 339
We should imitate the Holiness of them. 164
The *Goodness* of *God* in that of Innocence. *a* 372 *ad* 375
Cannot but be good. 412
He gives Laws to all. 434, 435
Positive ones. 435
His only reach the Conscience. 435, 436
Dispensed with by him; but cannot by Man. 436, 453
To make any contrary to *God's*, how great a sin. 453, 454
Or make additions to them. 454
Or obey those of Men before them. 454, 455, 470, 471
Vide *Governor* and *Magistrates*.
Licentiousness, the Gospel is no friend to. 210
Life Eternal, expected by Men, from something of their own.
Vide *Justification*.
Assured to the People of *God*. 145, 413, 414
Light, a glorious Creature. 359
Light of Nature shews the Being of a *God*. 3
Natural discovers a Providence. 523
Limiting God, a contempt of his Dominion. 457
Providence reflects on it. 529
Lives of Men at God's disposal. 449
Love of God, the Church the peculiar object of it. 580, 581
Seen in destroying her Enemies. 592
To God, sometimes arises meerly from some self-pleasing benefits. 56
A necessary ingredient in Spiritual Worship. 90, 91
A great help to it. 108
God is highly worthy of it. 124, 347, 351, 408, 409, 410
Outward expressions of it insignificant without obedience. 354, 355
God's Gospel-Name. 375
Of God to his People great. 462
To God how to try it. 608, 609, 614
A means to raise good thoughts. *s.* 564
A sign of pardon. 647
To Men seen in mourning for their sins. 609
To sin setled, a renewed Man, cannot have. 631
Lusts of Men make them Atheists. 1, 2

M.

Magistracy, the Goodness of God in setling it. 394
Magistrates are inferior to God, to be obedient to him. 460
Ought to govern Justly, and Righteously. *ibid.*
To be obey'd. *ibid.*
Man, could not make himself. 11, 12
The World subservient to him. 14, 15
The abridgement of the Universe. 18, 19, 371
Naturally disowns the Rule God hath set him. 34 *ad* 42
Owns any Rule rather than God's. 42, 43
Would set himself up as his own Rule. 43 *ad* 46
Would give Laws to God. 46 *ad* 59
Would make himself his own End.
Vide *End*.
His Natural Corruption, how great. 281
Made holy at first. 315, 316, 370, 371
Yet mutable, which was no blemish to God's Holiness. 322, 323
Made after God's Image. 370, 371
The World made and furnish'd for him. 371, 372
In his corrupt Estate, without any Motives to excite God's Redeeming Love. *a* 380 *ad* 382
Restored to a more excellent state than his first. 389, 390
Under God's Dominion. 432, 433
Marriage no Sacrament. 616
Means. Vide *Instrument*.
To depend on the Power of God, and neglect them, is an abuse of it. 300, 301
Of Grace to neglect them, an affront of God's Wisdom. 248
Given to some, and not to others. 441, 442
Have various influences. 442, 443
God oft uses small contrary casual ones, 512, 513
Use of unlawful ones reflects on Providence. 526
So doth distrust, when none are visible. 526, 527
To be used with trusting in God. 531
Onely lawful ones must be used. 531, 532
God never wants. 550, 551, 576, 577
Unlawful not to be used. 598
Meditation on the Law of God, Men have no delight in. 35
Every morning, a means to raise good thoughts. 565
The matter and manner of it to be looked to. 565, 566
Good thoughts injected should be used to assist us in it. 569
Men, good and bad, objects of Providence. 509, 529
Eying them in their actions rather than God, reflects on Providence. 528
Good the special objects of Providence. 529
Members, bodily attributed to God, do not prove him a Body. 73, 74
What sort of them attributed to him. *ibid.*
With a respect to the Incarnation of Christ *ibid.*
Mercies of God to sinners, how wonderful. 61, 62
A Motive to Worship. 89
Former ones should be remembred, when we come to beg new ones. 110
Its Plea for fallen Man. 234
It and Justice reconcil'd in Christ. *ibid.*
Holiness of God in them to be observed. 347, 348
Contempt and abuse of them.

Vide *Goodneſs.*
One foundation of God's Dominion. 427
Call for our love of him. 409, 410
And obedience to him. 411, 412
Given after great Provocations. 484
Stoutneſs under them reflects on Providence. 527
To the Church prefer'd by God, before juſtice on the Wicked. 542, 543
God always hath for his people. 606
Mixt with Puniſhment. 622
Common ones ſweetned by Pardon. 643
Arguments for hope and truſt for the future. 593, 598
Senſe of them cauſes delight in Prayer. 603
Temporal, faith to be acted for them. 622
Merit of Chriſt, not the cauſe of the firſt Reſolution of God to Redeem. 378
Not the cauſe of Election. 438
Man uncapable of. 465
Miniſtery ſhall never fail. 584
Miracles prove the Beeing of a God, though not wrought to that end. 3, 24
Wrough by God but ſeldom. 226
The Power of God. 270, 271
The Power of God ſeen no more in them, than in the ordinary Works of Nature. 278
Many wrought by Chriſt. 286
Moral Goodneſs encouraged by God. 395, 396
Moral Law commands things good in their own Nature. 32, 435
The Holineſs of God appears in it. 316
Holy in matter and manner of his Precepts. 316, 317
Reaches the inward Man. 317
Perpetual. *ibid.*
Vide *Law* of *God.*
Publiſh'd with Majeſty. 435
Mortification, how difficult. 62, 63
Motions of all Creatures in God. 277
Variety of them in a ſinful Creature. 278
Firſt ſinful. *s.* 557
Mountains, how uſeful. 14
Before the Deluge. 111
Mouth, how curiouſly contrived. 19
Murmuring at Providence ſhould not be. 532, 533

N.

Nations, their Intereſt order'd as may make moſt for the Churches good. 536
Their intereſt is to countenance God People and Worſhip. 551
Natural things, their courſe, and the alteration of it for the Churches good. 536
Nature of Man muſt be Sanctified before it can perform Spiritual Worſhip. 87
Human highly advanced, by its Union with the Son of God. 382
Human and Divine in Chriſt.
Vide *Union.*
Neceſſities of good Men ſhall be ſupplied. 520
Vide *Wants.*
Night, how neceſſary. 218

O.

Obedience to God, not true unleſs it be univerſal. 38
Due to him upon the account of his Eternity. 124
To him ſhould be prefer'd before Obedience to Men.
Vide *Laws.*
Of Faith only acceptable to God. 210
Diſtict but inſeperable from Faith. *ibid.*
Shall be Rewarded. 221
Redemption a ſtrong incentive to it. 239
Without it nothing will avail us. 355
The Goodneſs of God in accepting it tho' imperfect. 398
Due to God for his goodneſs. 411, 412, 408
Due to God as a Soveraign. 468, 469, 470
What kind of it due to him. 470, 471
Deliverances on engagement to it. 593
Objects, the propoſing them to Man, which God knows he will uſe to ſin, no blemiſh to God's Holineſs. *a* 331 *ad* 333
Spiritual inferences to be drawn from occaſional ones. 566
Obſtinacy in Sin, a contempt of Divine Power. 299
Omiſſions of Prayer, a practical denyal of God's Knowledge. 200
Of Duty, a contempt of his Goodneſs. 403
Of known Duties a renewed Man can't be guilty off. 626
Omnipreſence, an Attribute of God. 149, 150
Denyed by ſome *Jews* and *Heathens* but acknowledged by the wiſeſt amongſt them. 150
To be underſtood Negatively. *ibid.*
Influential on all Creatures. 150, 151
Limitted to Subjects capacitated for this or that kind of it. 151
Eſſential. *ibid.*
In all places. 151, 152
With all Creatures. 152
Without mixture with them, or diviſion of himſelf. 152, 153
Not by multiplication or extenſion. 153
But totally. *ibid.*
In imaginary ſpaces beyond the World. 153, 154
God's incommunicable Property. 154
Arguments to prove his Omnipreſence. *a* 154 *ad* 157
Objections againſt it anſwered. *a* 157 *ad* 159
Aſcribed to Chriſt. 159, 160
Proves God a Spirit. 160
And his Providence. *ibid.*
And Omniſcient and Incomprehenſible. *ibid.*
Calls for admiration of him. 161
Forgotten and contemned. 161, 162
Terrible to Sinners. 162
Comfortable to the Righteous and wherein. *ibid.*
Should be often thought off, and the advantages of ſo doing. 164, 165
Omniſcience of God, belief of it would prevent bad thoughts. 567
Oppoſition in the hearts of Men naturally againſt the Will of God. 35
Oppreſſion reflects on Providence. 528
Original corruption, ſenſe of it the conſtant duty of all. 622
Ordinances, all ſhall continue. 584
The Glory of them obſcur'd before Judgments come. 606
Where they have been, the places of the greateſt Judgments. *ibid.*
Vide *Means* of *Grace*, *Word.*

P.

Pardon. God's Infinite Knowledge a comfort when we reflect on it, or ſeek it. 203, 204
The Power of God in granting it, and giving a ſenſe of it. 292, 293
The Spring of all other Bleſſings. 420
Always accompanied with Regeneration. *ibid.*
Puniſhment remitted upon it. 421
'Tis Perfect. *ibid.*
Of God, and his alone, gives a full ſecurity.

ty. 462
Its Nature. 636, 637
God only the Author of it. 637
His Attributes ſeen in it. 638, 639
The manner of it. 639
On the account of Chriſt what that implies. 639, 640, 641
Its effects. 642, 643
Miſery of thoſe that want it. 643
Comfort to thoſe that have it. 644
Falſe ſigns of it. *ibid.*
Falſe grounds, why pardon'd ones queſtion it. 646
Signs of it. *ibid.*
Motives to ſeek it, and directions. 647, 648
The Duties of thoſe that have it. 648
Vide *Cleanſing*.
Paſſion, the cauſe of a renewed Mans Sin. 638
Patience under Afflictions a duty. 255
God's Immutability ſhould teach us it. 146, 147
A ſenſe of God's Holineſs would promote it. 346, 347
And his Goodneſs. 416, 417
Motives to it. 471, 472
The true Nature of it. 472
Under Afflictions reaſonable. 622
Conſideration of God's Patience to us would promote it. 494
Patience of God, how admirable. 61, 62, 160, 485, 486
His Wiſdom the ground of it. 245
Evidences his Power. 286, 474
'Tis a property of the Divine Nature. 475
A part of Goodneſs and Mercy but differs from both. 476, 477
Not inſenſible, conſtrained or faint-hearted. 477
Flows from his fulneſs of Power over himſelf. 477, 478
Founded in the Death of Chriſt. 478
His Veracity, Holineſs and Juſtice no bars to it. 478, 479
Exerciſed towards our firſt Parents, *Gentiles* and *Iſraelites*. 480, 481
Wherein it is evidenced. *a* 481 *ad* 486
The reaſon of its exerciſe. *a* 486 *ad* 489
'Tis abuſed and how. 489, 490
The abuſe of it ſinful and dangerous. 490, 491
Exerciſed toward Sinners and Saints. 492
Comfortable to all. 493
Eſpecially to the Righteous. *ibid.*
Should be meditated on, and the advantage of ſo doing. 493, 494
We ſhould admire and bleſs God for it, with Motives ſo to do. 495. 496
Should not be preſumed on. 496, 497
Should be imitated. 497
No Argument againſt Providence. 521
Peace, God only can ſpeak it to troubled Souls. 293
Of Conſcience follows Reconciliation. 643
Given Holy Men in calamitous times. 606
Permiſſion of Sin, what it is, and that it is no blemiſh to God's Holineſs. *a* 325 *ad* 329
Perſecutions, the Goodneſs of God ſeen in them. 398, 399
Vide *Apoſtacy*.
Turn'd to the Churches good. 542
Encreaſes and purifies the Church. *s.* 560
Promiſe of the Churches ſtability a comfort in it. 586
When maliciouſly deſigned, the wicked deſtroyed. 590, 591
Heinouſly reſented by God. 609
Perſeverance of the Saints, a Goſpel-doctrin. 208
Aſſerted. 584
Certain. 302, 303
Motives to labour after it. 146, 147
Depends on God's Power and Wiſdom. 208, 393
Pleaſures, Senſual Men ſtrangely addicted to. 53
We ought to take heed of them. 66
In the ways of God great. 603
Poems, fewer ſacred ones good than of any other kind. 53
Poor, the Wiſdom of God in making ſome ſo. 222
Power Infinite belongs to God. 259
The meaning of the Word. *ibid.*
Abſolute and ordinate. 260, 261
Diſtinct from Will and Wiſdom. 261, 262
Gives life and activity to his other Perfections. 262
Of a larger extent than ſome others. *ibid.*
Originally and eſſentially in the Nature of God, and the ſame with his Eſſence. 262, 263
Imcommunicable to the Creature. *a* 263 *ad* 265
Infinite and Eternal. *a* 263 *ad* 266
Bounded in his Decree. 266
Not infringed by the Impoſſibility of doing ſome things. *a* 266 *ad* 268
Arguments to prove it is in God. *a* 268 *ad* 271
Appears in Creation. *a* 271 *ad* 275
In the Government of the World. *a* 275 *ad* 284
In Redemption. *a* 284 *ad* 287
In the publication and propagation of the Goſpel. *a* 287 *ad* 290
In planting and preſerving grace, and pardoning Sin. *a* 290 *ad* 293
Aſcribed to Chriſt. *a* 293 *ad* 296
And to the Holy Ghoſt. 296
Infers his Bleſſedneſs, Immutability and Providence. 296, 297
A ground of Worſhip. 297
And for the belief of the Reſurrection. 298
Contemn'd and abuſed, and wherein. *a* 299 *ad* 301
Terrible to the Wicked. 301
Comfortable to the Righteous, and wherein. *a* 301 *ad* 303
Should be meditated on. 303, 304
And truſted in, and why. 304
Should teach us humility and Submiſſion. 305
And the fear of him and not of Man. 305, 309
Seen in the ruin of the Churches Enemies. 592
In Pardon. 639
Praiſe, conſideration of God's Wiſdom and Goodneſs would help us to give it to him. 252, 417, 418
Men backward to it. 420
Due to him. 466, 467
For the Churches Mercies, to be given to God. 563
Prayer, Men impatient if God do not anſwer it. 57
We ſhould take the moſt melting oppertunitys for ſecret Prayer. 109
Not neceſſary, becauſe of God's Immutability and Knowledge. 141, 142, 198
To Creatures, a wrong to God's Omniſcience. 197

Omiſſion of it a practical denyal of God's Knowledge. 200
'Tis a comfort that the moſt ſecret ones are underſtood by God. 201
God's Wiſdom a comfort in delaying or denying an anſwer to them. 250
For ſucceſs on wicked deſigns how ſinful. 337, 338
God fit to be truſted in for an anſwer of them. 345
The goodneſs of God in anſwering them. 397, 398
His goodneſs a comfort in them. 412
God's Dominion an Encouragement to, and ground of it. 463, 468
A means to ſuppreſs bad thoughts. 568
For the Church hath excellent grounds. 584, 585
Excited by delays of deliverance. 593
Should be frequent in a time of trouble. 599
Omiſſion of it reflects on Providence. 524
Should be made in all wants. 530
Of, and for the Church pleaſing to, and prevalent with God. 549, 550
Enlivened by ſtudying former Providences, 561
To be made for the Church. 563
Preparation, we ſhould examine our ſelves concerning it before worſhip. 99
Conſideration of God's Knowledge would promote it. 206
How great a ſin to come into God's preſence without it. 338
Preſence of Men more regarded than God's. 54
We ſhould ſeek for God's ſpecial and influential Preſence. 165
Vide *Omnipreſence*.
Of God in the Church, her ſafety. 549
Preſerve himſelf no creature can. 12, 276
God only can the World. 18
The Power of God ſeen in it. 275
One foundation of *God*'s Dominion. 427
Preſervation of all things by God. 508, 509
Preſumption ſprings from vain imaginations of God. 59
A contempt of God's Dominion. 457, 458
Pride, how common. 51
An exalting our ſelves above God. 55
The thoughts of God's Eternity ſhould abate it. 121, 122
An affront to God's Wiſdom. 249, 250
Of our own wiſdom fooliſh. 253
God's Mercies abuſed to it. 404
A contempt of his Dominion. 457, 458
An affront to God's Wiſdom. 249, 250
Of our own wiſdom fooliſh. 253
God's Mercies abuſed to it. 404
A contempt of his Dominion. 457, 458
A ground of denyal of Providence. 523
Of the Churches Enemies, the time of their ruine. 594, 595
Prieſthood of Chriſt ſecures the Church, and every Believer. 582
Principles, better known by actions than words. 30
Some kept up by God to facilitate the Reception of the Goſpel. 240
Propagation of Creatures, the Power of God ſeen in it. 276, 277
Of Mankind, one end of God's Patience. 488
Prophecies prove the Being of God. 24
Prophetical Office of Chriſt ſecures Believers and the Church. 572
Promiſes, Men break them with God. 41, 42, 143
Of God, ſhall be performed. 121, 302, 493
We ſhould believe them, and leave God to his own ſeaſon of accompliſhing them. 213
Diſtruſt of them a contempt of God's Wiſdom. 250
The Holineſs of God in the performance of them to be obſerved. 347
Proſperity no argument of God's love or pardon. 645
Of the Churches Enemies before their ruine. 594
Of the Wicked, doth not impeach Providence. *a* 518, *ad* 521
At the Higheſt not very great. 519
Providence of God proved. 160, 194, 297
Vide *Government* of the *World*.
Eſpecially to his Church, and the meaneſt in it. 166
Extends to all Creatures. *a* 392, *ad* 394
Diſtruſt of it a contempt of God's goodneſs. 403
Univerſal, not a diſparagement, but an honour to God. 507, 509, 510
Univerſal. *a* 509, *ad* 511
Myſterious. 511, 512
Proofs that there is one. *a* 512, *ad* 515
An Objection againſt it anſwered. *a* 515, *ad* 518
A Second anſwered. *a* 518, *ad* 521
A Third anſwered, 521, 522
To deny it abſurd and ſinful. 522, 523
The grounds of its denial. 523, 524
How practically denied, contemned and abuſed. *a* 524, *ad* 529
Matter of comfort. 529, 530
Every one deſigned for the Churches good. *a* 534 *ad* 544
Muſt needs be for that. *a* 544, *ad* 550
This a comfort to the Church. 552
Former ones to be conſidered. 560, 561
Puniſhments. Vide *Judgments*.
God alway juſt in them. 62, 406
Of ſinners Eternal. 119
The wiſdom of God ſeen in them. 230
Neceſſarily follows ſins. 340, 341
Do not impeach God's goodneſs. *a* 365 *ad* 369
Not *God*'s primary intention. 367
Inflicting them a branch of *God*'s Dominion. 436, 437
Neceſſarily follow upon it. 461
Of the wicked, unavoidable and terrible. 461, 462
Afflictions of Believers, whether they are ſo. 617, 618
God and Chriſt intended not in this life to remove them. 618
The curſe of them taken away from a Believer. 618, 619, 637
Their nature alter'd, as to them. 619
Prejudice not their Salvation. *ibid.*
Why continued. 620, 621, 637
Forbearance of it no argument of Pardon. 645
Purgatory held by the *Jews*. 45, 46

R.

Rain an inſtance of *God*'s Wiſdom and Power. 218, 258
Re-acting ſin, how hainous. 559 *s.* 561 *s.*
Reaſon ſhould not be the meaſure of *God*'s Revelations. 254, 255
Reformation in *England*, Providence in it. 517
Regeneration, a means to raiſe good thoughts 563
Regenerate, difference between their ſins, and other

Mens great. *a* 626 *ad* 635
Relation of God and Chriſt to the Church. 546, 547
Loved by, prevalent with them. 547
Religion deſtroyed by denyal of Providence. 522
Repentance, how aſcribed to God. 138, 139
A reaſonable Condition. 241
The end of God's Patience. 487, 488
The conſideration of God's Patience would make us frequent and ſerious in the practiſe of it. 494
Not right without mourning for others ſins. 614
Reprobation, conſiſtent with God's Holineſs and Juſtice. 324, 325
Reproof may be for evil ends. 58
A good Man can't deſpiſe it. 631
Reputation, Men more concern'd for their own than God's glory. 52
Reſignation of our ſelves would flow from conſideration of God's Wiſdom: 255
Should from that of his Soveraignty. 465, 466
Reſiſtance of Sin muſt be continued. 568
Reſtraint of Men and Devils by God in Mercy to Man. 223, 281, 282, 328, 394, 447
Of Mens paſſions prove a Providence. 514
Reſolutions, good how ſoon broken. 142, 143
To ſin were it not for hindrances a good Man can't have. 629
Reſurrection of the Body no incredible Doctrin. 195, 298
The Power of God in that of Chriſt. 286, 287
Of Men aſcribed to Chriſt. 296
How pardon depended on it. 639
Reverence neceſſary in the Worſhip of God. 92, 93
Revelations of God, are not to be cenſured. 248, 289
Of God's purpoſes ſometimes made to his people. 543
Riches, inordinate deſire after them a hindrance to Spiritual Worſhip. 108, 109
God exerciſes a Soveraignty in beſtowing them. 204
Rivers, how uſeful. 218
Rome, why called *Babylon*. 8

S.

Sacraments, the goodneſs of God in appointing them. 388
Saints in glory pray for the Church. 552
Salvation of Men, how deſirous God is of it. 387, 388, 486, 487
Of Men by weak means. 513
Sanctification deſerves our thanks as much as Juſtification. 421
Vide *Holineſs*.
A ſign of pardon. 647
Vide *Holineſs*, *Regeneration*.
Satisfaction of the Soul only in God. 23, 79, 123
Neceſſary for Sin. 341
Scepticks muſt own a firſt Cauſe. 13
Scoffing at Holineſs a great ſin. 338
And at Convictions in others. 344
Scriptures are wreſted and abuſed. 36, 49
Ought to be prized and ſtudied. 66
The not fulfilling ſome Predictions in them, doth not prove God to be changeable. 140
Of the Old Teſtament give credit to the New, and of the New, illuſtrate thoſe of the Old. 209, 210
All Truth to be drawn thence. *ibid.*
Of the Old Teſtament to be ſtudied. 210
Something it them ſutable to all ſorts of Men. 220, 221
Written ſo as to prevent unſeen Corruptions. 221, 222
To ſtudy Arguments from them to defend ſin, a contempt of God's Holineſs. 337
The goodneſs of God in giving them all a Rule. 396
Studying them a means to raiſe good thoughts. *s.* 564
To be read by Women. 615
Sea, how uſeful. 14
The Wiſdom of God ſeen in it. 218
And his Power. 258, 276
Searching the Hearts of Men, how to be underſtood of God. 175
Seaſons, the variety of them neceſſary. 218, 219
For duty the fitteſt to be choſen. 605
Secrecy, a poor refuge to ſinners. 204
Secret Sins cauſe ſtings of Conſcience. 22, 191
Known to God. 160, 161, 204
Shall be revealed in the day of Judgment. 194
Prayers and Works known to God. 202
Security, Men abuſe God's Bleſſings to it. 404
Of the Churches Enemies the forerunner of their ruin. 595
Self, Man moſt oppoſite to thoſe Truths that are moſt contrary to it. 37
Man ſets up as his own Rule. 43, 44
Diſſatisfied with Conſcience when it contradicts its deſires. 44, 45
Meerly the agreeableneſs to it the ſpring of many materially good actions. 45, 46, 56 *ad* 58, 94, 95
Would make it the Rule of God. 43 *ad* 50
And his own end, and the end of all Creatures, and of God.
Vide *End*.
Applauding thoughts of it, how common 51
Men aſcribe the Glory of what they have or do to it. *ibid.*
Deſire Doctrines pleaſing to it 51, 52
Highly concerned for any injury done to it. 52
Obey it againſt the light of Conſcience. *ibid.*
How great a ſin this is. 52, 53
The giving Mercies pleaſing to it, the only cauſe of many Mens love to God. 56
Men unweildy to their Duty where it is not concerned. 57
How ſinful this is. 58
The great Enemy to the Goſpel and Converſion. 63
Self-love threefold. 50
The cauſe of all ſin, and hindrance of Converſion. 50, 51
Senſe of ſin, the want of it reproved. 612, 613
No argument of an unpardoned ſtate. 646
Service of God, how unwilling Men are to it. 39, 40
Slight in the performance of it. 40
Shew not that natural vigor in it as they do in their worldly buſineſs. *ibid.*
Quickly weary of it. 40, 41
Deſert it. 41
The preſence of God a comfort in it. 163
Hypocritical pretences for avoiding it, a denial of God's Knowledge. 200
A ſenſe of God's Goodneſs would make us faithful in it. 412
Some called to, and fitted for more eminent ones in their Generation. *a* 414 *ad* 447
Omiſſions of it a contempt of God's Soveraignty. 458
Much expected after pardon. 648

Special

Special providence a comfort in them. 552
Sin founded in a secret Atheism and self-love. 31, 50
Reflects a dishonour on all the Attributes of God. 31
Implies God is unworthy of a Beeing. 31, 32
Would make him a foolish, impure and miserable Being. 32
More troublesome than Holiness.
To make it our end, a great debasing of God. 54
No excuse, but an aggravation that we serve but one. *ibid.*
Abstinence from it proceeds many times from an evil cause. 56, 199
God's Name, Word and Mercies made use of to countenance it. 58, 337, 404, 490
Spiritual to be avoided. 79
'Tis folly. 118, 119
Past ones we should be humbled for. 121 204
Hath brought a curse on the Creation. 127
Vide *Creatures.*
Past, known to God. 172
All known to him and how. 175, 176, 204, 205
A sense of God's Knowledge and Holiness would check it. 205, 346
Bounded by God. 222, 223
God brings glory to himself, and good to the Creatures out of it. *a* 223 *ad* 228
God hath shewn the greatest hatred of it in Redemption. 238
A contempt of God's Power. 299
Abhored by God. 312, 313, 340
In God's People more severely punisht in this World than in others. 312, 313
God cannot be the Author of in others, or do it himself. *a* 313 *ad* 315
God punishes it and cannot but do so. 318 340, 341
The Instruments of it detestable to God. 318
Opposite to the Holiness of God. 335, 336
To charge it on God, or defend it by his word, a great sin. 337
Entrance of it into the World doth not impeach God's goodness. 363
Those that disturb Societies most signally punished in this Life. 395
A contempt of God's Dominion. 452, 453
How much God is daily provoked by it. *a* 484 *ad* 486, 495
An abuse of God's Patience. 489, 490
God's Providence exercised about it. 511, 513, 515
Without blemish to his Holiness. *a* 516 *ad* 518
He brings good out of it. 513, 517, 540, 541
Incouraged by denial of Providence. 522
Charging it on Providence, a reflection on it. 528
Prevented by considering past Providences. 561
God brings good out of it. 590
To be checked immediately. 568
Former ones, how they may be improved. *ibid.*
Small ones, their danger. 645
Sins of others, Mourning for them a Duty. 607, 608
Acceptable. 608, 609
A preservation from publick Judgments. 610, 611, 614
Those that Mock, Rail only, Fret, Imitate, or not Mourn aright for them reproved. 612
Comfort to those that bewail them. 613
Mourning for them urged. 613, 614
Sincerity required in spiritual worship. 88
Cannot be unknown to God. 201, 202
Consideration of God's Knowledge would promote it. 205
To be looked after. 564
Deliverance delayed to discover it. 593
Mourning for others sins an evidence of it. 610
A preservative from common Judgments. *ibid.*
A sign of pardon. 646
Sinful Times, in them we should be most Holy. 348
Sinners, God hath shewn the greatest love to them, and hatred to their sins. 238
Every thing in their possession detestable to God. 318, 319
Society, the goodness of God seen in the preservation of it. 394, 395
Could not subsist without restraining Grace.
Vide *Restraints.*
Sorrow, Godly, prevents bad thoughts. 566
A sign of pardon. 646
Soul, the vastness of its capacity, and quickness of its motion. 20, 21
Its union to the Body wonderful. 21
God only can satisfie it;
Vide *Satisfaction.*
They only can converse with God. 78
Should be the objects of our chiefest care. 79
We should worship God with them. 81, 82
The Goodness and Wisdom of God seen in them. 278, 370
Spaces imaginary beyond the World God is present with. 153, 154
Spirit, that God is so, plainly asserted but once in Scripture. 69
Various acceptations of the Word. 69, 70
That God is so, how to be understood. 70
God, the only pure one. 70, 71
Arguments to prove God is one. *a* 71, *ad* 73
Objection against it answered. 73
His motions to be entertained and improved. 569
Spirit of God, his assistance necessary to Spiritual Worship. 87, 88
Spirits of Men, raised up, and ordered by God as he pleases. 446, 447
Suddenly changed by God. 514
Studying Providence a Duty, and how. 523, 524, 560
Subjection to our Superiors, God remits of his own right for preserving it. 395
Submission to Providence urged. 532
Success, Men apt to prescribe to themselves. 51
Not to be ascrib'd to our selves. 405
Denied by God to some. 444, 445
Sufferings of Good Men for Truth glorifie God. 521
Providence a support to them under them. 529
Vide *Persecutions.*
Summer, how necessary. 218
Sun, conveniently placed. 14, 217
The Power of God seen in it. 274
Lord's *Supper*, the goodness of God in appointing it. 388
Seals the Covenant of Grace. 388, 389
In it we have Union and Communion with Christ. 389, 390

The neglect of it reproved. 390
Supererrogation, an Opinion that injures the Holiness of God. 339
Superstition proceeds from vain imaginations of God. 59
Swearing by any Creature an injury to God's Omniscience. T. 198

T*Emptations*, the Presence of God a comfort in them. 162
The thoughts of it would be a Shield against them. 164
The Wisdom and Power of God a comfort unto them. 250, 302
The goodness manifested to his People under them. 399, 400
The thoughts of God's Soveraignty would arm, and make us watchful against them. 465
Thankfullness, a necessary ingredient in Spiritual worship. 91
Due to God. 417, 467, 495, 496
A sense of his Goodness would promote it. 417
Deliverance delayed to promote it. 594
Theft, an Invasion of God's Dominion. 455
Thoughts should be often upon God. 29
Seldom are on him. 53, 60, 61
All known by God only. 174, 175
And by Christ. 192, 193
Cherishing evil ones, a practical denyal of God's Knowledge. 200
Of God's Knowledge, would make us watchful over them. 205, 206
Of Man naturally universally evil, and highly provoking. *s.* 556
What are sinful. 556, 557, *s.*
Sinful, Aggravated by delight, contrivance and re-acting. 558, 559, *s.*
Are sins. 559, 560, *s.*
Worse than evil actions. 560, 561, 562, *s.*
Reproof to those that entertain them. 562. 563, *s.*
To be suppresst. 563, *s.*
Good ones how to be raised. *a* 563, *ad* 566, *s.*
Bad ones how prevented. 566, 567
Evil ones how to be order'd when they intrude. 567, 568
Good ones how to be ordered when they appear. 569, 570
Threatnings, the not fulfilling them sometimes, argue no change in God. 139, 140
Are conditional. *ibid.*
The goodness of God in them. 374
Go before Judgments.
Vide *Judgments*.
Time, cannot be infinite. 10
Times of bestowing Mercy, God orders as a Soveraign. 445
Tongue, how curious a Workmanship. 19
Traditions, old ones generally lost. 7
Belief of a God, not owing meerly to it. *ibid.*
Transubstantiation an absurd Doctrine. 300
Trees how useful. 14, 218
Troubles, Promise of the Churches stability a comfort in them. 585, 586
Sharp, to be expected and provided for. 597
Should not put us out of the way of duty. 598, 599
Vide *Afflictions*.
Trust in themselves Men do, and not in God. 52
We should not in the World. 122, 123, 145
God the fit object of it. 201, 239, 245, 304, 343, 344, 410, 468
Means to promote it 206, 464
Should not in our own Wisdom. 253
In our selves, a contempt of God's Power and Dominion. 300, 455, 456
God's Power, the main ground of trusting him 304
And sometimes the only one. 304, 305
Should be placed in God against outward appearances. 348
Goodness, the first motive of it. 410
More foundations of it, and motives to it under the Gospel, than under the Law. 411
Gives God the glory of his goodness. *ibid.*
God's Patience to the Wicked a ground for the Righteous to trust in his promise. 493
In any thing but God, a reflection on Providence. 525
In Providence, a duty in the greatest extremities. 531
How it should be qualified. *ibid.*
A strong ground for it in the Churches greatest miseries. 585
Truths of God most contrary to self, Man most opposite to, And to those that are most Holy, Spiritual, lead most to God, and relate most to him. 37
Men unconstant in the belief of them. 142
Corrupters of them no better than Devils. 207
Evangelical shall prevail. 208
Engaged for Sions stability. 579, 580

U.

U*Biquity* of Christ's Humane Nature confuted. 154
Venial sins, an Opinion that reproaches God's Holiness. 339
Virtue and Vice not arbitrary things. 32
Unbelief, the reason of it. 63
A contempt of Divine Power. 300
And Goodness. 402, 403
Understanding enlightened in a renewed Man. 628
Union of Soul and Body, an effect of Almighty Power. 21
Of two Natures in Christ, made no change in his Divine Nature. 138
Shews the Wisdom of *God*. *a* 235, *ad* 237
How necessary for us. 236, 237
Shews the Power of *God*. 285, 286
Explain'd. 286, 287
Vide *Incarnation*.
Voluntary, Christ's Death was. 639
Usurpations of Men an Invasion of God's Soveraignty. 453

W.

W*Ants* of a good Man shall be supplied. 529
Vide *Necessities*.
Supply of them to be sought of God. 530
Providence a comfort under fears of them. 553
Waiting on God in the ways of his Providences, a Duty, and how to be performed. 562, 563
Water, an excellent Creature. 360
Watchfullness over our hearts, a means to prevent bad Thoughts. 567
To be joyn'd in Prayer. 568
Weakness a sensibleness of it, a necessary ingredient in Spiritual Worship. 91
Wicked Men made subservient to the Churches good. 539, 540
Will of God cannot be defeated. 32
Man averse to it.
Vide *Man*.
The same with his Essence. 132

Always accompanied with his Understanding. *ibid*
Unchangeable. *ibid.*
The unchangeableness of it doth not make things willed by him so. 132, 133
Free. 133
How conversant about sin. 325
Nothing done without it. 508
Manifested by Providence, not to be resisted. 524, 532, 534
Will of Man, not necessitated by God's Fore-knowledge. *a* 184 *ad* 186
Subject to God. 433
Of a renewed Man changed. 628
Vide *Regeneration.*
Winds, how useful. 218
Winter, how usefull. *ibid.*
Wisdom, an Attribute of God. 211
What it is, and wherein it consists. *ibid.*
Distinct from Knowledge. *ibid.*
Essential which is the same with his Essence, and Personal. 212
In what sense God is only wise. *a* 212 *ad* 214
Proved to be in God. *a* 214 *ad* 216
Appears in Creation. *a* 216 *ad* 219
In Government of Man as Rational. *a* 219 *ad* 222
As fallen and sinful. *a* 222 *ad* 228
As Restored. *a* 228 *ad* 230
In Redemption. *a* 230 *ad* 240
In the condition of the Covenant of Grace. 240, 241
In the propagation of the Gospel. *a* 241 *ad* 244
Ascribed to Christ. 244
Renders God fit to govern the World, and enclines him actually to govern it. *ibid.*
A ground of his Patience and Immutability in his Decrees. 245
Makes him a fit object of our Trust. *ibid.*
Infers a day of Judgment. 245, 246
Calls for a Veneration of him. 246
A ground of Prayer to him. *ibid.*
Prodigiously contemn'd, and wherein. *a* 246 *ad* 250
Comfortable to the Righteous. 250, 251
In Creation and Government, should be meditated on, and Motives to it. 251, 252
In Redemption to be studied and admired. 252, 253
To be submitted to in his Revelations, Precepts, Providences. 254, 255
Not to be censured in any of his ways. 255 256
Seen in Providences. 511, 512, 530, 532
In the destruction of the Churches Enemies. 595
Wisdom, no Man should be proud of, or trust in. 253, 254
Should be sought from God. 254
Women should read the Scriptures. 615
The first punishment continued on them, and why. 617, 619, 620, 621
Of what nature that punishment is. 617, 618
Their Salvation not hindred by it. 618
Mercy of God to them in it. 621, 622
Child-bearing, their duty. 622, 623, 624
World, was not, and could not be from Eternity. 10, 11
Could not make it self. 11, 12
No Creature could make it. 12
It's Harmony. 13 *ad* 17
Greedily pursued by Men. 53
Inordinate desires after it a great hindrance to Spiritual Worship. 105
Our love and confidence not to be placed in it. 122, 123, 127
Shall not be annihilated but refined. 126, 127
Vide *Creatures.*
We should be sensible of the unconstancy of all things in it. 145
Our Thoughts should not dwell much on them. *ibid.*
We should not trust or rejoyce in them. *ibid.*
Not to be preferred before God. 146
Made in the best manner. 266
Made and richly furnisht for Man. 371, 372
A sense of God's Goodness would lift us up above it. 417
Its continuance for the Churches sake. 535
Its commotions order'd for her good. 541
Not entangling our selves with it, a means to prevent bad thoughts. 566
Worship of God, a folly to neglect it. 28, 29
If not according to his Rule no better than a worshiping the Devil. 42
Men prone to corrupt it with their own Rites and Inventions. 49
Spiritual, Man naturally hath no heart to. 60
Cannot be right without a true notion of God. 77
Should be Spiritual and Spiritually performed. 79
God's Spiritualty the Rule, tho' his Attributes be the foundation of it. 80, 297, 298
Spiritual to be due to him, manifest by the light of Nature, tho' not the outward means and matter of an acceptable Worship discoverable by it. 80, 81, 82
Spiritual own'd to be due to God by Heathens. 81
Always required by God. 82
Men as much oblig'd to it as to worship him at all. 82, 83
Ceremonial Law abolisht to promote it. *a* 83 *ad* 85
Legal Ceremonies did not promote but rather hindred it. 84
By them God was never well pleased with, nor intended it should be durable. 84, 85
Under the Gospel 'tis more Spiritual then under the Law. 85
Yet doth not exclude Bodily worship. 85, 86, 87
In Societies due to God. 86
Spiritual, what it is and wherein it consists. 87 *ad* 95
Due to God, proved. *a* 95 *ad* 98
Those reproved that render him none at all. 98
A Duty incumbent on all. *ibid.*
Wholly to neglect it a great degree of Atheism. *ibid.*
To a false God, or in a false manner, better than a total neglect of it. 98, 99
Outward, not to be rested in. 99
We should examine our selves of the manner of it, and in what particulars. 99, 109
Spiritual, 'tis a comfort that God requires it. 101
Not to give it to God, is to affront all his Attributes,

Attributes. *à* 104 *ad* 107, 199
To give it him and not that of our Spirits is a bad ſign. 106
Meerly Carnal, uncomfortable, unacceptable, abominable. 107
Directions for Spiritual. 107 *ad* 109
Immutability of God, a ground of worſhip and encouragement to it. 141, 142
Bringing Human Inventions into it, an affront to God's Wiſdom. 247
Vide *Ceremonies.*
A ſtrong ſenſe of God's Holineſs would make us reverence in it. 345, 346
We ſhould carry it holily in it. 351, 352
Ingenuous, would be promoted by a ſenſe of God's Goodneſs. 416
Slight and careleſs, a contempt of God's Soveraignty. 458
And ſo is omiſſion of it. *ibid.*
Thoughts of God's Soveraignty would make us diligent in it. 465
Worſhip of Creatures is Idolatry. 76
Not countenanc'd by God's Omnipreſence. 158
Wrong, God can do none. 65, 459

Z

Zeal, ſometimes a baſe end in it. 58

A TABLE

A TABLE *of the Places of Scripture Explained in this* First VOLUME.

Some few of the Numbers being twice gone over, the *Reader* may obſerve that *s.* againſt the *Page* ſignifies *Supplement.*

GENESIS.

Chapters,	Verſes,	Pages,
1.	1.	271, 272
	21.	509
	26.	273
2.	7.	18, 371
	17.	478
3.	5.	617
	8.	483
	15.	285
	16.	616
	22.	617
4.	7, 8, 9.	522
	9.	528
	26.	86, 481
6.	5.	555, *s.* 556, *s.*
	6.	136
8.	21.	530, 556
9.	27.	539
18.	19.	175
22.	12.	*ibid.*
32.	30.	71
40.	14.	525
46.	4.	399
47.	31	86

EXODUS.

Chapters,	Verſes,	Pages,
3.	11.	200
	14.	115
4.	24.	482
6.	3.	271
9.	16.	282
15.	9, 10.	588 *s.* 589 *s.*
	11.	307
19.	5.	535
32.	10.	368
	32, 33.	509
33.	19.	358
34.	6, 7.	638
	9.	485

NUMBERS.

Chapters,	Verſes,	Pages,
14.	17.	638, 639
24.	17.	512
34.	10.	71

DEUT.

Chapters,	Verſes,	Pages,
32.	8.	530
	33, 34.	183
34.	10.	71

JOSHUA.

Chapters,	Verſes,	Pages,
5.	13, 14.	546

Chap.	Verſes,	Pages,
24.		

1 KINGS.

Chapters,	Verſes,	Pages,
8.	27.	153
	39.	193

2 KINGS.

Chapters,	Verſes,	Pages,
10.	9.	40
20.	1, 4, 5.	139

1 CHRON.

Chap.	Verſ.	Pages.
21.	1.	515

2 CHRON.

Chapters,	Verſes,	Pages,
11.	15.	42
16.	9.	503

JOB.

Chapters,	Verſes,	Pages,
4.	18.	311
9.	21.	196
12.	18.	446
14.	5.	179
	17.	172
16.	19.	201
22.	14.	432
24.	12.	476
26.	5. to the end of the Chapter,	257, 258, 259
	26, 27, 28.	54
31.	21.	174
34.	7.	375
38.		

PSALMS.

Pſal.	Verſ.	Pages,
1.	4.	143
2.	4.	157
8.	4.	495
10.	11, 13.	1
14.	1.	1, 2, 523
16.	2.	449
17.	3.	567
18.	30.	623
19.	1, 2, 3, 4.	486
	4.	217
22.	8.	564. *s.*
25.	9.	317
26.	12.	175, 562, *s.*
	2, 3, 4.	348
	10.	534
	8.	157

Pſal.	Verſes,	Pages,
27.	4.	309
	10.	162
29.	10.	436
	10, 11.	541
32.	1, 2.	199, 635
36.	4.	629
37.	1, 2, 3, 4.	599
	13.	521
	18.	520
	23.	610
42.	6.	564 *s.*
45.	4.	596
49.	20.	559 *s.*
50.	21.	476, 477
	23.	199
51.	4.	185
	6.	238
56.	10.	622
58.	3, 4.	30
	10.	368
59.	13.	551
62.	11.	259
66.	18.	630
68.	21.	549
	22.	588
69.	19.	200
74.	14.	251, 556
76.	12.	463
78.	36.	199
	38.	483
84.	11.	596
87.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5,	570, 571, 572
89.	27.	619
90.	1.	110
	2.	110. 111
	8.	194
94.	11.	557 *s.*
102.	25, 26, 27.	6, 7, 125
	27, 28.	583
From Ver. 3 to 28.		141
103.	3.	421
	14.	203
	19.	420, 421, 422
104.	2.	9
	31.	127
105.	25.	332
106.	19, 20.	75
111.	10.	9
113.	5.	157
119.	112.	629
125.	1.	584
130.	4.	80
139.	2.	183
	7, 8, 9.	152
	15, 16.	19
	16.	179
	21, 22, 23, 24.	203. 610
145.	17.	357
147.	1, 2, 3.	166
	4, 5.	167

PROV.

A TABLE.

PROV.

Chapters,	Verſes,	Pages,
8.	12.	216
	22.	118, 450
	30.	214
9.	10.	9
10.	25.	535
12.	2.	460 s.
14.	9.	612
15.	11.	174
16.	4.	328

ECCLES.

Chap.	Verſ.	Page,
8.	11.	30

ISAI.

Chapters,	Verſes,	Pages,
1.	10, 11, 14.	84
2.	2.	587
4.	2.	284, 620
5.	5.	606
9.	6.	192
10.	26, 27.	588
25.	10.	580
27.	3.	579
29.	15, 16.	557
	15.	200
31.	9.	584
34.	4.	126
38.	1, 5.	139
40.	15, 17.	154
41.	10.	549
	21, 22.	177
43.	20, 21.	41
45.	5.	446
	11.	462, 581
48.	10.	398
49.	10.	583
	16.	581
51.	12, 13.	557
52.	4, 5.	399
54.	9.	578
	16.	216
66.	1.	154
63.	2, 3.	596
	8.	*ibid.*

JERE.

Chapters,	Verſes,	Pages,
6.	21.	332
7.	21.	84
12.	9.	143
15.	15.	474
16.	17.	175
17.	12.	546
21.	35, 36.	126
23 from v. 16 to 24.		148, 149
31.	3.	581
32.	31.	480
33.	20.	510

LAM.

hap.	Verſ.	Page.
3.	33.	483

EZEK.

Chapters,	Verſes,	Pages,
1.	28.	578
4.	6.	482
8.	2.	310
9.	1, 2, 3, 4.	605, 606
	10.	483
11.	16.	398
18.	25.	475
20.	33.	463
44.	2.	573
45.	8.	587

DAN.

Chapters,	Verſes,	Pages,
4.	17.	537
7.	9.	76

HOSEA.

Chapters,	Verſes,	Pages,
1.	5.	491
2.	2, 3.	489
	8.	526
	16.	90
	19.	462
5.	5.	319
	12.	483
6.	3.	580
	4.	483
	7.	452
7.	3.	43
	15.	405
8.	12.	34
9.	10.	548
10.	15.	75
11.	10.	92
	8.	483
12.	9.	580
13.	12, 13.	204, 488
14.	2.	91
	4.	619
	6.	551

JOEL.

Chapters,	Verſes,	Pages,
1.	4.	483
2.	2.	613

AMOS.

Chapters,	Verſes,	Pages,
2.	6.	54
3.	2.	169

JONAH.

Chap.	Verſ.	Page.
3.	4, 10.	139

MICAH.

Chapters,	Verſes,	Pages,
5.	2.	118
7.	18, 19.	638

NAHUM.

Chapters,	Verſes,	Pages,
1.	1, 2.	473
	3.	474, 594

HABAK.

Chap.	Verſ.	Page.
1.	16.	53, 526

ZEPH.

Chapters,	Verſes,	Pages.
2.	1, 2.	481
3.	17.	548

ZECH.

Chapters,	Verſes,	Pages,
1.	8.	595
	11, 12.	530
3.	9.	503, 638
6.	1.	131
	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.	508
	6.	595
	13.	545
10.	10.	588

MAL.

Chapters,	Verſes,	Pages,
1.	13, 14.	40
3.	5.	195
	6.	485

MATTH.

Chapters,	Verſes,	Pages,
1.	18.	284
3.	9.	260
5.	13.	535
	48.	476, 497
7.	11.	343
	23.	169
15.	6.	39
	19.	558 s.
16.	18.	580
18.	10.	169, 537
21.	16.	597
25.	12.	169
26.	39, 42.	623
28.	20.	582, 584

MARK.

Chapters,	Verſes,	Pages,
6.	5.	624
10.	18.	353, 354

LUKE.

Chapters,	Verſes,	Pages,
1.	35.	284
2.	49.	509
10.	20.	144
18.	8.	554

A TABLE.

JOHN.

Chapters,	Verſes,	Pages,
1.	3.	295
4.	*a* 10 *ad* 24.	67,68
	24.	68, 69, 79, 80
5.	19.	294
	22.	545
6.	64.	194
7.	37.	92
9.	2, 3.	618
	3.	429
10.	30.	160
12.	38.	185
	39,41.	341
17.	5.	117,158

ACTS.

Chapters,	Verſes,	Pages,
2.	23.	515
4.	28.	*ibid.*
7.	51.	35
17.	18.	287
	28.	149, 152
	30.	480,535

ROM.

Chapters,	Verſes,	Pages,
1.	9.	88
	19,20,21.	3,9,356
	23.	157
	25.	26
2.	4.	487
	15, 16.	560 *s.*
3.	9, 10, 11, 12.	30
	23.	340
	25.	640
4.	25.	*ibid.*
5.	7.	357
7.	6.	83
	8.	35
	20.	632
8.	4.	234
	10.	478
	21.	126
	28.	534
	38, 39.	208
9.	13, 15.	437
	6.	83
	22.	477, 489
10.	18.	486
12.	1.	86
15.	5.	493
16.	25,26,27.	*a* 207 *ad* 211

1 COR.

Chapters,	Verſes,	Pages,
1.	21.	208
2.	2.	175
	10, 11.	169
3.	11.	583
	22.	537
9.	9.	510
16.	20, 22.	42

2 COR.

Chapters,	Verſes,	Pages,
3.	9.	642
	18.	231

GAL.

Chap.	Verſ.	Page.
3.	3.	83

EPHES.

Chapters,	Verſes,	Pages,
1.	10.	377
	18.	232
2.	2, 3.	561 *s.*
	3.	63
	12.	29,60,63
	20.	583
3.	10.	232, 538
	21.	580
4.	6.	151
	25.	563, *s.*

PHIL.

Chap.	Verſ.	Page.
2.	6.	44

COL.

Chapters,	Verſes,	Pages,
1.	16.	294
	20.	295
2.	3.	244
2.	14, 15.	642

2 THESS.

Chap.	Verſ.	Page.
2.	4.	595

1 TIM.

Chapters,	Verſes,	Pages,
1.	14.	648
2.	14, 15.	615,616
4.	8.	530
6.	17.	525

2 TIM.

Chapters,	Verſes,	Pages,
1.	10.	383
2.	19.	144

TITUS.

Chapters,	Verſes,	Pages.
1.	16.	2, 31
2.	19.	169

HEB.

Chapters,	Verſes,	Pages,
1.	1,2,10,11.	141, 26
	3.	54
	9.	32
	14.	53
4.	12.	17
	12, 13.	566,
11.	3.	10, 30
	6.	3
	16.	384
	21.	88

JAMES.

Chapters,	Verſes,	Pages,
2.	10, 11.	38
3.	15.	30

2 PETER.

Chapters,	Verſes,	Pages,
2.	1.	478
	5.	481
	7, 8.	607, 610
3.	9.	480
	12, 13.	128

1 JOHN.

Chap.	Verſ.	Page.
3.	9.	624, 625

REVELATIONS.

Chapters,	Verſes,	Pages,
1.	10.	107
	13,14,15,16.	586, 596
	20.	584
2.	1.	582
	8.	583
	18, 19, 23.	201
3.	1.	582, 584
4.	3.	578
	4.	548
5.	6.	535
6.	10.	485
	14.	126
12.	5.	572
	5.	584
14.	6.	587
	19, 20.	595
15.	2.	587
	8	584
17.	3.	555
19.	1, 4, 6.	573

FINIS.